

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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"FRUITS MEET FOR REPENTANCE"

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THE forerunner of Jesus, according to the New Testament, was John the Baptist. Jesus and many others are said to have come to John to be baptized in the River Jordan. And he said to some of them, Pharisees and Sadducees: "Bring forth...fruits meet for repentance." Are not these words a statement of the Law of Karma which we should do well to ponder?

What man or woman is there who is not conscious of having now and then indulged in unbrotherly conduct or hurtful speech that made another feel diminished in his self-respect? And who has not, on more than one occasion, had unkind feelings or indulged in mental if not verbal condemnation of another or of many others? Even if one can in good conscience plead not guilty to all these charges, can he claim never to have been inactive in a deed of mercy, the need for which had, under Karma, come to his attention? And never to have failed, when he heard an innocent person slandered, to come to his defence against unjust attack? Yet we are told that he who fails to do the latter, as he would undertake his own defence, is no Theosophist; and that "inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin."

We who are so fortunate as to have found Theosophy and have responded to its Teachings, sadly recognize that we have fallen far short of the ideal those Teachings set before us, and we resolve to

try to sin no more. We feel sincerely sorry for the wrongs that we have done, and it is with a sense of relief that we come upon Mr. Judge's injunction in *Letters That Have Helped Me* to dismiss the past and his statement that "regret is productive only of error."

Of course we should not dwell upon past failures, lest we strengthen the weaknesses that caused them. But let us not overlook the fact that positive right efforts in the present are very necessary to counteract or mitigate, as far as in us lies, the effects of evil causes sown. When our account book shows that we are "in the red," we know that things are not adjusted by turning a new leaf.

If we have neglected duties, whether congenital or self-assumed, we must as far as possible discharge them now. If parents have been treated by us with less than the respect and gratitude which was their due, we must make up for this as far as possible, with generous consideration for them and with loving care.

If restitution of ill-gotten gains from any source is possible, we shall do well to make it. If in ignorance and out of self-importance and the love of creating a sensation we have passed along a story which we have since learned was slanderous, we should admit our error and as far as possible correct the calumny. And if we have in the past been swayed by personal distinctions of race or creed or caste, sex or condition, in ignorance that all these pertain but to the outer garments of the soul, we need to cultivate the sense of spiritual unity that will make us see a brother or a sister in everyone we meet, whether much older in experience than ourselves or younger.

The motive, however, even for redressing wrongs we have committed, must not be that we may have an easy conscience, but that, for the sake of all, the balance that we have disturbed may be restored by mitigating for others, as far as we are able, some of the effects upon them of our wrong actions.

For, the wrongs done by us have affected more people than those who at the moment felt them most. Madame Blavatsky writes:

...every physical action has its moral and everlasting effect.

Hurt a man by doing him bodily harm; you may think that his pain and suffering cannot spread by any means to his neighbours, least of all to men of other nations. We affirm *that it will*,

in good time. Therefore, we say, that unless every man is brought to understand and accept *as an axiomatic truth* that by wronging one man we wrong not only ourselves but the whole of humanity in the long run, no brotherly feelings such as preached by all the great Reformers, pre-eminently by Buddha and Jesus, are possible on earth. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 46-7)

To some, confession to their priest of wrongs that they have perpetrated gives a specious temporary sense of relief from the weight of guilt, the feeling that now the slate is clean for making a fresh start. A fresh start can always be attempted, but it is idle to expect that the past can be blotted out. Well for those who resolve aright for the future; well for us all if they persevere; but the great Law will not, cannot, suspend its action!

It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter-true
Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs;
Times are as nought, tomorrow it will judge,
Or after many days.

It is not wise to be always analysing our faults and failures, having once seen them clearly and traced them to their cause. To regret *is* waste of energy. If we endeavour to use all our energy in the service of Theosophy, we shall find ourselves rising above our limitations, as a weak muscle is made strong by proper exercise. Occasional lapses there may no doubt be, but progressively our weaknesses and temptations will lose their power to drag us down. While we do have to face wrong tendencies and fight them when they show themselves, our strength for such a struggle will increase with our devotion and unselfishness.

Unless we make strong efforts in the right direction, however, the evil seeds sown in the past are sure some day to sprout and, if the weeds that spring up from them are allowed to grow unchecked, they will inevitably bear more seeds of evil in their turn. Such weeds must either be pulled up by the roots, at whatever cost in present effort, or else be starved out by our planting of wholesome seedlings round them in such profusion that the soil denies the weeds its sustenance.

But if every action, mental, moral or physical, brings its due reaction, one of the "Aphorisms on Karma" states encouragingly that

the effects may be counteracted or mitigated by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another, and then the resulting effects represent the combination and interaction of the whole number of causes involved in producing the effects.

But, if we can see some improvement in our self of today over that of yesterday, let it not make us feel overconfident or, above all, that we are not as other men.

Remember, O disciple, that great though the gulf may be between the good man and the sinner, it is greater between the good man and the man who has attained knowledge; it is immeasurable between the good man and the one on the threshold of divinity. (*Light on the Path*, pp. 18-19)

It is recorded that when Father Damien—the noble Belgian priest whom H.P.B. called "a true Theosophist," who went to live with the wretched and neglected lepers on the lonely island of Molokai—first contracted, from the sufferers to whom he ministered, their dread disease, he intimated the fact very simply to his fellow-sufferers. He used in his Sunday sermon the revealing words, "We lepers."

That attitude we have to be prepared to take towards all our brothers and sisters, groping beside us towards the light; for, compared to the Masters' stainless purity, what are we but sinners all? We dare not "stand aside from the bad man or the foolish man....The self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of mire."

Theosophy recognizes no vicarious atonement, which it brands as a pernicious doctrine, but each can and must, by his present attitude and actions, atone as far as possible for his own past shortcomings. We must devote our aim and efforts to the performance of "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)

The real Theosophist, Madame Blavatsky wrote, "in every

conceivable case...must be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow-men."

Such are some of the "fruits meet for repentance" which we shall do well to bring forth before seeking instruction in the mysteries, whether those of the plane of matter, symbolized by water, with which John, a non-initiated ascetic, baptized, or "the 'FIRE' Wisdom of the true gnosis or the *real spiritual* enlightenment," which only an Initiate of the higher mysteries can reveal. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 566)

THE theosophical movement was a necessity of the age, and it has spread under its own inherent impulsion, and owes nothing to adventitious methods. From the first it has had neither money, endowment, nor social or governmental patronage to count upon. It appealed to certain human instincts and aspirations, and held up a certain lofty ideal of perfectibility, with which the vested extraneous interests of society conflicted, and against which these were foredoomed to battle. Its strongest allies were the human yearnings for light upon the problem of life, and for a nobler conception of the origin, destiny, and potentialities of the human being. While materialism and its congener, secularism, were bent upon destroying not only theology and sectarian dogmatism, but even the religious conception of a diviner Self, theosophy has aimed at uniting all broad religious people for research into the actual basis of religion and scientific proofs of the existence and permanence of the higher Self. Accepting thankfully the results of scientific study and exposure of theological error, and adopting the methods and maxims of science, its advocates try to save from the wreck of cults the precious admixture of truth to be found in each. Discarding the theory of miracle and supernaturalism, they endeavour to trace out the kinship of the whole family of world-faiths to each other, and their common reconciliation with science.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

LESSONS OF REINCARNATION

IN one school of Indian Philosophy, it is taught that Spirit is like a lame man who cannot walk, and Matter is like a blind man who cannot see. Separated, they cannot function; united, they can. So Spirit or *Purusha* mounts on the shoulders of Matter or *Prakriti*; Spirit tells Matter where to go, and Matter carries Spirit to the destination both are bound for. The story illustrates the Law of Unison and Interdependence, both metaphysically and ethically. Though we may be blind, if we lend our services to the lame and accept the latter's gift of sight, we can move forward on the path of growth.

