

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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### SENSING THE SWEET SIDE OF LIFE

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For practical purposes: if we are developing the child-heart; if we are learning to love things beautiful; if we are becoming more honest and plain and simple; if we are beginning to sense the sweet side of life; if we are getting to like our friends better and extending the circle; if we feel ourselves expanding in sympathy; if we love to work for Theosophy and do not ask position as a reward; if we are not bothering too much about whether we are personal or impersonal—this is travelling on the path of impersonality.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

MANY people, when feeling worried, harassed, frustrated, find it difficult even to appreciate a sunset, not to mention their perhaps doubting whether life, for them, has any sweet side at all. And yet, is it not true that two men looking out through the same bars see differently? One sees the mud; the other sees the stars. There is in fact a feast of beauty spread by life for all who will partake of it. Let us not "glower at the festal board with cup turned down"!

Sorrow and pain there are, but there is beauty in bearing them serenely. An English novelist has referred to the almost unbearable innocence of bird notes at dawn. Many of us have felt their poignancy, yet simultaneously their beauty touches us and we can glimpse, however fleetingly, the fact of pain and pleasure being but

one sensation. Shelley has beautifully phrased it in "To a Skylark":

Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Since, as we are told, as we think, so we become, it is easy to understand why the Initiate Paul wrote to the Philippians:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

But there is another no less compelling reason for us to keep the level of our thinking high.

If, on the one hand, a morbid interest in gruesome things may invest our glance with the power to precipitate disaster upon others, as H.P.B. has indicated, it would seem that, on the other hand, keeping one's thoughts as far as possible on purity, nobility and peace might invest our very glance with beneficence. At any rate the thoughts themselves will spread their influence for good. H.P.B. wrote in *Isis Unveiled*:

...when a thought of good or evil import is begotten in our brain, it draws to it *impulses* of like nature as irresistibly as the magnet attracts iron filings. This attraction is also proportionate to the intensity with which the thought-impulse makes itself felt in the ether; and so it will be understood how one man may impress himself upon his own epoch so forcibly, that the influence may be carried—through the ever-interchanging currents of energy between the two worlds, the visible and the invisible—from one succeeding age to another; until it affects a large portion of mankind. (I, 181)

What a responsibility is therefore ours, to guard our thoughts! Mr. Judge put it simply and graphically when he wrote:

We have, each one of us, to make ourselves a centre of light; a picture gallery from which shall be projected on the astral light such scenes, such influences, such thoughts, as may influence

many for good.

Is there friction sometimes between ourselves and our fellow workers? Let us not dwell upon our grievances, thus keeping open whatever wounds we may think we have received, or be too confident that we are in no way responsible for them ourselves, remembering rather that "we are none of us ever in the right, there is always that in us that causes another to offend," and that "the work must not fail because here and there personalities fall, and sin, and are unwise."

If we are, at the moment, in too personal a mood to think good thoughts of those whom we conceive to have injured us, we can and should at least avoid thinking of them until harmonious vibrations to some extent ensue, meantime awaiting our hour in hope. Are we not told that, great though the trials and labours of the Mystic may be, he "goes his way with smiling face and joyful heart"?

"Let us, then," as the Buddha said, "live happily, we who possess nothing. Let us live like the Shining Ones nourished on joy." And in *The Light of Asia* is recorded His tender blessing of Sujata, treading so happily the way of duty, of virtue and of peace:

...grow, thou flower!  
 With thy sweet kind in peaceful shade—the light  
 Of Truth's high noon is not for tender leaves  
 Which must spread broad in other suns, and lift  
 In later lives a crowned head to the sky.

And of Himself and His returning to His kingdom, it is written how

...love—  
 Vaster in being free from toils of sense—  
 Was wisest stooping to the weaker heart;  
 And so the feet of sweet Yasodhara  
 Passed into peace and bliss, being softly led.

How many aspects of the sweet side of life there are if we are but alert to them and not absorbed in our petty personal self! A baby's radiant smile, lighting a passing stranger's lonely day; the look of peace upon a wrinkled face; the modest flowerets of the greensward in their dainty perfectness of form and hue; a human mother's

joyous sacrifice to give the gift of life and then to nourish and to serve her child; the shining courage of the man who lays down his own life to save the lives of others.

We have not even touched upon the joy to be experienced from soaring mountains, from quiet woods or from true beauty of form or face or character, whether in nature or in man, or as depicted faithfully in the fine arts or in literature. The Russian writer Ilya Ehrenburg said truly that "when he writes of purity and valour, even the most helpless journalist becomes a prophet who burns hearts."

Who is there who does not know the power of contact with the beautiful to release him from his absorption in his little personal affairs? As Longinus wrote: "Our soul is uplifted by the true sublime; it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as if it had produced what it had heard."

Coming down to everyday life, we all know how poisonous an atmosphere a jealous or a sulky person spreads around him. Malignant influences, that is, disturbances through strifes, quarrels, bad feelings, etc., impress themselves at once upon the astral light, affecting the atmosphere of a place, as they hang about in the air. How important, then, for families, for all their members to live at peace with one another and so avoid such continuing pollution of the environment they share!

On every count, should we not try to increase our openness to impressions of the sweet side of life, the good, the true, the beautiful, and to dwell in thought on these? As H.P.B. has said:

Is it not the greatest art of all, this which affects the very atmosphere in which we live? That it is the most important is seen at once, when we remember that every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to colour the day for those about him. Those who do not help to elevate the thoughts and lives of others must of necessity either paralyze them by indifference, or actively drag them down.

Shall we not try to emulate the Masters and to learn the art of making life not only beautiful but divine?

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## THE BIRTH OF THE SOUL

THERE are three voices which function in each one of us—the voice of the flesh which imprisons and enslaves the mind and the soul; the voice of conscience which warns and protects; and the Voice of the Soul, which is higher than that of conscience and which illuminates the mind, something the conscience is not able to do. By study, the voice of the flesh can be subdued; by practice, our conscience can be educated and elevated; and by spiritual training, the Voice of the Soul can help us in making our lives radiant and happy.

The title of this article, "The Birth of the Soul," has reference to the festival of Christmas. The 25th of December is not really the day on which Jesus was born; it was several centuries after his era that it was fixed as the Day of Nativity, and that was done so that people might get at the real understanding of the Birth of Christ. Like Krishna, Christos is the Universal Principle which throbs within the heart of every form of life and which may be termed *Atman*, the Self. The Birth of Christ is the Birth of the Soul, the Real or Spiritual Self in man. Christmas is fittingly celebrated at this time, for, in Occultism and Esoteric Philosophy, the spiritual and invisible aspect of the seasons is recognized. The Winter Solstice, *i.e.*, the 21st of December, is the day on which the Sun begins to move northwards and the regenerating forces of the new season begin to awaken. The Soul of the Earth is born at this season, and so we have a double meaning to the festival of Christmas. Many ancient civilizations have recognized the fact, and therefore numerous Sages and Spiritual Teachers are said to have been born around the 21st of December. But let us turn from Christmas as a festival to the spiritual use we should make of it.