There are various constituents of our being, many principles which compose every man—man of matter and man of Spirit, man visible and man invisible. The source of the Soul is Spirit; the source of the body is Matter. There is but One Universal Spirit from which many Spiritual Entities, Eternal Pilgrims, emanate—One *Paramatma* and many *Atma-Buddhis*; One *Ahura Mazda* and many *Fravarshis*. Just as there are innumerable rays of the One Sun, so are there innumerable Spiritual Entities from the One Impartite Self or Spirit.

But Spirit is not Soul: Human Soul is the Thinker, *Manas*, or *Manushya*, from which the English word "Man" is derived. He is the owner and evolver of mind, the instrument of thought. But he is not matter either, for matter is our body of flesh and blood, of senses and organs of action. *Manas*, the Human Soul or the Human Ego, is the Thinker and has a dual aspect; he partakes of both Spirit and matter and is their connecting link. As Spirit he is the Thinker, the Ego, the Soul; as matter he is mind, the instrument of thought. As *Manas* he is immortal, deathless; as mind he is ever-changing, ever-growing, ever-evolving. In understanding the process of reincarnation, how it all happens, what it is that happens, we must bear in mind these three factors: Spirit, the Eternal Pilgrim; Human Soul or *Manas*, a duad of Thinker and his instrument of mind; and finally matter which builds the body of flesh.

The Human Soul, or *Manas*, is called the reincarnating Ego, the

Individuality. The Spirit is the Higher Self; the Human Soul or Individuality is the Inner Ego; and the body represents the personality, the mask, and is called the man of flesh, the outer man, the lower man. The Human Soul in turn is dual: the Thinker, he who ideates and is drawn close to the Human Spirit; and mind, the assembly of ideas or thoughts, constantly changing, which is fed by the man of matter, by the senses and organs of action.

Perhaps our understanding would be greatly facilitated if we were to examine ourself in reference to these three constituents of our being. Let us begin with the body, the lower man. In it and through it certain processes take place. First, we say, "I am well, I am ill"; "I am fatigued, I am rested," and so forth. We are speaking of ourself as the body: "I have a headache"; "I am hungry"; "I have overeaten." Next, we say, "I feel bad about this," or, "I am happy about that." We are identifying ourself with our feelings and desires. But they too are always changing. Our feelings of likes and loves for friends when we were at school—where are they now? Either they have evaporated, or they have undergone a complete change. Thirdly, we say, "I think this ought to be so"; "I don't think you are right." (How good it would be if from time to time we would take the position, "I don't think *I* am right"!) We know that our opinions, views, ideas undergo a constant change.

This ever-changing self is the lower self, the mortal self. Body changes and dies; feelings change and die; thoughts change and die. And here we should examine cursorily the question so many ask: "Why don't I remember my past life?" The answer is—of which "I" are we speaking? Ordinarily, when we speak of ourself as a person, that entity is *not* immortal. The person dies; the personality is a mask. What remains of all our bodily experiences, of all our loves and hates, of all our thoughts and cogitations? Memory—not ordinary brain-memory of details, but abstract memory. The grammar we learnt in school enables us to speak and write correctly, though we have forgotten the rules. The geometry we learnt enables us to reason, to be logical, in proportion as we did not cram the theorems but understood and mastered them. Similarly, the love we gave in the past, the hatred we indulged in, has given us greater

power to like and dislike.

So we, as Soul, are dual: as Thinker or Manas we are immortal; as mind, the assemblage of thoughts, feelings, words and deeds, we are mortal. The Soul in us is ever the same, the mind in us ever new. In this lies the mystery of memory and reincarnation.

We have first to learn this lesson. When we say, "I, Mr. so-and-so," generally it is to the mortal or the changing lower self or personality we are making a reference. But mortal existence is *not* useless. Without it, there would be no evolution. That lower self is like the blind man, but he can walk; he is as important as the Soul who can see, but who is lame. The Inner Ego has sight; Manas, the Thinker, can see, but it is his material vehicle of thoughts, feelings, words and deeds which can move, and the seeing but lame Soul must mount on the shoulders of the blind lower man who has locomotion. Body needs Soul as much as Soul needs body.

So the first practical lesson of reincarnation is the recognition that both body and Soul, the lower self and the Inner Ego, the personality which is but a mask and the Individuality, the Immortal Being, are necessary. Therefore we have to learn to give proper values to Soul and body. This giving of proper values is a long, long process which we call evolution. The doctrine of reincarnation is a mighty teaching, which once grasped enables us to give a new value to all we see and hear, all we feel and think, all we say and do.

In the ordinary world, where reincarnation is not acted upon, people attach a greater value to senses and their objects, to personal feelings and personal opinions. This is the condition of the blind man who does not know what he is about. Are we not all blind, chasing wealth when we know that we will have to part with it at death, or even earlier because of our folly or our extravagance? Then, are we not just misguided—selfishly loving, possessing, giving and getting a thousand things which perish or vanish? And are we not insane—proud of our name and fame, proud of our knowledge and possessions, when all these are passing and eroding? The one central, ever-recurring lesson of history is that worldly things do not endure, that they are evanescent.

Shall we then discard the body and the things of the body? By

no means. The body and its flesh, the heart and its feelings, the head and its thoughts, are all needed. The *Hatha Yogi* who despises the body is attempting an equally impossible task. If the worldly man is trying to walk the paths of life blindly, the *Hatha Yogi* is attempting to climb the ladder of evolution without feet and hands. Soul and body—the seeing Soul, the moving body—must work together, labour together. We are all blind, walking, running, moving, doing this or that, contriving and scheming one way or another. This is "a mad world, my masters," said John Taylor, and it certainly is true!

Reincarnation teaches that in the midst of all these changes—births and deaths, disease and health, poverty and opulence, folly and wisdom—there is a current, a thread, which gives meaning to life, bestows a purpose upon evolution. When we understand reincarnation, we look for the Immortal Ego, we differentiate between the ever-changing, the ever-passing, the ever-dying, and that which is steady and steadfast and surviving. Without reincarnation, how can we understand what Soul-evolution means? The growth of the Human Soul, the Immortal Thinker, is perceived only when we prick the bubble of this mask or personality, this lower self, whose chief characteristic is change and death.

That is the second lesson of reincarnation. It explains the variegated universe; it explains why we are part wise and part foolish, part ugly and part beautiful; why we possess knowledge of some things and are totally ignorant about others. And, going without, we know why some are born geniuses and others congenital idiots; why some are born self-seekers and others philanthropists; why some enjoy good health while others are disease-stricken. That lesson brings us the mighty vision—we made ourselves. In past lives, we had different masks or personalities. Each of us has had many, many personalities; we are born sometimes in a male body, sometimes in a female body; in one continent or another; wearing brown skins or black skins, red skins or white skins; dwelling in slums or palatial mansions; leading immoral lives or pure and noble lives. We have lived, we have laboured, we have been evolving and growing. We are what we are because of

what we gathered before in the school of Life. This "we" is the Thinker, the Inner Ego, the Real Man, though most of us recognize him not.