To begin with, what is the Soul? We need to distinguish between Spirit and Soul. Spirit is universal; there is but One Spirit, and my Spirit is not different from your Spirit. But my soul is different from your Soul. There are many Souls, but only One Spirit. In the *Gita* (XIII, 33), Krishna says: "As a single sun illuminateth the whole world, even so doth the One Spirit illumine every body." Just as the

One Sun has innumerable rays, so each Soul is a ray of the Universal Spirit. The Human Soul is the Real Man—*Manushya*, the Thinker; but it must not be confounded with the ordinary human mind. *Manushya* is also called *Manas*, the Mind; but that mind is the Higher Mind: It is better to know the Human Soul as the Real Man, the Soul which is the ray of the Spirit.

The Soul has two outstanding qualities—*Viveka* or discrimination, and *Vairagya* or detachment. Every Soul has the power to reason in a clear-cut way, and by that power it discriminates between the true and the false, the real and the unreal. This work of *Viveka* or discrimination is done by the Soul through and in its aspect of *Manas*, the Higher Mind. Further, the Soul has vision born of *Viveka*, and that vision expresses itself as detachment, *Vairagya*. Every Soul has the power to detach itself from the Ever-changing, ever-shifting *Maya* or illusion of the world—the mighty magic of *Prakriti* or matter—and thus detaching itself, the Soul can preserve its own human integrity and, further, can activate the Light of the One Universal Spirit which is within it. This work of *Vairagya* or detachment is done by the Soul through and in its aspect of *Buddhi*, the Illuminating Heart.

It is necessary for us to picture, as clearly as we can, the composition of the Human Soul, the Real Man. It is triple. The Soul, through its Mind or *Manas* aspect, uses the faculty of discrimination; through its Heart or *Buddhi* aspect, it uses the faculty of detachment; and thus it activates within itself the Light of Spirit or *Atman*. At present, in most men and women, *Atman* or Spirit is passive, quiescent, because *Buddhi*, on and in which it shines, is passive or inactive. Soul-evolution consists in making *Buddhi* active. The Heart must be awakened; at the present hour it is asleep in most people. What can awaken the Heart is *Manas*, the Higher Mind, if that *Manas* will use the power of discrimination or *Viveka*. Why does not *Manas* do the necessary work? To understand this, we must look at ourselves as we are, here and now. In our innermost nature, as the Human Soul, we are *Manas*, with its power of discrimination or *Buddhi*, and of detachment or *Atman*. But that Triple Human Soul—*Atma-Buddhi-Manas*—is not functioning

here, in this body. We do *not* discriminate; we are *not* detached; and the Light of the One Spirit or God does *not* shine forth.

Then what are we here, in this body, on this earth? Theosophy teaches that only a fragment of the Triple Soul is incarnated in the body. The first step we need to take is to recognize that, though overpowered by desires and passions, the Soul dwells in the body. Few men and women feel the presence of the Soul in them, the Soul that they *are*. Theosophy says that the human kingdom is made up of the "living" and the "dead"—*i.e.*, those who recognize that they are Souls, and those who do not. The Sixteenth Chapter of the *Gita* speaks of two natures, the divine and the devilish. Those of the demoniacal disposition say that there is no Spirit; they indulge in insatiable desires and are fast-fixed in false beliefs through their delusions. Such men and women are "dead," in the sense that they are soulless.

So the first step is to begin to recognize the Soul within us. The danger to modern civilization comes from two sources. False and superstitious religions are one danger; they teach false doctrines, yet they do refer to the Human Soul and its condition here and hereafter. The second source of danger is modern science, which denies the very existence of the Soul. Caught between these two, ordinary men and women suffer most grievously. Theosophy teaches the right doctrine about the existence and evolution of the Human Soul, and the first step is recognition of the Soul—what its nature is and what its past and its future.

The second step is indicated in *The Voice of the Silence*: "Seek, O Beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul." We must learn to distinguish between Mind and Soul. When we read or meditate, when we look within ourselves, we find that behind and beyond the mind is something that can control its movements, that can order and direct it; and that is the incarnated aspect of the Soul, the Soul in the body. This incarnated Soul is but a fragment of the whole Human Soul. It needs to be recognized that only in a small or fragmentary measure the Human Soul is able to manifest its power and glory in the body. It is like a bird caught in a cage. It is necessary to distinguish the soul from the mind, because the whole trouble,

the root of all ignorance, all disease, all misery and suffering, is in the mind. The difficulty is *not* with the body, nor even with mere desires; animals have desires and passions, yet they do not cause as much mischief in the world as men do. The real difficulty arises when desires catch hold of the mind, use and exploit it, to serve their mean and selfish purposes. It is the mind that gives its real power to lust. Lust exists in the animals, but they do not revel in it as humans do. Men, using their minds, enhance their lust by finding ways and means to indulge in it; so with wrath and anger, and so with greed and avarice. If we could perceive that the mind should be blended with the Soul and not with desires and passions, we would take a long step forward in evolution. Therefore we have the aphorism that we so often repeat—"The fight is in the mind." Correct the mind, purify the mind, free the mind from desires.

In most people, the mind is protected by their passions; the mind must become the bride of the Soul in the body. The marriage of mind and Soul is the allegorical language which mystics have often used. But this marriage is between mind and the *incarnated* Soul, and something more remains to be done to bring to birth the Triple Soul—*Atma-Buddhi-Manas*. It should be nothing extraordinary at the present stage of human evolution to have our mind and incarnated Soul working harmoniously together. Our civilization, dominated by religious superstition and scientific materialism, has made this most difficult for us, and our human egotism and selfishness have succumbed to these dominations. A little study and a little practice, and we can regain our natural position as thinking human beings; as Souls, we can use our mind, and grow from power to power.

The Birth of the Soul is a higher stage; it refers to the activating of the higher aspects of the Soul—of *Manas* and its quality of *Viveka*-discrimination, of *Buddhi* and its virtue of *Vairagya*-dispassion. When our mind is under the control of the Incarnated Soul, we are able to control our lower animal-nature, and while we are doing that, we have also to learn to attend to the spiritual aspect of our being.

One might ask, Why bother about the Soul? People generally

accept that to be good, virtuous, unselfish and kind, the mind should be kept pure as well as sincere; but when that is done, and when the voice of conscience is listened to, why bother any further? What good does it do to have dispassion and discrimination and other spiritual qualities? If the mind is brought under control, and the dictates of the conscience are carried out, we do begin to live the good life; but that is not enough. Very many people, decent men and women, honourable and upright, go on living their round of daily life, but without real growth. Such do not understand the meaning and purpose of life. Though in the main their lives are good, not being familiar with spiritual principles they compromise with truth, they play with honesty and do many things simply because "that is the done thing," and avoid others because "that is not done." They have overcome evil, but they are slaves to what people call "good" yet which is *not* spiritually good. Our civilization suffers as much from the folly of the good as from the evil of the wicked. Unless we stop and consider, our very goodness may drag us down once again to evil. Confucius said that "goody-goody" people were the thieves of fortune and nature. Good and virtuous people are by no means safe from the temptations of the flesh, and unless they endeavour to go on with the task of purifying and elevating themselves, they are likely to slip back into the morass of evil. Folly is very often the outcome of sentimental mushiness, and many men and women go down at the first stroke of even a simple temptation. So the fight in the mind must continue, and that mind must be made so clean and radiant that it is able to reflect, more and more, the Light of the true Soul, the Triple *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*.

The first thing necessary is to learn that this Soul is our God. Deity is not outside of us but within us. Most good men and women, even of little education, agree that God is within; yet they go to churches and temples, mosques and synagogues, because they have given only casual lip assent to the proposition that there is an Inner God. Here is but one example of how good people compromise with Truth, with their own glimpse of vision, and slip into the error of sectarianism which in a short time becomes the sin of fanaticism.

So, we need to understand how and why our Real Soul is not only Godlike, but *is* God; is not only divine, but *is* Deity Itself. Each one of us as *Manushya*, the Real Soul, is God.

What would be the outcome if a person really accepted understandingly that his own Soul is God? He would naturally ask, "Who then is this other God to whom people pray?"—and there are many, many gods who are prayed to. Another thought that would arise in the mind of such a person is: "If God is within me, then I must be powerful and wise, resourceful and adaptable; and if so, the moulding of my life can be determined by myself." Good and virtuous men and women, saying that God is within, still continue in their humdrum ways, now weak, now strong, now mean and then noble, acting selfishly at one time and unselfishly at another. Unless a good person takes to heart the ancient instruction, "Man, know thyself," and looks within to seek for the life-activity of that God in his own heart, he will not be able to go further.

The Real Soul, *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*, shines like a star in the depths of our being. Each of us is but a ray of that star—"the flaming star that shines within the lightless depths of ever-being, the boundless fields of the Unknown." And even that ray is not always able to guide us in this world of *Maya*, of illusion and ignorance. The only true prayer is that which is directed to the Radiant God within—*Atma-Buddhi-Manas*. The prayer of *Viveka* or Discrimination would reach the *Manas* and bring to us the response of that *Manas*. The prayer of *Vairagya* or Detachment would reach the *Buddhi* and bring to us the response of that *Buddhi*. And when *Manas* is united to *Buddhi*, the prayer of Compassion and of Altruism would reach the *Atman*, and its response would come in the form of Radiance, Power and Peace.

So we have to learn to know something about the nature and character of the three constituents of the Real Soul or *Manushya*. People want peace and power and light in their own lives. But when Theosophy tells them to acquire the necessary knowledge to convince themselves that they *are* God, they are hardly bothered. What would one say of a young man who wants to become an engineer by profession, but refuses to study the texts of his subject?

What would one say of a woman who knows naught of cooking and refuses to learn, yet is desirous of creating a first-rate dinner? Both of them could attain their respective goals if they would devote time and attention to the learning of the subject or skill they are interested in.

One must begin with the task of evaluating things correctly. We are in this world, which is like a great market-place, full of things that we get and give; but do we know their real values? The real value of money, or of the things it can buy, proceeds from within ourselves and lies in the use we make of it. Discrimination of the spiritual kind consists in knowing not just the market price of this or that object or thing, but also its real value in terms of the use and the joy that thing yields. This sounds a simple practice, but it leads to a great achievement. In this manner, we get at the true values of all things and all people. In that very process, the Birth of the Soul takes place. But it is only the birth; maturity comes long after the birth, by practising the Doctrine of the Heart.

When an individual recognizes that within himself, as a Soul, he is God, spiritual conception takes place; when he endeavours to give real or spiritual values to the things, events and peoples of this world, the Soul as an independent entity is born. Through many stages, extended over several lives, the Soul will grow and unfold, and in course of time attain to sublime perfection. Theosophy offers Soul-Images of those who have attained Perfection. Those Great Ones, *Mahatmas*, possess full *Viveka*-Discrimination and are therefore called *Tattva-Gnyanis*, Knowers of the Essence of all things; they are completely detached from the *Maya* of this world, and are supreme *Vairagis*, Renouncers, but their Compassion is such that, though detached, they live in the world yet are not of the world. They serve all who are willing to learn the Heart Doctrine, the science of human progression and perfection. They guide and help and bless, but we have to labour to study what they teach, and thus earn the privilege of gaining their Blessings.

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## HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

In this manner do those speak who are deluded: "This today hath been acquired by me, and that object of my heart I shall obtain; this wealth I have, and that also shall be mine. This foe have I already slain, and others will I forthwith vanquish; I am the lord, I am powerful, and I am happy. I am rich and with precedence among men; where is there another like unto me? I shall make sacrifices, give alms, and enjoy." ...Confounded by all manner of desires, entangled in the net of delusion, firmly attached to the gratification of their desires, they descend into hell. Esteeming themselves very highly, self-willed, full of pride and ever in pursuit of riches, they perform worship with hypocrisy and not even according to ritual, but only for outward show. Indulging in pride, selfishness, ostentation, power, lust, and anger, they detest me who am in their bodies and in the bodies of others. Wherefore I continually hurl these cruel haters, the lowest of men, into wombs of an infernal nature in this world of rebirth. And they being doomed to those infernal wombs, more and more deluded in each succeeding rebirth, never come to me...but go at length to the lowest region.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, XVI, 13-20

IN these words, still vibrant with truth as when uttered over 50 centuries ago, has our life, our civilization, our religion been pictured by Sri Krishna, with whose death started this cycle which we know as the *Kali Yuga* or the dark age—dark because spirituality is conspicuous by its absence, being obscured by materiality and mere intellectualism. Thoughtful men and women well know that mere physical and intellectual progress in itself is not a sign of real advancement, but may have in it the elements of its own stoppage and destruction. This, together with loss of spirituality, absence of moral control and of a true philosophical basis, is causing concern to many, and we often hear it asked: "Whither humanity?"

It may seem a strange contradiction to some that, in spite of our world being closely knit physically—modern technology having shrunk our globe—we are engaged in a constant clash of men and

of ideas. The crux of the problem lies on planes other than the physical, and it is time those at the helm of world affairs realized it. If we look for mere physical panaceas, there is very little hope of our being able to check, still less to reverse, the downward trend, and our civilization will sink into "that mere luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as civilizations have done."

At the turn of the century, more and more people in every land assumed that the material progress of the previous hundred years would continue onward and upward for many hundred years to come. Nor did they stop there. Faith in material progress bred faith in human progress. H. G. Wells expressed the hopes of millions when he foresaw 20th-century science promoting the health, wealth and happiness of all humankind.

This age has been called an age of transition. The world of a hundred years ago has now vanished altogether. Few prophets at mid-century foresaw much health, wealth, or happiness for mankind. This is but natural. The present state of affairs is the inevitable result of a generation of materialism and of putting faith in a science which believes not in the "soul of things," expecting it to elevate us and make for human progress. What else can we expect from modern science, which fanatically holds to the wrong idea that man is no more than a glorified ape, that human civilization began in savagery, and that unaided man rose from height to height till today he finds himself the proud possessor of wisdom never known before? Will advocates of modern science pause to consider the Theosophical view that man is divine in his origin, that he has a noble and sacred mission here on earth, and that civilizations much grander and wiser than this of the 20th century have flourished?

To find out how to prevent the misuse of scientific discoveries for destructive purposes is the most pressing task of scientific research. According to what use is made of these discoveries, they may lead to the greatest blessings or become the cause of the most awful miseries. So long as the tendency is to follow the latter direction, further progress in the scientific field is not only meaningless but pernicious.