Just as all of us eat of choice and knowingly, but very few know how digestion and assimilation take place and build the health or disease of the body, so also living and toiling and moiling as one person and then as another, we garner the food of experience, and unknowingly to ourselves we grow. What makes this possible is reincarnation. Nature's laws have to be conformed to; so, whether we like it or not, reincarnation is certain for all of us. Let us learn to experience intelligently, knowingly.

That brings us a new lesson: if we are what we are because of our past labours, unconsciously performed, let us work self-consciously, understandingly, and make our future as we need it. That means we should cease to act from the point of view of the personality, the lower man, and seek the Immortal within the mortal, the Inner Ego beyond the outer self, the Individuality for whom the hour of death never strikes.

We have an intuitive impress and it manifests as an instinctive feeling that there is something in us which will not die. Let us pursue that instinct to its root. Theosophy teaches that we must practise to separate ourselves in thought from our bodies. This is real retreat, real retiring into the silence. The true monastery or nunnery, the true *ashram*, is within the Heart. There we must go, each one of us, and use pure thought to separate ourselves from all that is low and mean, all that is changing, all that is mortal; and looking upon all such objects and feelings and thoughts, we must note that the Observer, the Seer, the Spectator, the Thinker, is separate, is different. And the moment this vision is glimpsed, we shall see how the Seeing Soul needs the blind body to gather new knowledge and fresh experience, but in that vision will also come to us the truth that we, as Soul, the Thinker, must not abrogate our right of direction; we must not permit the blind but moving lower self to go where it pleases, taking us, the Soul, with him. Without the knowledge of reincarnation, we allow ourselves to be slaves of the blind body; with the knowledge of that law, we move deliber-

ately, with sight, *i.e.*, after due thought.

To conclude: The lower man with whom most identify themselves is mortal and therefore cannot be born again. It is the Inner Ego who is the real reincarnating principle; in him the memory of all our past lives inheres. He is the Seeing Soul, and must learn to control the blind lower man if the real benefit of progress is to be obtained. The Spirit in man is all-wise and all-pure; the Human Soul has to raise matter, and thus he raises himself to Spirit. If we have learnt but this lesson, that Soul and body have to work together, that the body must be guided by the Soul, that our own growth is seen by our Soul-power to control and guide our body-power, we must admit reincarnation, for it takes many lives to accomplish the task. We can shorten the period by acquiring knowledge.

THE *Gita* is a sermon preached on Kurukshetra, which is not merely the temporal battlefield on which the Kuru dynastic struggle was staged, but is the perennial battlefield of life. This is where anxieties must be confronted and struggles resolved, this is where the demons of the soul must be wrestled with and happiness must be won.

And how is this peace, this freedom from the bondage of restless desire, to be achieved, asks Arjuna. In answer, Krishna proposes the path of yoga, a term that means union: it implies the state of changeless bliss that arises from the harmonious fusion of individual self with cosmic overself, of devotion, meditation and action in one flowing movement of being. Offering a compelling and poetic image of this state (chapter 2, shloka 70), Krishna sings: "Even as all waters flow into the great ocean, but the ocean never overflows, so the wise one feels desires but remains undisturbed in his infinite tranquillity."

—P. D. SHASTRI

THE LIGHT OF FAITH

IN the 17th discourse of the *Gita*, three kinds of faith are mentioned. First, there is the faith which is pure, whose manifestation is harmony, rhythm. Next, there is that faith which is of the nature of motion, mobility. The third is of the nature of inertia, manifesting as rigidity.

All of us have one or another kind of faith. Some have faith which is very rigid, unmoving but unrhythmic. Take, for instance, the faith of the ordinary religious person. He never moves from it, never questions what the priests of his church, or the *purohits* of his temple, or the *maulanas* of his mosque say. This faith manifests itself in human nature as belief, belief that leads to dogmatism, to fanaticism. We find this kind of faith in all parts of the world, in all religions, in all movements, including the Theosophical. Just as a Hindu says, "I believe thus and so because it is in the Vedas," or just as the Christian believes blindly on the authority of the Bible, so also there are students of Theosophy who believe in a teaching simply because it is in *The Secret Doctrine*, or in *Isis Unveiled*, or in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, or in some other Theosophical text. This faith is not different from that of the orthodox religionist. The faith of all such is of the same kind—*tamasic*, of the nature of inertia.

The second kind of faith, which is characterized by motion, by mobility, obtains among men of science, among intellectual people. Their argument is that they are not bound to this, that or the other idea or fact or truth; the faith that is in them enables them to move on. This faith, energized by the quality of *rajas*, is superior to the first.

Higher still is the third kind of faith, which expresses itself in rhythm. Joy and inspiration are the two effects that rhythm produces. In comparison with the faith of the mere believer whose basis is rigidity, and that of the person whose basis is movement, we find in rhythmic faith the good characteristics of both, without the weaknesses of either of them.

We have reached at present a stage in our mental growth that

makes our faith mostly of the second type. It moves on. We find it even among religionists, who want to reform their churches. The men and women of our age shift their belief from one thing to another and do not possess the higher faith because they have not come across any subject or object inside or outside of them on which they can rely in all instances and at all times.

If we analyse our own mental make-up we find that our faith changes because we are not sure of the ground on which we stand—whether in the sphere of science, philosophy or religion. Most of us are trying to get new knowledge about new subjects all the time. The faith that expresses itself in our life at the present moment rests on something that itself is unstable; otherwise we would not run after new knowledge; we would seek for more knowledge of the same thing.

What faith can one who believes that he is the body manifest, save that of the first kind? He is a materialist. He ceases to be a materialist the moment he acknowledges that the soul, the real "I" in him, is other than the body. Next, there is the person whose mind is influenced by his feelings, is swayed by likes and dislikes. His faith is of the nature of motion. He believes in his friends when he likes them. "I have lost all faith in them," he says, when he dislikes them, for one reason or another. But the mind that is not influenced by the senses or sense impressions, that is not swayed by likes or dislikes, that is controlled and energized by the soul, the soul being the stable factor, produces the faith that is of the third and higher kind—spiritual faith. In whom does the spiritual man put his faith? In himself first, because he finds that everything changes save one thing, and that is his own individual consciousness. His body changes; his senses and sense-impressions change; his feelings alternate as thoughts come and go. But he goes on; and when he recognizes that fact, the real faith awakens in him.

All those who manifest the first, the *tamasic*, kind of faith are dependent on others. Their nature is inertia. Those who manifest the second, the *rajasic*, kind of faith are dependent partly on others and partly on themselves. Their nature is mobile. Those who manifest the third, the *sattvic*, kind of faith rely on the Self alone.

Their nature is rhythmic and harmonious, producing bliss, joy, beatitude. Hence the great law of Manu: "Self-dependence is happiness; other-dependence is misery."

Theosophy teaches that man can take his evolution in his own hands, self-consciously and deliberately. He can take his mind in hand and train it; he can take his faith in hand and cultivate it.

Can we, when we have analysed our faith as it manifests in our lives, take steps whereby we can manifest a higher kind of faith? Theosophy answers—yes, we can. What is the process? First and foremost, we need to have faith in ourselves; secondly, faith in the Law which governs us and our evolution; thirdly, faith in those Exalted Beings who are the perfect embodiments of this Law. These are the three fundamental factors for awakening spiritual faith. We need primarily a recognition of our soul consciousness, above the mind, which controls and energizes the mind, feelings and senses. People often say that the world is chaotic. If we believe in the real "I" within us, continuous and persistent amidst the changing panorama of life, the chaos slowly becomes a cosmos. The moment we believe in ourselves as soul-entities, we move from rhythm to rhythm, in which pain and pleasure are but two aspects, in which seeing and hearing, tasting and smelling, touching and feeling, are all processes out of which bliss results. All these are but instruments of experience—not instruments of reward or punishment—which bring unfoldment and therefore increase power and thus bring joy.

Let us then have faith in ourselves first and foremost. This enables us to regard ourselves as part and parcel of the Law in which we live and move and have our being, and to recognize that nothing can happen to us that is not necessary for us. The illusion produced by time which separates cause and effect, the gulf in space between action and its recompense-reaction, have to be overcome. Then slowly emerges the recognition of the identity between ourselves and the Law of which we are but a part. This recognition is very important, because when we take our evolution in our own hands, when we begin to make deliberate use of the great psychological laws of self-growth, we are bound to come face to face with a

universal experience. It is what is sometimes spoken of as the "test of the soul," or the "dark night of the soul." It is a condition in which every outer support is taken away and we find ourselves standing alone. What helps us then is the highest faith. Though we may be intellectually puzzled and emotionally depressed, our inner bliss abides because we recognize that we are part and parcel of the Law.

Different people embody the Law differently. Some are conscious of it; others are not. It is logical to deduce that there must be those who are fully conscious of themselves being perfect embodiments of the Law. They have transcended the Law; *i.e.*, they are not slaves to it but are its arbiters; they are masters of it. And hence faith in Masters is awakened.

So, if we want real faith, three things are necessary: belief in ourselves, belief in the Law, and belief in those who are perfect embodiments of the Law. Such faith brings to us in our daily life sustenance and inspiration to go on and on, higher and higher. But people often begin at the wrong end. They want to believe in the Masters, in the Prophets and Saviours, before they have begun to believe in themselves and to recognize themselves as part and parcel of the Law. If one believes in Krishna or Christ without recognizing that he himself and all others are unfolding Krishnas or Christs, he will have a wrong basis to start with and will lead himself from one kind of ignorance to another kind of ignorance instead of from ignorance to knowledge. An ideal is necessary in one's life for the purpose of awakening faith, but the individual must recognize his own identity in essence with the ideal. Why is the Christ not real to many churchgoing Christians? Because they do not believe that they are like Him in their individual essence.

To worship an ideal is to make ourselves worthy of relationship with it. All of us are trying to realize in our lives our own ideal. But we do not achieve success unless we understand the principles that our ideal manifests. If we want to realize our ideal which embodies eternal principles, we must have the roots of those principles in us. The law of consubstantiality works. If our aspiration is to worship the Masters, to become worthy of relationship with the Buddhas and Christs of ages gone by and of ages to come, we must have

within us the substance of which They are made.

There are people to whom an impersonal ideal appeals, while for others a tangible, objective ideal is necessary. The mistake lies in endeavouring to follow personalities without understanding the principles which those personalities embody. It is therefore wise to proceed from the Teaching to the Teacher. Krishna does not ask Arjuna to follow him; he expounds the teaching in the 18 discourses of the *Gita*, and at the end leaves Arjuna free to act as seems best to him. "Do not follow me or my Path," said H.P.B.; "follow the Path I show." And that is the attitude adopted by all true Saviours and Gurus.

Thus we awaken within ourselves the highest form of faith. It manifests itself in human nature as illuminated reason, sometimes spoken of as pure and compassionate reason, sometimes as intuition. It should be noted that what often passes for intuition is not real intuition. Intuition is a high condition of consciousness in which the individuality energizes the mind and illuminates the field of observation at one flash. There is no reasoning, argument, dissension necessary. The clear light of the sun illuminates all objects on which it falls, and the light of faith acts in the same manner. Let us endeavour to awaken the real faith which enlightens our whole being and those we contact.

Out of the dusk a shadow,
Then a spark;
Out of the cloud a silence,
Then a lark;
Out of the heart a rapture,
Then a pain;
Out of the dead cold ashes,
Life again.

—JOHN BANISTER TABB

LETTERS TO A STUDENT

V

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

DEAR SIR AND COMRADE:

It is true that we do not really rejoice, for we have not yet reached that state of resignation, when all is viewed in the calm; if we had, we should attain. But one thing we can do—and we are wise if we do it—that is, to constantly study all things in the light of this philosophy; to know what we do and why we do it, and what it is in us that causes these thoughts. It is useless to make an intellectual affirmation of a thought, however frequently, unless we can transfer that thought to our *heart* and live it there.

I find that the brain causes much of our sadness. Of course much arises from ignorance. More comes in the shape of mental suggestions, sensed by the inner man and instilled from the astral pictures of the dark Thought of the age. At such moments, if we try to go down into the heart, or to concentrate all our attention in the breath, and to *feel* there, we find a sweetness rushing up, a feeling or a sense that is pure joy in itself. It does not take the shape of concrete consciousness; it does not suggest some thing or fact about which we are joyful. It is pure gladness in itself, undivided by objects. It is a fountain of force which flows forth, sweet and strong. *Being* is pure gladness, and, at such a moment, we taste its essence. The more we try to get to this point, and to stay there, the better for us. It helps us, for it develops devotion.

The real value of mantrams lies in their combinations of sound. I believe that there is also great usefulness in embodying some central idea in a word or sentence and keeping it before us. A mantram of the first kind will be found in the words—impressively said—"What is your object in Life?" It rouses and stimulates. I have good authority and good ground in experience, too, for saying this. It awakens and helps young men, rouses them to thought. Another of the second kind is this: "Consider, when thou speakest, whether thy words will promote love; if not, speak not." If we fix this sentence in our minds, we find it recurring frequently, and it helps

develop true fraternity. It is from the Oriental sage, Kapila, and the vowel sounds must be peculiarly combined, for I find it has great force. Some combinations influence some men more than others; the matter is one of vibration and synchronous relation. You know how some sounds haunt us, and with elevating or depressing effect. At this time, a good mantram for T.S., and one which seems to recur with force and to be needed, is, "Blessed are the peace-makers."

At all times I find inspiration and much teaching, if I *concentrate* on this, "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights"—and then I hear an echo within—"The Father of Lights, Father of Lights." Deep thought upon this Elder Light reveals some hidden things. What and Who is this, and Where hidden? To reflect upon it, after we have found that fountain in the heart, gives a new, intangible strength. And then I find that if I try to help others, while in this state, I give them a real aid, which is above my human powers, and which must come from beyond, or deep within—from that Father of Lights, that Elder Flame Primordial. For it gives them new hope and real spiritual aid; to use for another whatever we receive is the secret of redoubled strength.