And religion? In this age of topsyturvydom, religion, which ought to unite human beings, creates disunity and strife. Everywhere there is a rise in sacerdotalism and a widespread return to the traditional religions. In place of the old false gods we have looming over us the danger of new false ones—the gods of wealth, of material progress, of nationalism, and so forth. H.P.B. wrote in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 38):

Unless we mistake the signs, the day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known....Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin.

Some decades ago, nearly every historian of stature who tried to look into the future predicted that the rise of Asia would continue to overshadow whatever else this century might bring forth. As Asia has gone up in the world, Europe has gone down. Even though the power of Europe no longer spreads through the world as it once did, Europe's decline might take the same slow course as its rise. In the last century, and in the earlier part of the present one, the European sub-race reached its highest pitch of development, following which it was destined to begin a cycle of decline. As far back as 1888, in her *Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. wrote foreshadowing the darkness that was to overtake Europe. She stated that what she said was no more of the nature of a prophecy or prevision than the announcement of the return of a comet by an astronomer, several years before its appearance. A knowledge of the law of cycles and mathematically correct computations enable the "Wise Men of the East" to say with accuracy that

England is on the eve of such or another catastrophe; France, nearing such a point of her cycle, and Europe in general threatened with, or rather, on the eve of, a cataclysm, which her own cycle of racial *Karma* has led her to. (*S.D.*, I, 646)

A new race is coming into being on the American continent, but

the seeds of the same weaknesses that afflict the European or fifth sub-race are strongly developed in the United States, and if the opportunities for future growth are greater there, so also are the dangers.

We cannot expect the present trends to continue for ever. What then is the hope for humanity in the immediate future?

If we examine the etiological factors behind the neurosis of our modern civilization we shall find that in the main they are *avidya* ("the ignorance which proceeds from and is produced by the illusion of the senses") and, what is worse, mere "Head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it"; and *Attavada* ("the heresy of the belief in...the separateness of Soul or *Self* from the One Universal, Infinite SELF"). In this *Kali Yuga*, men and women no longer follow their spiritual intuitions; instead of acting from within, they ever follow impulses from without—those produced by their physical senses and gross selfish bodies. H.P.B., who could perceive where this would lead us and what future was in store for us, also gave us the means to ameliorate it, if it were not possible entirely to avert it:

...the only palliative to the evils of life is union and harmony—a Brotherhood IN ACTU, and *altruism* not simply in name. The suppression of one single bad *cause* will suppress not one, but a variety of bad effects. And if a Brotherhood or even a number of Brotherhoods may not be able to prevent nations from occasionally cutting each other's throats—still unity in thought and action, and philosophical research into the mysteries of being, will always prevent some, while trying to comprehend that which has hitherto remained to them a riddle, from creating additional causes in a world already so full of woe and evil.  
(S.D., I, 644)

Thus H.P.B. knew that the present situation would be caused by unbrotherliness, the "insanity of the age," that it would be the legitimate and due effect of causes set in motion by humanity itself, and that it might be prevented by the promulgation of the broad teachings of Theosophy. True ideas are the crying need of mankind. Unless our ideas are changed, unless the ideal of Universal Broth-

erhood replaces the concept of "might is right," our civilization is bound to meet its doom.

Individuals and nations offer the sure solution of brotherly cooperation to their neighbours. "Co-operate with me," says everybody. How many of us with true determination affirm, "Let *me* co-operate with my neighbours"? We are blind to the simple fact that it takes two to co-operate. Assimilation of each other's points of view and the adoption of common principles alone will make the dream of a World Order, of world unity, concord and understanding, come true.

By what compass to steer? Many see the condition; few have a remedy; probably none an effective remedy. We are not willing to acknowledge in full measure that there can never be world improvement without individual improvement; that there is no world problem—there is only the individual problem. Discord and wars in the world outside are but the outcome of the archetypal conflict—the conflict between the self of matter and the Self of Spirit within every single human being. The Great War of Kurukshetra is waged in every human heart. Says H.P.B.:

This war will last till the inner and divine man adjusts his outer terrestrial self to his own spiritual nature. Till then the dark and fierce passions of the former will be at eternal feud with his master, the Divine Man. But the *animal* will be tamed one day, because its nature will be changed, and harmony will reign once more between the two. (*S.D.*, II, 268)

Thus it is only through self-reform of individual units that humanity *en masse* can be uplifted and made whole. We need to educate the individual and make him aware of his own responsibility. There is great truth in the saying: "The proper study of mankind is man." Most of our problems would be solved if only an understanding of our own true nature is gained and acted upon.

An impartial examination would show that neither in modern science, nor in sectarian religion, nor in political and socialistic programmes is there any remedy. Only in Theosophy will men and women find a sure and permanent foundation for a new World

Order and for peace and happiness. For Theosophy is not only more scientific than science and more religious than religion, but is the continuation of the selfless efforts of the Great Sacrificers, who are also the mental and moral Pioneers of human progress.

As time rolls on, there is a growing latent fear everywhere as to what the future might hold in store for us. It is not unlikely that our civilization may be destroyed by the very forces which it has had the knowledge to create but not the wisdom to control. Civilizations more mighty and glorious than our own have come to dust, and there is no reason why ours should be an exception. But that does not mean the stoppage of humanity's progress. Human souls must go on and on in their divine pilgrimage. The ascending arc of the spiral of human evolution may bring to us a better time of which Mr. Judge has spoken:

...out of anger and disturbance will arise a new and better time;  
yet not without the pain which accompanies every new birth.

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DHARMA is the word which in our language is translated as "duty," but it has a much wider range and meaning than that which we accord to the word "duty." There are many who think that duty is something that others think we should do; others again consider "duty" to be irksome, and as actions to be performed under duress, and therefore to be avoided; it is therefore necessary to grasp the meaning of the word "duty" as used in the *Gita*. *Dharma* means "the sacred Law," the fulfilment of our karmic destiny through many incarnations, the working out and elimination of defects which have brought us into earth life under the conditions in which we find ourselves, which conditions we should feel and know to be the very opportunities needed for our further progress. This is why one of the great Teachers wrote, "Duty is the royal talisman; duty alone will lead us to the goal."

— *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*

## THE PLANE OF MENTALITY

ON the subject of mind, which is an instrument of the soul, Eastern psychology takes a position that is very precise. Western psychology takes a different view because its definition of mind as a principle in the human constitution is entirely different. When we speak of the reconstruction of mind from the point of view of Theosophy (which is the point of view of Eastern psychology) we speak of something definite and precise that has been analysed, not of something that is vague.

To study any subject we need to take up the position of an honest inquirer who puts aside all his predilections, all the inferences drawn from so-called exact knowledge, and begins to test by human experience. Unless we apply this test to the subject of mind, we will not be able to come to any definite conclusion. When we do so, we immediately come up against the limitations of human experience. Everyone wants to and does go by what he calls his convictions. Hence, when we speak of human experience as a test, as a measure, we naturally speak of that which has been verified over and over again.

Human experience in reference to the mind, as it is known in modern culture and civilization, is a limited experience. The science of psychology as it is known in the West today is, comparatively speaking, a new science and, therefore, its observations, experiments and collection of facts, though interesting, are not sufficient to draw inferences from. How very inadequate and unsatisfactory the position of the modern science of psychology is can be seen from the fact that those who have been experimenting in this field have not asked the simple question: "May there not have been people in the great civilizations of the past who were psychologists?" The conceit of the modern mind is colossal. It is thought that psychology is a new science and that the ancients did not know of it.

The ancients knew of it very definitely; their tabulations of facts are there and need to be studied. Why ought we to study the problems of the mind? Because they are the cause of most of our

troubles. There is a great deal of talk about the reconstruction of the world. What needs reconstruction at the present moment is not the world but the way we look at it.

There is nothing the matter with the world. All the elements, the earth, the air, the water, the fire, carry on their activities harmoniously. Even while wars rage, Nature goes on with her work. Therefore, what we mean by the reconstruction of the world is a reconstruction of our attitude towards the world. And our attitude to the world takes shape in what we call our mind.

The Upanishadic philosophers knew that the world at which one person looks is a totally different world from the one at which another person is looking, and that the impressions one gets and the inferences which he draws are different from the impressions another gets and the inferences which he draws. We think that the universe is changing because the change is in us. So, if we want to reconstruct anything, we must reconstruct that in us which changes. That view, once grasped, will bring us the clear conviction that each one of us is living in a universe that he makes. We think that our neighbour is living in the same universe as we live in, and this belief is productive of conflict. What is the cause of war save that different people see things differently, hear things differently? It is the minds of men that produce all the havoc in the world and it is therefore the mind that needs reconstruction perpetually.

Now, how are we going to reconstruct it? By first trying to understand what mind is and how it acts.

The mind receives impressions from without and makes possible expressions from within. The impressions that come to us come *via* the five senses, the *jnana-indriyas*. Sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch are the channels through which knowledge of the great world without is received. The work of expression, on the other hand, is made possible through the five organs of action, the *karma-indriyas*—hands, feet, speech, the organs of procreation and of excretion. Expression proceeds from within without. Impression comes from without within. Mind is the link between the two.

What does the mind do? It responds to the impressions received from without. We see or hear a thing and our mind responds to that

impression. It modifies itself according to the impressions from without, just as water takes the shape of the receptacle into which it is poured. The faculty of cognition enables the mind to know the real meaning and significance of the impressions in terms of its own inherent knowledge. If it is not able to understand their meaning, it becomes a slave to the impressions.

After receiving and evaluating the impressions, the mind expresses itself. It takes the form that the impressions have created and, if it feels satisfied, it remains there. If it feels pain, it tries to get out of it. Pleasure and pain—in other words, our feelings—connect impressions with expressions.

The object of concentration is to prevent the impressions from modifying our thinking principle. It should hold firm when the impressions come and be a silent spectator of the panorama that passes before its eyes.

To put itself in the position of a spectator of the impressions that come from without, the mind needs to be reconstructed. We may reconstruct it superficially—and modern education does that—but the real method of reconstruction is to alter its foundation. This implies training the mind not to become a slave to impressions, not to rush into the moulds that matter makes from outside. Colour makes an impression through the eyes. Sound, music, make an impression through the ears, and so on with the other senses. Not to be enslaved by them, but to energize and ensoul them, is our object.

We need to practise meditation to reconstruct the mind. Meditation does not mean taking a set posture at a set time. A study of *The Voice of the Silence* and of Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* will help considerably in the practice of meditation. It is said in *The Voice of the Silence* that "the mind is the great Slayer of the Real." A little further on we are told that we live and die in the Hall of Ignorance. What does it mean? What do we do there? How did we gain our ignorance? By letting the mind become a slave to the emotions. We gain the lower knowledge, become more and more involved in sense activities, more and more enslaved by sense impressions. The Hall of ignorance is the hall in which we use our

senses, in which we first see the light. For what brings us to knowledge? Recognition of the fact that we are ignorant. That is the first step in the attainment of wisdom.

Proceed from that to the next. To get away from the hall of the senses and sense impressions, we are told: "Let not thy mind mistake the fires of lust that burn therein for the sunlight of life." The mind makes the mistake of being led by sense inclinations and goes further and further away from the soul. The Wise Ones, it is said, "tarry not in pleasure-grounds of senses."

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* give us the practical method: "Concentration, or Yoga, is the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle." Here we get the very first step for reconstructing our minds. We may read scores of volumes on psychology; we may probe, by the process of psychoanalysis, our subconscious minds; but ultimately we shall come to this concept which Patanjali has given.

Let us not go after the phenomenal phases of things but try to look for the philosophical basis of things. The philosophical basis is there in what we have considered above. By studying *The Voice of the Silence* and Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* we shall be able to understand more clearly, more accurately, what the mind is and what we can do with it. If we give thought to the matter we shall see that the evolution of the mind consists in coming out of the kingdom in which the mind is a slave to impressions into the kingdom where the mind becomes an instrument for the expression of the soul. And then we see, not with our eyes, but through our eyes. We do not hear with our ears, but through our ears. We do not speak with our vocal organs, but speak through them. We recognize the power within differently and hence the world becomes a different world. The language of the soul, symbolism, and the language of ideas, ideographs, come into play. That is the work that lies before us in evolution.

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LOVE is to the moral nature exactly what the sun is to the earth.

— HONORE DE BALZAC

## THE LAW OF PRECISION

IN order to have a correct concept of the One Reality, *Sat*, back of this manifested universe, Theosophy gives the symbol of space, limitless and boundless. One can stretch one's vision as far as one may, but beyond that there still will be space. Universes and systems of worlds appear, disappear and reappear in space. At the dawn of manifestation, all energies, powers and forces reawaken in space, and at the time of dissolution everything merges back into space. The moving panorama of life, the drama of evolution, is enacted in space; therefore it is a fitting symbol of God.

It is essential to bear in mind that God is not *extra-cosmic* but *intra-cosmic*. On the clear perception of this will depend the attitude of an individual, his morality, his behaviour, his sense of unity and harmony. Belief in an extra-cosmic God will lead one to orthodoxy, superstition, unquestioning adherence to customs and conventions, and therefore to outer-dependence. The perception of an intra-cosmic God will enable one to be self-reliant, to help nature and nature's laws, and thereby express truth and love, peace and harmony in one's daily life. Beginningless and endless, birthless and deathless is the Divine Power which moves accurately, because it is Law itself.

As God is intra-cosmic, space is not something vacant and void, but is thrilling and throbbing with life-energy, is full of visible and invisible lives and entities of the objective and subjective worlds. Hence the injunction of *The Voice of the Silence*: "Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void." As this is studied, meditated and reflected upon, the One Reality, the Root and the Source of all manifestation, is perceived within the manifested aspects of the One Life. It is stated in *The Secret Doctrine*:

The first lesson taught in Esoteric philosophy is, that the incognizable Cause does not put forth evolution, whether consciously or unconsciously, but only exhibits periodically *different aspects of itself* to the perception of *finite Minds*. (II,487)

Herein lies the clue to the understanding of unity in diversity.

The finite mind of man has to be elevated, purified and refined so as to realize the incognizable Cause through its different aspects. The manifestation of different aspects takes place not in a haphazard manner, but accurately, proportionately and harmoniously. As stated in *Isis Unveiled*: "Pythagoras taught that the entire universe is one vast system of mathematically correct combinations. Plato shows the deity *geometrizing*." (I, 318)

Accurate proportions and harmonious combinations make nature not only beautiful but divine. The rotation of the earth is as precise and accurate as its revolution round the sun. Were it not for this precision, sunrise would not always be seen in the east and sunset in the west. The heavenly bodies move in their places and change their positions accurately. How beautifully precise are the patterns in crystals, the petals of a flower or the veins of a leaf! Who taught the bees to make the hexagonal cells for collecting honey? With what compass do they draw and take measurements? The birds show a sense of proportion in building their nests, and, soaring heavenwards, sing divine melodies. So the whole of nature is one vast picture of divine light and life moving accurately in space.