I do not "infer" anything from your letters. But I answer what you say. We do not always know ourselves, and I think you let the practical disappointments weigh far more upon you than you think you do. If you were to review your own letters, you would see it. We *must* stand alone—in the sense that we get to a point where we cannot convey what we feel, and where no help reaches us. It is useless to pretend to be where we are not. The soul itself has to outgrow certain tendencies, and we only know our minds, and but part of what we call "mind"; our souls we do not know. The best possible plan now is to observe all we do and think, as if done by another, and to study its bearings in the light of the *Gita*. In this way, we come to realize our duality, and that thought when instinctive and fixed helps to form and to develop the astral or thought body, the vehicle of knowledge.

We are not taught how to concentrate because, in our present state, such rules would only injure us, so long as we have not a Guru to readjust us, nor are we self-initiated in the first degree. In

consequence, any effort at concentration, which acts by generation of forces, might generate the wrong ones, and we should develop negative concentration instead of positive concentration. There is a *great* difference. Enough hints are thrown out to help those who have developed the interior power to any degree. When that power is developed, men are ready, and they are taught *from within*. When they are ready, nothing *can be* withheld; so runs the law. But, before they are truly and interiorly ready, they can only develop into mediums and go to ruin. When devotion and resignation are perfect—that is, when nothing but calm arises in the heart; when it is calm to the very depths, and always so; when calm is a fixed quantity, then the messengers of light appear out of the The Light. Until this state is reached, devotion and altruism are our best helpers. Rules to concentrate might be given, but not right understanding of these rules, nor yet knowledge whether we are using them properly or mistakenly.

The Roman Catholic Church has an opposite aim to that of Theosophy. The former teaches her own authority, and so gives all the aids that will bind you to her, and bring you under her dominion through your faith in her. Theosophy teaches that men must grow, and that real growth is from within outward, and so urges you to make your own effort and throws you upon those efforts. The Church teaches obedience. Theosophy teaches development. Hence, we best attain when we learn to look within, and there to get deeper than the brain thoughts, into the *intuitions*, through calm. The way is taught to each from within, and not in hours or years.

Fraternally,

J. NIEMAND, F.T.S.

Don't you see I cannot teach you how to fix *your own* thought? It is for you, by will, to control it. Fix it on what you will or can, but hold it. If you were ready, if you could—you would know of yourself, without any help. *Think* it out; thought will tell you how. Fix your mind on the *how*.

J.N.

DISINTERESTED FORSAKING

THE *Voice of the Silence* defines *Viraga* as "indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived." It is the golden key to pass "the Portal of temptations which do ensnare the inner man" on the hard and thorny way to *Jnana*. *Viraga* makes the spiritual aspirant safe "when crossing to the nearing 'Gate of Balance.'"

Viraga is described as Higher Indifference to distinguish it from indifference of the lower type. *Tamas*, which is the lower indifference, is "the deluder of all creatures." Says the *Gita*: "The abstention from works which are necessary and obligatory is improper; the not doing of such actions is due to delusion springing from the quality of *tamas*." Running away from the field of duty and abandoning the works to be performed is the result of *tamasic* indifference. But the possession of *Viraga* enables one to be in the world and in the body but not of the world and of the body. "Repose on eternal Truth" produces the higher indifference.

Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* (Book I, verse 16) describe *Viraga* accurately: "Dispassion, carried to the utmost, is indifference regarding all else than the soul, and this indifference arises from a knowledge of soul as distinguished from all else." Shankaracharya denominates Right Knowledge of objects as the cause of Indifference (*Aparokshanubhuti*, verse 5). He explains in verse 106 of the same treatise that "The abandonment of this illusion (of form and name) by the recognition of the non-material, ever enlightened Brahma everywhere, is *Tyaga*, honoured by the great." H.P.B. brings out this idea by saying: "The mind must remain blunt to all but the universal truths in nature, lest the 'Doctrine of the Heart' should become only the 'doctrine of the Eye' (*i.e.*, empty exoteric ritualism)" (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, second ed., p. 20). It is the complete realization of the True and the Real in man and in nature that results in the shedding of all illusions, including that of separateness. To possess an attitude of higher Indifference, one must fix one's eyes on that "Star above the storm," the luminous Self within.

In more than one place in *The Secret Doctrine*, we find H.P.B.

explaining the illusive character of objects and of the world itself in relation to the Supreme Reality. A study of pages 39-40, 274, 295-296 and 329-330 of Volume I, for instance, will enable the reader to grasp fully that

everything is relative in this Universe, everything is an illusion. But the experience of any plane is an actuality for the percipient being, whose consciousness is on that plane; though the said experience, regarded from the purely metaphysical standpoint, may be conceived to have no objective reality. (*S.D.*, I, 295-96)

To have knowledge of *things-in-themselves*, the perceiving Ego must be freed from the thralldom of the senses. Only then can it scale the peak of Omniscience.

Whatever plane our 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... (*S.D.*, I, 40)

In view of the fact that everything is relative in this world, the spiritual aspirant has to cultivate a "calm indifference for, but a just appreciation of everything that constitutes the objective and transitory world, in its relation with, and to, the invisible regions" (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, p. 2). *Viraga* is, therefore, the attunement of the senses, emotions and mind to the Individuality (Atma-Buddhi-Manas).

The first two unnumbered rules of *Light on the Path* have a direct bearing on the correct understanding of *Viraga*. "Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness." These rules, we are told, "are merely the phrasing of laws in supernature, the putting into words truths as absolute in their own sphere, as those laws which govern the conduct of the earth and its atmosphere" (p. 35). The eyes are the windows of the soul and the ears are its gateways or doors. Through them comes knowledge of the confusion of the world.

If grief, dismay, disappointment, or pleasure, can shake the

soul so that it loses its fixed hold on the calm spirit which inspires it, and the moisture of life breaks forth, drowning knowledge in sensation, then all is blurred, the windows are darkened, the light is useless. (*Light on the Path*, p. 38)

But it is the duty of the disciple not to allow his suffering to shake him from his fixed purpose. To be incapable of tears is to have attained an equilibrium which cannot be shaken by personal emotions. Such an equilibrium produces the feeling of absolute indifference to the objective universe and to pleasure and pain.

The real actor is the mind. It is useless, therefore, to abandon the outer field of action if the mind remains attached to it. Sri Krishna warns us against becoming false pietists of bewildered soul who keep the body inert, restraining the senses and organs, while at the same time pondering on objects of sense. The inward character of the man himself is the real test. If his inner nature has not changed, he will be the same man and whenever a temptation presents itself he will fall prey to it and his outward asceticism will avail him nothing. It is for this reason that Shankaracharya, in his *Vivekachudamani* (verse 71), insists upon "complete detachment of the mind from transitory objects." With a tranquil mind, one can be both a renouncer of action and a devotee of right action. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

The branches of a tree are shaken by the wind; the trunk remains unmoved.

Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy Soul as limpid as a mountain lake. (p. 32)

The trunk (mind and soul) of the man of *Viraga*, rooted in Wisdom, remains unmoved while his senses and organs move by natural impulse to their appropriate objects.