Human beings try to follow this law of precision along certain lines. An architect making a plan will have accurate measurements and will construct a building accordingly. Examples can be multiplied, but are usually limited to the physical plane only. It is difficult to practise the deeper aspect of this principle, the aspect of Truthfulness. Why? Sri Krishna teaches in the Fifth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "The truth is obscured by that which is not true, and therefore all creatures are led astray." Truth, the one incognizable Cause, is hidden by the spectacular pageant of Its ever-changing aspects, and the majority of human beings are glamoured by it, get involved in it, bound by it, creating misery and suffering for themselves and others. Nothing wrong with the pageant; it is the dance—*lila*—of the One Life provided for our knowledge and experience, progress and unfoldment. H.P.B. says in one place:

Instead of truth and sincerity, we have propriety and cold,

cultured politeness; in one plain word, *dissembling*. Falsification on every plane; falsification of moral food and the same falsification of eatable food. *Margarine* butter for the soul, and margarine butter for the stomach; beauty and fresh colours without, and rottenness and corruption within.

Because of such a state of human society, the motto adopted for the present Theosophical Movement was: "There is no Religion higher than Truth." As the word "religion" means that which binds or unites, Truth is the one source of inspiration in daily life for establishing unity, harmony and peace. Then universal brotherhood becomes a fact, because all aspects of the One Life are interrelated and interdependent. The statesmen and politicians, the thinkers and writers of different countries talk of one united world, but because the metaphysical concept of the unity of the One Life as the source and root of all is not perceived, because their ideas are not based on eternal verities, they fail again and again or succeed only partially. H.P.B. in her own graphic way gives the concept of the One in the many, and the many in the One, showing forth accuracy in the Universe.

As the foetus develops amidst the *liquor amnii* in the womb, so the Earths germinate in the universal ether, or astral fluid, in the womb of the Universe. These cosmic children, like their pigmy inhabitants, are at first nuclei; then ovules; then gradually mature; and becoming mothers, in their turn, develop mineral, vegetable, animal, and human forms. From centre to circumference, from the imperceptible vesicle to the uttermost conceivable bounds of the Kosmos, those glorious thinkers, the Occultists, trace cycle merging into cycle, containing and contained in an endless series. The embryo evolving in its pre-natal sphere, the individual in his family, the family in the state, the state in mankind, the Earth in our system, that system in its central universe, the universe in the Kosmos, and the Kosmos in the ONE CAUSE...thus runs *their* philosophy of evolution. (*S.D.*, II, 188-89)

Realization comes from dwelling upon the truth to be realized. It will take us not only nearer Truth, but also nearer the bearers of

the torch of Truth, because they themselves are the embodiments of Truth. They live and labour in the world to guide the faltering footsteps of the pilgrims Godwards. Having passed the midway point of its evolutionary march, it behooves mankind to live according to the rules and principles of Life which would help it to reach the goal safely. Motion, space and time are symbols given us to meditate upon God, the God within and the God without. They form the three lines of an equilateral triangle whose apex is merged in the incognizable Cause.

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THERE are nowadays many professors of occultism, just as years ago there was a numerous brood of those who pretended to know about the philosopher's stone. Both, however, were and are learned chiefly in repeating what they heard of as occultism, with no substance or reality underneath all the profession. Now, as then, the mere incidentals of the true occultist's practice are thought of, spoken about, and pursued. Phenomena or the power to produce them constitute the end and aim of these searchers' efforts. But seek as we may, we will not find among them real knowledge, real experience, true initiation. Being on the wrong path, deluded by false light, they cannot do aught but mystify, annoy, and deceive those who put their trust in them. During the days of Rosicrucian fame there was some excuse for the mass of seekers, but since the old Hindu works have become gradually known to everyone, that exculpation is at an end; for on every hand the note of warning is sounded, and everywhere are signs that show in what direction lies the true path. Particularly is this so in that wonderful book, the *Bhagavad-Gita*. In it, however void of phenomena, however unattractive in respect to bait for psychic emotion, it points out the way, declares the mystic science, true devotion, right action.

— W. Q. JUDGE

## OUR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

WHY are we told to "look not behind"? Why, in the Old Testament, is Lot's wife told not to look behind her? Why are we told not to try to get advance knowledge of the future? And why are we told to watch events and to plan with an eye to the future? What does it mean when it is said that to know the time element between cause and effect is to know Karma?

Our main difficulty in acting or in planning for action is that we view the future as merely an extension of the present. That is to say, we plan what we should do in the future while looking at that future in terms of the present. Actually, the future is unknown to us in the present. Hence, if we plan an action that fits the present environment but has to be done in a future environment that is unknown to us, it will not produce the effect we seek, for the future is the effect of myriads of causes sown in the past, and these we do not know. This is why adaptability has to be cultivated. What makes for adaptability? Right motive. Given the right motive for action, details will easily be adapted to the conditions in which the action is to take place.

Let us take an analogy. We have a friend with whom we are in complete sympathy and accord; our likes and dislikes are similar; our attitude towards life is the same. We separate for ten years and then arrange to meet again. Both of us look forward to the reunion and the picking up again of the old threads. But what often happens? Life has dealt differently with both of us; perhaps either or both of us have hardened through circumstances. The happenings of life have altered us both; both have acquired new knowledge and experience along different lines. Maybe even our motives have changed. The tie that bound us in the past no longer binds us now. If we do not try to adapt ourselves to the changed conditions, the friendship is over. To recall to the mind our friend as he was, is of no use. *He* no longer exists. We will have to reorient our attitude and adapt ourselves to our friend as he now is.

The same is true in our Theosophical work. We have the norm—the same Teaching, the same Object, the same Original Impulse.

But is not any adaptation (not alteration) expected of us? Yes, it is. Science has taken enormous steps forward, and even our languages have grown richer with new words for new things discovered. Have we any help in Theosophy for the thinking man and the young of today who are interested in new developments? If we have in our Philosophy all that can be given out at this time, then there must be help along the scientific line, and those students whose vocation takes them in that field have a great responsibility for bringing forward what Theosophy teaches along this line. This is not a field for every student because it is a specialized field. There are many statements about science in *The Secret Doctrine* and elsewhere, which are of permanent value and are known to all earnest students, but what is meant is that we need students who can bring out just what the relationship is between those statements and present discoveries, for the mutual benefit of other students and the world of science. Can a rocket reach the distant worlds? Can man land on other planets? Is there any light on this topic in *The Secret Doctrine*? It is important for us to know, on the basis of logical, occult principles, what might or might not be possible. So, many statements made in the past need to be examined in the present and hints must be given as to the future. We cannot go on speaking of science as it was in the early days of our Movement. The same with the Churches, and with social problems in the West and in the East, which are very different now from what they were in the last century or even in the beginning of this century.

What about problems such as birth control, or alternative medicines, or nature conservation, exercising men and women today? What is our contribution to these practical problems? Who thinks of linking up, for instance, the teaching of the elemental lives pertaining to a tree with the sensation-vibrations known to science to come from all living plants and trees?

The environment in which we are placed now is different from that which obtained at the end of the last century, but there is in our Teachings all that is needed for the present. The Teachings do not alter. The student must, therefore, search and find in the Teachings that which he can bring forth in the environment of his own life and

mind for the helping of other minds in the present. Hypnosis, extrasensory perception and other psychic phenomena and faculties are other subjects that we should delve into further in order to help the developing thought along the right lines.

The field is large. We must dig into the Teachings, while sticking to the Original Lines, the Original Impulse, and fit ourselves to be the better able to help our struggling brothers.

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THE children of the 21st century will inherit a world in many ways beguiling. For everyone but the poorest, it beckons as a magical empire of Mammon, a madcap consumer's paradise of immediate gratification and express delivery.... Thanks to science and technology—not to mention advertising and marketing—more people are consuming a more amazing array of worldly goods than at any time in history.

But beneath the surface all is not well. Like Oscar Wilde's creation Dorian Gray, who stayed forever young while a portrait of him in the attic aged horribly, the modern economy masks a disfigured planet. The engine of consumption has scarred the land and stained the seas, eating away at the foundations of nature and threatening to destroy humanity's only means of survival....

In the next century the environment will no doubt continue its invasion of public consciousness and the precincts of power. Before too long the needs of the planet will likely become an integral part of decision making, and some new paradigm will emerge incorporating the recognition that humanity depends on nature and not vice versa. This transformation will not come about because of an attack of mass sentimentality or the dawning of the age of Aquarius. Change will occur because every year the distress signals from the biosphere become more pointed and new groups of people come to understand how environmental degradation mortgages their future—and the future of all their descendants.

—EUGENE LINDEN

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

According to an opinion poll commissioned by *India Today*, an increasing number of the young and the restless in the country, as they seek to come to terms with a society in flux, are turning to religion as a source of emotional and moral support. In the October 5 issue of the magazine, Madhu Jain comments on the findings of the survey of people between the ages of 16 and 30, in the country's five metropolises—Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai and Bangalore:

Religion is back in vogue. As much as 94 per cent of the people surveyed said they believe in God. A substantial majority (86 per cent) categorized themselves as very religious. Rituals, pujas and pilgrimages are now the in thing. Among Hindus, one out of two said they had performed a ritualistic puja at home this year apart from paying regular visits to temples and an occasional pilgrimage. Among Muslims, a third of them performed namaz five times a day. And another third at least once. And in all, three-quarters of the people surveyed felt that religion had become an essential part of their lives....

"The youth are beginning to lose their moorings. It's like they're feeling a blast in their lives," observes Father Ignatius Mascarenhas. "So a search is now on for something more permanent, a certain stability."...Parents are no longer role models, hence the cults they follow are not good enough. In the *India Today* survey, almost half of the respondents said that religion offers the best solace today to the problems they face. And a third said they took to religion because of a general insecurity....

Many sociologists believe that spurring the return to faith are problems of identity which crop up more frequently in the turbulent and changing times, specially during rapid urbanization when old standards and morals take a beating....Nor does education have answers which the youth are looking for today. Therapist Rani Raote believes that this generation has been taught to ask questions the answers to which neither their parents nor their teachers can provide...."So it's easy for the younger generation to get caught in rituals for immediate relief

since they can't depend on anything from their family, institutions or any social system."...

Religion is a wand to banish the fear and sense of hopelessness and loneliness besieging many of today's youth. But many who have got it all now wonder if this is all. A question troubles many of them: how do you reconcile the materialism of today with spirituality? Can you have both? How do you grapple with money, power, corruption, technology and an inner quest?

Where will all this religiosity lead to? Theosophy would say to today's youth seeking for their moorings in an unsettling world: Substitute a religion of knowledge for that of mere belief—knowledge which brings enlightenment to the mind and conviction to the heart. Real faith is born of knowledge and understanding, and by wisdom one is purified. Even the prophets and saints can but point the way which we ourselves have to walk. Without knowledge, mysticism would be emotionalism, devotion would be sentimentalism, and unearthliness would result in a total disregard of the path of duty and service of this world. With knowledge, which Theosophy offers, men and women can change the course of their lives, endowing them with an inspiring meaning and a superb purpose.

Unless religions are discarded in favour of Religion, ceremonial in favour of Ethics, priest-reliance and vicarious atonement in a variety of forms in favour of Self-Reliance—doubt, dissatisfaction and misery, the offspring of selfishness and passion, must continue to flourish. The youth, seeking solace and solutions to the problems they face, must take an enlightened line, not only in thought, but also in conduct.

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A wave of new research is making scientists veer round to the view that life begins not at birth, but much earlier in embryonic development—according to some, at the moment of conception. Armed with highly sensitive and sophisticated monitoring gear, Johns Hopkins University psychologist Janet DiPietro and other researchers are beginning to understand more about the life and

behaviour of the embryo and the foetus. *Psychology Today* (September/October 1998) reports:

Scientists are creating a startling new picture of intelligent life in the womb. Among the revelations:

- By nine weeks, a developing foetus can hiccup and react to loud noises. By the end of the second trimester it can hear.
- Just as adults do, the foetus experiences the rapid eye movement (REM) sleep of dreams.
- The foetus savours its mother's meals, first picking up the food tastes of a culture in the womb.
- Among other mental feats, the foetus can distinguish between the voice of Mom and that of a stranger, and respond to a familiar story read to it.
- Even a premature baby is aware, feels, responds, and adapts to its environment....

The roots of human behaviour, researchers now know, begin to develop early—just weeks after conception, in fact. Well before a woman typically knows she is pregnant, her embryo's brain has already begun to bulge. By five weeks, the organ that looks like a lumpy inchworm has already embarked on the most spectacular feat of human development: the creation of the deeply creased and convoluted cerebral cortex, the part of the brain that will eventually allow the growing person to move, think, speak, plan, and create in a human way.

At nine weeks, the embryo's ballooning brain allows it to bend its body....At week ten, it moves its arms, "breathes" amniotic fluid in and out, opens its jaw, and stretches. Before the first trimester is over, it yawns, sucks, and swallows as well as feels and smells. By the end of the second trimester, it can hear; toward the end of pregnancy, it can see.

The new findings will undoubtedly have an impact on the abortion issue, for the essence of the abortion debate is: When does life begin? Though many of the scientists engaged in studying the foetus choose to remain detached from the abortion controversy, their research is bound to strengthen the convictions of right-to-lifers.

From the occult viewpoint, the issue involves considerations

other than purely physical. What are the forces at work in the formation of the foetus? This, says H.P.B., is one of the chief difficulties of the science of embryology which has never been properly answered; nor will it ever be solved "till the day when scientists condescend to accept the Occult theories" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 223). An unknown influence radiates from a focus in the incipient embryo, multiplying and differentiating the cells as it proceeds. This invisible factor is absolute master of the materials and of the future form. There is a pattern body, says Theosophy, which exists prior to the physical, and it is not of physical matter. What forms this "astral body"? Doubtless skeptics will refuse to concede that consciousness is the governing factor in embryology. But they cannot successfully deny it. Till such time as scientists are prepared to go beyond the mere physical explanation of embryonic development, some of the mysteries connected with it must continue to remain *terra incognita* to them.