A *Vairagi* is one who has become physically, mentally and morally indifferent and insensible to either pleasure or pain. He submits, if necessary, to what are called "pleasures and pains for all," but derives neither pleasure nor pain from such submission (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 70 fn.). This ideal is well expressed in

the following verse in the same treatise:

...thy Soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others' woes, as hard as that fruit's stone for thine own throes and sorrows, O Conqueror of Weal and Woe. (pp. 65-66)

The cultivation of compassion for all and of sensitiveness to the sufferings of others is the concern of the true renouncer. Sri Krishna explains what is "disinterested forsaking" in Chapter XVIII of the *Gita*:

Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise. But even those works are to be performed after having renounced all selfish interest in them and in their fruits; this, O son of Pritha, is my ultimate and supreme decision. (XVIII, 5-6)

Viraga, or disinterested forsaking, is "Resignation to the Supreme Soul" which, as explained by W. Q. Judge in *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, "is the consigning to the Divine, or the Supreme Soul, all one's works, without interest in their results."

You can control nothing but your own mind. Even your two-year-old babe may defy you by the instinctive force of its personality. But your own mind you can control. Your own mind is a sacred enclosure into which nothing harmful can enter except by your permission. Your own mind has the power to transmute every external phenomenon to its own purposes.

—ARNOLD BENNETT

WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS?

THE *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, with its questions and answers on the Stanzas of Dzyan, which form the basis of *The Secret Doctrine*, is a book which makes the student roam among many subjects, from Space in the abstract (p. 1) to the "Wheels within Wheels" (p. 149). But through it all runs the insistence of unity in diversity, a principle stated with fine economy of words in the opening verse of Stanza IV of the *Book of Dzyan*: "Learn there is neither first nor last; for all is One Number, issued from No Number."

Some passages in *Transactions* on what H.P.B. calls "the great problem of Consciousness" (p. 28) can prove to be of help to students of Theosophy. Consciousness is the seat of the real life of the human individual, of any being, in fact. It is the essence of the individual. It functions on different planes—sensuous, intellectual and spiritual—and within its deep region there are tracks of infinite variety and number. The study of Theosophy is essentially the study of Consciousness—consciousness as subject, consciousness as object, consciousness as mineral, vegetable, animal, human and divine. The realization of this basic principle is the object the student of Theosophy should always keep in mind, and study of *Transactions* aids him in this.

"All is soul and spirit ever evolving under the rule of law which is inherent in the whole," says W. Q. Judge in *The Ocean of Theosophy*. Though its manifestations are many, there is but one Spirit, one Consciousness, pervading the manifested universe, and in the comprehension of this lies the solution to many of our philosophical difficulties. If we regard matter or objective existence as a modification of Consciousness, a form of Spirit, then we can see that all are parts, in varying degrees, of One Spiritual or Conscious Totality which ever moves forward as a Unit according to the Law inherent in the Whole.

The following statements on Consciousness culled from *Transactions* complement and supplement what is said on the subject in *The Secret Doctrine* and elsewhere:

"As manvantara is divided into seven periods, so is Pralaya; as day is composed of twelve hours, so is night. Can we say that because we are asleep during the night and lose consciousness of time, that therefore the hours do not strike? Pralaya is the 'Night' after the Manvantaric 'Day.' There is no one by, and consciousness is asleep with the rest. But...it exists, and is in full activity during Manvantara." (p. 9)

"Universal or Absolute Mind always *is* during Pralaya as well as Manvantara; it is immutable....It is *absolute consciousness* eternally, which consciousness becomes *relative consciousness* periodically, at every 'Manvantaric dawn.' Let us picture to ourselves this latent or potential consciousness as a kind of vacuum in a vessel. Break the vessel, and what becomes of the vacuum; where shall we look for it? It has disappeared; it is everywhere and nowhere. It is something, yet *nothing*: a *vacuum*, yet a *plenum*." (p. 20)

"The Hierarchies of respective 'Planetary Builders' reflect and act upon the ideations they find planned for them in the Universal Consciousness, the real great Architect of the Universe....The one *impersonal* Great Architect of the Universe is MAHAT, the Universal Mind. And Mahat is a symbol, an abstraction, an aspect which assumed a hazy entitative form in the all-materializing conceptions of men....'Human consciousness' is but a Ray of the Divine. Our *Manas*, or Ego, proceeds from, and is the Son (figuratively) of Mahat." (pp. 50, 99)

"Even on this plane of ours there are other and various intellects, besides those of man, in creatures visible and invisible, from minds of subjective high and low Beings to objective animals and the lowest organisms, in short, 'from the Deva to the elephant, from the elemental to the ant.'...Thus, finding on our own plane—if we credit the teachings of Occultism—so many and such varied states of consciousness and intelligence, we have no right to take into consideration and account only our own human consciousness, as though no other existed outside of it. And if we cannot presume to decide how far insect consciousness goes, how can we limit consciousness, of which science knows nothing, to this

plane?" (pp. 13-14)

"Free will can only exist in a Man who has both mind and consciousness, which act and make him perceive things both within and without himself. The 'Ah-hi' ['Dragons of Wisdom,' Dhyan Chohans] are Forces, not human Beings...conscious in as far as they act within the universal consciousness. But the consciousness of the Manasa-putra on the third plane is quite different. It is only then that they become *Thinkers*. Besides, Occultism, unlike modern Science, maintains that every atom of matter, when once differentiated, becomes endowed with *its own* kind of Consciousness. Every *cell* in the human body (as in every animal) is endowed with its own peculiar discrimination, instinct, and, speaking relatively, with intelligence." (p. 25)

"Can there be Consciousness without Mind? Not on this plane of matter. But why not on some other and higher plane? Once we postulate a Universal Mind, both the brain, the mind's vehicle, and Consciousness, its faculty, must be quite different on a higher plane from what they are here. They are nearer to the *Absolute* ALL, and must therefore be represented by a substance infinitely more homogeneous; something *sui generis*, and entirely beyond the reach of our intellectual perceptions. Let us call or imagine it an incipient and incognizable state of primeval differentiation. On that higher plane, as it seems to me, Mahat—the great *Manvantaric* Principle of Intelligence—acts as a Brain, through which the Universal and Eternal Mind radiates the Ah-hi, representing the resultant Consciousness or ideation. As the shadow of this primordial *triangle* falls lower and lower through the descending planes, it becomes with every stage more material." (p. 28)

"It becomes the plane on which Consciousness perceives objective manifestations....But here we come face to face with the great problem of Consciousness, and shall have to fight Materialism. For what is Consciousness? According to modern Science it is a faculty of the Mind like volition. We say so, too; but add that while Consciousness is not a thing *per se*, Mind is distinctly—in its Manvantaric functions at least—an Entity. Such is the opinion of all the Eastern Idealists....Nevertheless, mind is a term perfectly

synonymous with Soul. Those who deny the existence of the latter will of course contend that there is no such thing as consciousness apart from brain, and at death consciousness ceases. Occultists, on the contrary, affirm that consciousness exists after death, and that then only the real consciousness and freedom of the Ego commences, when it is no longer impeded by terrestrial matter." (pp. 28-29)

"Man is the microcosm of the macrocosm; the god on earth is built on the pattern of the god in nature. But the universal consciousness of the real Ego transcends a millionfold the self-consciousness of the personal or false Ego." (p. 74)

"While all the different cells of which the human body is composed are different and varying consciousnesses, there is still a unit of consciousness which is the man. But this unit, so to say, is not a single consciousness: it is a reflection of thousands and millions of consciousnesses which a man has absorbed." (p. 100)

"What the Christians call the Day of Judgment, in the East was called the Day after Mahamanvantara, or the 'Day-Be-With-Us.' Then everything becomes one, all individualities are merged into one, yet each knowing itself, a mysterious teaching indeed. But then, that which to us now is non-consciousness or the unconscious, will then be absolute consciousness." (p. 148)

It is clear from the above that Consciousness alone *is*, whether there are universes or none. It is the cause and basis of all states. It is the only Reality, the Knower, Sustainer and Experiencer, while every condition or state is more or less a temporary appearance. This is the idea we should always carry with us, that "real life is in the spiritual consciousness of that life, in a conscious existence in Spirit—not matter."