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Is it heredity or environment, nature or nurture, that shapes us and our behaviour? Molecular biologists around the world are seeking an answer to the question. *Life* magazine (April 1998) throws light on what scientists are saying today:

Does the key to who we are lie in our genes or in our family, friends and experiences? In one of the most bitter scientific controversies of the 20th century—the battle over nature and nurture—a wealth of new research has tipped the scales overwhelmingly toward nature....And yet new findings are also shedding light on how heredity and environment interact. Psychiatrists are using these findings to help patients overcome their genetic predispositions....

Even the most zealous behavioural geneticists admit that genes are not—quite—destiny....In any case, if genes are not commands but nudges, we can nudge back. We are the only animals on earth that can overrule our genes. And we do so constantly—whenever an alcoholic chooses not to drink or an obese person diets....

Bethesda psychiatrist Stanley Greenspan is one of a growing number of therapists who have incorporated the findings of behavioural genetics into their practice. "When a trait appears to be influenced by genes, people assume it's not changeable," he says. "Well, we can't change the genes, but we can change the way genes express themselves. We can change behaviour." ...Greenspan's work illustrates an idea at the heart of behavioural genetics today—that heredity and environment are entwined, always reacting to and building on each other.

In other words, no matter what genes we inherit, they do not by themselves dictate specific behaviours. Our self-effort and free will, support from others and a conducive environment, can help tip the balance. We are not bound; our traits and tendencies are not irreversible.

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That rhythms, or cycles, govern the lives of all living beings has for long been observed by scientists. Some among them believed at one time that plants, animals and humans respond to the cosmic rhythms of the external world, reacting to the cycles of day and night, of the seasons, of the waxing and waning of the moon, etc. Others, however, held to the theory that in all living things there is an internal biological clock, which works independently of external factors. Evidence in this direction has been accumulating for years.

In the magazine *Discover* (October 1998), Mark Cladwell writes of the latest findings on the nature and location of internal biological clocks:

Partisans of the internal-clock theory could cite suggestive evidence. Cells can, for example, keep time on their own, showing regular cyclic activity even when they're isolated in lab cultures, cut off from outside stimuli like sunlight and temperature variations. No one knew, though, how such cells maintained their cycles. "What was lacking," says biochemist Jay Dunlap, "was a plausible mechanism."

Now researchers finally seem to have uncovered one.... Teams at Harvard, Brandeis, Rockefeller University in New York, and

the Scripps Research Institute in San Diego, as well as labs at Dartmouth, have teased out many of the clock's secrets. They have come up with a reasonably complete blueprint for a system that seems, with some variations, to hold true across a wide spectrum of organisms, from fungi to fruit flies to mammals....

DNA is the mainspring in these submicroscopic time-pieces....Each cellular beat of time begins in the nucleus, where special initiator genes are always in the "on" position, making proteins that switch on "clock" genes in another region of the cell's DNA. In turn, the clock genes activate the construction of distinctive clock proteins in the cytoplasm of the cell, outside the nucleus....The whole cycle takes between 22 and 26 hours, never varying, even when the cells are isolated from all day-night stimuli.

While most scientists are seeking for an explanation of the timing mechanism within living beings at the biochemical level, perhaps the more intuitive among them may be led toward a non-mechanistic theory of causation. Where there is life there is consciousness or intelligence, and as life is everywhere, so is consciousness-intelligence. "Where is that daring man," asks *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 277 fn.), "who would presume to deny to vegetation and even to minerals a consciousness of their own?" All he can say is, that this consciousness is beyond his comprehension." Every atom is an "independent entity" and every cell a "conscious unit." H.P.B.'s article "Psychic and Noetic Action" (reprinted in *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*) throws further light on this question of the cell's consciousness and memory—or call it instinct.

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The contemporary world has seen a mind-boggling revolution in science and technology. There has also been an upswing in the economic development of some countries. The setting up of the United Nations Organization with its auxiliary agencies has been another significant feature of the contemporary world. Freedom from war was not the only aim; freedom from hunger, disease and ignorance was also sought. So was all-round social and economic

development. And with a view to making the international system more equitable and just, quite a few high-level commissions were appointed.

In spite of all these measures and advances, all is not well with the present-day world. Jagmohan, a Lok Sabha M.P., lays his finger on the cause and suggests a cure (*The Times of India*, October 7):

Why, with phenomenal knowledge and skill at mankind's command, should things be falling apart? Why, despite unprecedented affluence in the present-day world, should there be widespread hunger, disease and death? Why are the UN and its agencies failing to attain their objective? Why, in spite of repeated warnings, is ecological disequilibrium growing? And why are political and economic ideologies unable to provide solutions?

Clearly, the current complexities and contradictions have arisen because the post-world-war world has continued to be guided by old attitudes, values and reflexes, because the Earth is not being viewed as an integral part of a cosmic web; and because the sea, the soil, the forests, the clouds, the mountains and the teeming millions are not being treated as intermeshed items of the same organic entity.

The world's dominant powers refuse to take a holistic view of reality and help develop a system in which the requirements of body, mind, intellect and soul are integrated in a balanced and harmonious pattern and in which human societies function, not as separate, but as the complementary and mutually reinforcing unity of the same universe. They do not understand that if one or two aspects of the human personality or one or two arenas of human society alone are catered to, or are not accompanied by a proportionate advance in complementary spheres, then negative results will accrue. For example, as we know, knowledge, a desirable item in itself, cannot bring happiness or harmony unless accompanied by a corresponding advancement in the spiritual field. As Bertrand Russell puts it, "Unless man increases in wisdom, increase in knowledge will be increase in sorrow." The *Gita* elucidates the same phenomenon: The mind that runs out, following the pull of the senses, gets despoiled of

its wisdom and is lost, like a ship on the ocean in the gale. But the self-controlled and self-regulated man, on the other hand, freed from selfish desire and anger, attains tranquillity.

If the world genuinely wants to replace the contemporary scientifically, technologically and materially advanced, but socially and morally retarded, civilization by a truly just, humane and enlightened civilization, then it has to include integral humanism in the core of its ideology and work for the development of integrated, balanced and harmonious individuals, societies and states, operating within an international order which is organized on mutual understanding and an underlying unity.

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FACED with the challenge of establishing genuine world peace and preserving the bountiful earth, what can we do? Beautiful words are not enough. Our ultimate goal should be the demilitarisation of the entire planet. If it were properly planned and people were educated to understand its advantages, I believe it would be quite possible. But, if we are to have the confidence to eliminate physical weapons, to begin with some kind of inner disarmament is necessary. We need to embark on the difficult task of developing love and compassion within ourselves. Compassion is, by nature, peaceful and gentle, but it is also very powerful. Some may dismiss it as impractical and unrealistic, but I believe its practice is the true source of success. It is a sign of true inner strength. To achieve it we do not need to become religious, nor do we need any ideology. All that is necessary is for us to develop our basic human qualities....

We all want to live a good life, but that does not mean just having good food, clothes, and shelter. These are not sufficient. We need a good motivation: compassion, without dogmatism, without complicated philosophy, just understanding that others are our human brothers and sisters and respecting their rights and human dignity. That we humans can help each other is one of our unique capacities.

—H. H. THE DALAI LAMA