Peace is not a word, it's a way of behaving.

—FELIX HOUPHOUET BOIGNY

USELESS REGRETS

MR. JUDGE quotes in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (Book I, Letter VIII) the Hindu maxim: "Regret nothing." Commenting on this, Jasper Niemand says that "Regret is a thought, hence an energy. If we turn its tide upon the past, it plays upon the seeds of that past and vivifies them."

Shall we then pass through life content with all that we have done, without regret for lost opportunities, for wrong or mistaken actions? Shall we not even notice these, content as we are with our life as we live it? Supposing we realize too late that a wonderful opportunity had presented itself to us and we missed it or turned it down, must we not regret it?

What is regret? In what principle of our make-up is it rooted? It is different from recognition of a fact. Recognition is a mental process; regret belongs to the emotional nature. Why do we regret something? Is it not because our pride is hurt, or because we feel ashamed or annoyed, or because we know that others have lost their faith in us? What good does it do, therefore, to us or to the resulting Karma, to regret anything?

Why do we regret any action while at the time we performed it we believed it was the right thing to do? Are we not reviewing the circumstances in the light of the knowledge and experience we have gained since then, or of our quietened emotions? Therefore regret is useless whereas recognition is important. Through recognition of a mistake we can search for its cause. That cause almost invariably is ignorance or selfishness, emotionalism or pride. Recognition will help us to apply the remedy to root out these bad traits from our character and will prevent us from committing the same error in the future. We should be glad that we have recognized the error, and should not spend energy in regretting!

One other point: we never act alone; our action or inaction always affects the whole and may indeed bring pain and sorrow to others. Therefore our emotions must be transformed from regret to helpfulness towards those we have harmed.

Let us always remember that we commit sins of omission and

commission all the time but often we are unaware of them. So, instead of harbouring feelings of regret when we do recognize the error, let us be glad, for it offers us an opportunity to gain knowledge and wisdom, sympathy and understanding.

Where does retribution come in here? In our effort to right the wrong. For example, if we knock someone down and he is hurt, we recognize our negligence, regret it and do all we can to help. We accept the responsibility. So perhaps we can see that recognition, regret, responsibility, resignation are steps which take in different aspects of our being.

THE student must raise himself beyond "the influence of the pairs of opposites." He must see that these are but the means and modes necessary to give him ever-widening perception, and he must realize that he is the Perceiver and not any nor all of his perceptions. And as he raises himself above that influence, he will find others like himself, and still others beyond who are of a godlike nature—who love and understand; who possess what appear to others as virtues, but which to them are but actions with spiritual knowledge as director; who understand the vices of men to be due to ignorance and not to innate wickedness; and who hence have patience, power and fortitude, universal compassion, modesty and mildness. They know that that which makes for evil can be turned into that which makes for good; that which makes for destructiveness can be turned into that which makes for constructiveness; that which makes for separation and selfishness can be turned into that which makes for unity and selflessness. So knowing, all nature is theirs, every power and element in it are their instruments; not that the relativities of good and evil can or should be destroyed, but that the spiritual identity of all beings shall be realized at every stage, and only such thought and action prevail as will bring about a harmonious progress towards perfection.

—*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It was once believed by anthropologists that all human beings, in every continent and of every race, originated from a single African couple and gradually spread to other parts of the world. New fossil discoveries along the Solo river in Indonesia are now leading the investigators to the view that human evolution began simultaneously in different regions. According to a report published in *Science*, a team led by Carl Swisher of the Berkeley geochronology centre in California has found several links in the chain of human evolution.

Occult teachings claim for man a polygenetic origin. The Divine Progenitors created men on seven portions of the globe, "each on his lot"—*i.e.*, "each a different race of men externally and internally, and on different zones." (*S.D.*, II, 77)

If we regard the Second portion of the Third Race as the first representatives of the *really human race* with solid bones, then Haeckel's surmise that "the evolution of the primitive men took place...in *either* Southern Asia or...Lemuria"—Africa, whether Eastern or Western being out of question—is correct enough, if not entirely so. To be accurate, however, in the same way that the evolution of the First Race (from the bodies of the *pitars*) took place on seven distinctly separated regions of the (then) only Earth at the arctic pole—so did the ultimate transformation of the Third occur: it began in those northern regions, which have just been described as including Behring's Straits, and what there then was of dry land in Central Asia, when the climate was semi-tropical even in the Arctic regions and most adapted to the primitive wants of nascent physical man. That region, however, has been more than once frigid and tropical in turn since the appearance of man. (*S.D.*, II, 329)

Mankind did not issue from one solitary couple. Nor was there ever a first man—whether Adam or Yima—but a first mankind. It may, or may not be, "mitigated polygenism." Once that both creation *ex-nihilo*—an absurdity—and a superhuman Creator or creators—a fact—are made away with by science, polygenism presents no more difficulties or inconveniences

(rather fewer from a scientific point of view) than monogenism does. (*Ibid.*, II, 610)

Anger is the passion of fools; it becometh not a wise man....Anger is the destruction of all that man obtains...and prevents the attainment of emancipation. The sages shun wrath. Be not thou subject to its influence.

Thus *Vishnu Purana* (I, i). Anger, however, has become an aberration of our modern civilization. According to a special report published in *Dignity Dialogue* (December 1996), "there are no national or international boundaries when it comes to rage. It is universal." "It's become such a problem for people, we've had to start groups for anger management," says Harvard Medical School psychologist Richard Friedman, co-director of research at a pioneering stress-management programme at Boston's Deconess Hospital.

What has got people so on edge? Says the report:

If you ask social scientists, one proximate cause is the mass frustration besetting the populations. In this era of entitlement, nearly everyone has expectations that are not being met. There's more noise in our discourse, more jostling for social and economic advantage. "We're impinging on each other as never before," says historian Virginia Williams, Ph.D., who conducts workshops in hostility control with her husband, Redford Williams, M.D., director of behavioural research at Duke University. She feels that increasing urbanization has made it harder to form communities of shared interests, and thus: "We're being thrown together with people different from us. How do you not get angry?"

Indeed, common, workaday anger may be emerging as a kind of plague of the nineties, deadly to those who harbour it and hazardous to almost anyone within striking distance. Doctors have long suspected the emotion was crucially implicated in heart disease, and new research is confirming those suspicions....

The one aspect that does catch popular interest is whether

it's better to vent anger (referred to technically as "anger out") or suppress it ("anger in"). The popular assumption is that anger out is better for your health, but the evidence on that point is equivocal. On the whole, study results have been mixed. Some of them suggest that while expressing anger can provide temporary relief, it may also serve as a "rehearsal," making it that much easier to get angry next time. In short, anger may beget more anger....

Therapists generally agree on three main features of anger treatment: (1) *Enhanced awareness*: Learning to analyse what it is that makes you angry and why.... (2) *Time out*: Says Deffenbacher: "Calling time-out is a powerful and useful strategy, in sports and in life." ... (3) *Relaxation*: Learning to go back into a provoking situation and re-experiencing it, while decompressing with one of several relaxation techniques....

In a new book they're working on, the Williamses will emphasize that what we need, above all, is to learn to listen to each other—to see the world in the perspective of the other person. Learning to listen to each other for extended periods is among the exercises they use with clients in anger-control workshops. "You have to go from listening, to empathy that builds on listening," says Virginia Williams. "Then maybe you can make your way, occasionally, to tolerance." And from occasional tolerance, maybe we could stumble back to some of the lost civility in our lives.

We often suffer much more from anger than from the very thing at which we are angry. Apart from its damaging effects on the physical body and on one's life in general, it is one of the greatest of hindrances for one attempting to live the higher life. Its effects on the inner body are hinted at by Mr. Judge in his "Culture of Concentration" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 18*). He concludes:

There is no such thing as having what is called "righteous anger" and escaping the inevitable consequences. Whether your "rights" have been unjustly and flagrantly invaded or not does not matter. The anger is a force that will work itself out in its appointed way. Therefore anger must be strictly avoided, and it cannot be avoided unless charity and love—absolute tol-

eration—are cultivated.

Christmas is among the most widely celebrated of all festivals, yet how few understand its true significance amidst all the "abuses of merriment," "crass overindulgence" and "gross commercialism"! *U.S. News and World Report* (December 23, 1996) tries to look at the origin of all the frivolity and extravagance associated with the festival:

A series of new studies suggests that the observance of Christmas was never an entirely religious affair....The earliest celebrations of the Nativity were surprisingly late. There is no record of official observance of Christ's birth until the fourth century, when Constantine, a Christian convert, was emperor of Rome. The absence of a Nativity celebration before then, scholars say, reflects at least in part the fact that no one knew for sure when Jesus was born....

Most widely held is the view that the holiday was an intentional "Christianization" of Saturnalia and other pagan festivals. In the third and fourth centuries, the church in Rome found itself in fierce competition with popular pagan religions and mystery cults, most of them involving sun worship. From the middle of December through the first of January, Romans would engage in feasts and drunken revelry, paying homage to their god and marking the winter solstice, when days began to lengthen. In A.D. 274, Emperor Aurelian decreed December 25—the solstice on the Julian calendar—as *natalis solis invicti* ("birth of the invincible sun"), a festival honouring the sun god Mithras. In designating December 25 as the date for their Nativity feast, says Restad of the University of Texas, Rome's Christians "challenged paganism directly." They also were able to invoke rich biblical symbolism that described Jesus as the "Sun of Righteousness" and God's "true light," sent to dispel darkness in the world....

But while there were always people for whom Christmas was a time of reverence rather than revelry, says Stephen Nissenbaum [University of Massachusetts history professor], "such people were in the minority." Christmas, he says, "has

always been an extremely difficult holiday to Christianize." ...Leading clergy, from time to time, tried to rein in abuses of Christmas merriment but usually to little avail....The Puritans, says Nissenbaum, "were correct when they pointed out—and they pointed it out often—that Christmas was nothing but a pagan festival covered with a Christian veneer."

According to the knowledge and the mood of the people, the celebration of Christmas—or of any other festival—undergoes a change, generation by generation. The consumer culture shapes our holidays today, says Princeton University professor of religion Leigh Eric Schmidt, and Christmas now has become a "grand festival of consumption."

Truly sacred festivals, however, have an esoteric basis, constant and universal, and Christmas is such a festival—not the festival of the birth of the prophet of Christendom, but of the Birth of the Sun-God under many names. "Christ—the true esoteric SAVIOUR—*is no man*, but the DIVINE PRINCIPLE in every human being," wrote H.P.B. "The 'Son of Man' is no child of the bond-woman—*flesh*, but verily of the free-woman—*Spirit*, the child of man's own deeds and the fruit of his own spiritual labour."

More and more scientists are now realizing the futility of experiments on animals. To develop drugs to treat human diseases, medical researchers are saying, the ideal subjects are, naturally enough, humans. Animals do not share all our biochemistry, so a drug that works on animals may not work on us.

Not surprisingly, however, humans do not want to be guinea pigs, and animals continue to be used in laboratories the world over. That is why it is good news that more experiments can now be done using human tissue kept in culture rather than live animals. The opening of Europe's first human tissue bank, together with the announcement that a new pharmaceutical company, Pharmagene, based in Royston, Hertfordshire (U.K.), will test drugs without using any animals, is a welcome sign of the times. (*New Scientist*, 31 August 1996)

"We think we're the first company in the world to do all our work on human tissue," says Bob Coleman, one of Pharmagene's founders. Gordon Baxter, the company's other founder, says that a flood of new data on human genetics is making drug research in animals redundant. "If you have information on human genes, what's the point of going back to animals?" he says.

Animal rights groups campaigning for an end to animal experiments see the move as a step in the right direction. One such group, Animal Aid, has launched a donor card scheme so that people could offer their tissue for research when they died. Some 250,000 people have joined the scheme.

It will be a long while before the whole vast testing regime can be replaced. Nevertheless, the first steps have been taken towards a kinder world.

A recently released comprehensive report on the health effects of climate change warns that global warming is already creating more illness in the world. Prepared by an international team of scientists, the report was commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. The experts say in the report that increased temperatures worldwide may be responsible for the rise in diseases such as malaria, dengue fever and cholera. (*Science Update*, October 1996)

"We're not talking about a lot of theoretical possibilities. Thousands of people are dying of preventable problems, which could get worse," Dr. Barry Levy, incoming president of the American Public Health Association, said at a news conference. Millions of people will become vulnerable to the direct and indirect effects of global warming, says the report.

Warnings issued by environmental organizations to governments and industry in the developed and developing world to take the steps necessary to reduce emissions of such greenhouse gases as carbon dioxide, produced in the burning of coal, oil and wood to make electricity, heat homes, power cars and trucks, and cook food,

have mainly gone unheeded so far. Two recent studies in *Nature*, a prominent scientific journal, indicated that human activity is causing a warming of the world, and that may explain why spring has been arriving earlier each year in the northern hemisphere.

"Various health events have indeed occurred recently that might be early signals of global climate change," the report states. "They include the substantially increased number of heat-related deaths in India, midwest United States and southern Europe in 1995, and changes in the geographic range of some vector-borne diseases" such as malaria and dengue fever. In both cases the disease is spread by mosquitoes who thrive in warmer climates.

The solution, the researchers say, lies in "creating an awareness that, in destabilizing the world's climate system and its dependent ecosystems, we are posing new and widespread risks to the health of human populations."

In the next millennium, "the resources that will count most will be intelligence, creativity, adaptability and ready access to the accumulated knowledge of humanity." This was the central point made by the 175 MPs from around the world who met at UNESCO headquarters on the initiative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Participants urged UNESCO to "work closely with the elected representatives of the people...in forging popular support for national and international action." (*Unesco Sources*, July-August 1996)

HEALTH is the proper relationship between the microcosm which is man and the macrocosm which is the Universe. Disease is a disruption of this relationship. Unimpeded reaction of the macrocosm to such a disruption results in a cure, unless the disruption is irreversible, when death becomes the cure.

—YESHE DHONDEN