

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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Nothing of that which does not exist somewhere, whether in the visible or invisible kosmos, can be reproduced artificially, or even in human thought.

—*Occult Axiom*

ONE of the characteristics of our age is a thirst for "something new," "something fresh," "something original." New goods and achievements, fresh ideas, original books, are the demands of the day. More words are put in print than ever before, pretending to be giving out original thoughts, yet in truth but repeating old, old ideas. Most of us are loath to take the trouble to read and reread the thoughts of the ancients as given in the Scriptures of old. We are lazy of mind as well as superficial; therefore there must be constant restatement. The teachings of the ancients, if given out in the old form, are scouted, but if rewritten with a modern title, will be considered.

New schools of philosophy arise in the world; science progresses; religious creeds are elastic and suit the narrow-minded, evolving new beliefs and superstitions. Theosophy, the modern restatement of the Ancient Wisdom, ever remains and people who are always looking for "something new" are not attracted to it. Centred in the ever-shifting personality, they are affianced to ever-changing knowledge. It is the immortal soul of man which has the capacity to appreciate the immortal soul of knowledge which is Theosophy.

The dissemination of the ancient teachings suited to the modern man is the aim and object of the wider Theosophical Movement and of this monthly. We go on beckoning the many though finding only a few responding. We point to the source of Religion, but the many are wedded to their narrow creeds. We point to the fountainhead of knowledge, but men and women find it easier to secure information on the passing, changing and disintegrating aspects of mundane knowledge.

One of H. P. Blavatsky's main objects in founding the Theosophical Movement of the 19th-20th century was to show the absurdity of the vain and arrogant claim that modern man has reached the acme of civilization, that our thought and achievements have vastly improved upon those of the ancients, and that ideas of which the philosophers and scientists of antiquity never dreamed have today been brought to light. In *Isis Unveiled, The Secret Doctrine* and numerous articles that she wrote, H.P.B. exposed the fallacies in contemporary theories that were offered in evidence of modern "superiority."

For her magazine *Lucifer* especially, H.P.B. wrote her most challenging commentaries on contemporary thought and civilization. Her contributions to *The Theosophist* had been largely concerned with the philosophy itself and the work of the Theosophical Movement. In *Lucifer* her editorial articles carried the struggle of the Movement a step further; they were direct challenges to the bigotry of established religions and modern physical sciences and were calculated to shock the complacency of the intelligentsia of the age into an awareness of the contradictions in their thought and in their lives.

There is nothing new under the sun. Failure to recognize that all that can be said was known centuries ago has resulted in the Babel-like confusion of modern thought. No religion, philosophy or science can ever stand alone or be complete in itself, for it is at best but a fragment of the ancient Wisdom-Religion, consistent, logical and harmonious, "the work of generations of adepts and seers, the sacred heirloom of prehistoric times." This Wisdom-Religion is the spiritual soul of all philosophies, all sciences, all religions, all arts.

While schools of philosophy die, branches of science perish, creedal religions decay and disintegrate, and arts transform and transmute themselves, that Wisdom-Religion, which is the soul of knowledge, persists ever the same to enlighten the mind and to elevate the heart of humankind. It constitutes the changeless truth. Ageless wisdom has a voice which is always in the world. Its ideas expressed themselves at one time in Sanskrit, at another time in Avesta, then in Greek and now in English. The language differs, but the ideas are the same.

Mr. Judge wrote in his editorial opening the seventh volume of *The Path*:

The editor...wearies of the eternal printing that goes on, for there is nothing new under the sun and we are like squirrels repeating the words spoken by bodies long since dead which were inhabited by ourselves whom now we fail to recognize. But since this is the age of black on white impressed by machinery, we are compelled to publish so that the opportunity of saying the same thing once more to a rebellious and stiff-necked generation shall not be neglected.

This noble example of Mr. Judge we endeavour to follow humbly.

THE world moves in cycles, which proceed under the impetus of two mutually antagonistic and destroying Forces, the one striving to move Humanity onward, toward Spirit, the other forcing Mankind to gravitate downward, into the very abysses of matter. It remains with men to help either the one or the other. Thus, also, it is our present task, as Theosophists, to help in one or the other direction. We are in the very midst of the Egyptian darkness of *kali-yuga*.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

KARMA IS EXERTION

WHEN Gautama, the Buddha, began preaching the *Dhamma*, he encountered one of the chief obstacles arising from a mistaken belief in the Law of Karma. Twofold was the difficulty. First, the metaphysical and cosmical aspect of the great Law was a matter of debate and futile discussions; there was much of airy speculation, and theology had usurped the place of philosophy. The chief result was the substitution of god and gods for the immutable and infallible Law. From that arose the second difficulty: the ethical aspect of Karma became degraded; people began propitiating "Lords of Karma," forgetting that they themselves, each one for himself, was the lord and master of his own Karma. This ethical corruption brought about the illogical superstition about transmigration, *viz.*, that as a punishment for committing offences, the immortal and divine souls of men and women got incarnated in the bodies of birds and beasts. In studying the philosophical and ethical propositions of Buddhistic philosophy, we must not overlook the important factor of the environment in which Gautama laboured and the beliefs his hearers firmly held in matters of religion. We must keep in mind that when the Buddha taught Karma and explained its mysteries, certain set opinions and beliefs prevailed.

There are two departments in which the operations of the Law of Karma can best be studied. First, in Nature outside of man; in the cosmos and the atoms, in the visible and invisible universe which is vibrant with Life which is Law. Next, the operation of Karma in the human kingdom.

Karma is the Law of Causation. Its movement causes worlds to come into existence and go out of existence. Its action divides homogeneous matter into heterogeneous forms and produces the numerous kingdoms of Nature and numberless forms of life in each kingdom. People must have asked then as they ask now about the beginning of things—the first cause; and superstition and ignorance accepted the theological answer—God caused everything.

Let us dwell for a moment on this puzzle. We have all heard the question—which came first, the seed or the fruit in which the seed

is; which was first, the hen or the egg? The hen lays the egg, but it is the egg which is the cause of the hen! If we view the Law of Causation as a *line*, we come upon that aspect of it which reveals that cosmic process has neither a beginning nor an end. The Buddha taught that we would not find it profitable to dream about this *line* of causation. "Measure not with words the Immeasurable," he said. But he did not stop with a negative injunction. He taught a *circle* or *chain* of causation that we know as the twelve *Nidanas*.

We are taught that there are twelve links in the chain and these twelve are the causes of existence. They pertain not only to human life but to all existence. Whence, why and how any form of life sprang into visibility is explained by this abstruse and metaphysical doctrine of *Nidanas*. Karma, causation, operates in the whole of Nature. It operates in the starry heavens above, as in the world of atoms which produce phenomena below; crystals under the earth and pearls under the ocean waves are formed by the Great Law; seeds sprout, plants grow, trees shed leaves, and fruits yield their seeds—all because of the Great Law.

This is its touch upon the blossomed rose,
 The fashion of its hand shaped lotus-leaves;
 In dark soil and the silence of the seeds
 The robe of Spring it weaves.

(*The Light of Asia*)

Turn from the chain of *Nidanas* to the operation of Karma in the human kingdom. As the result of a misinterpretation of the true doctrine, people had come to believe that because of their sins in this life they would be born again in the bodies of beasts. Underlying this distortion of a fact in evolution, there is a truth; and just as the Buddha taught the truth of the twelve *Nidanas* to destroy the false view about god and gods, so also he taught the fact about the five *Skandhas*, bundles or groups of attributes, to destroy the wrong notion about metempsychosis. What *Nidanas* are to the study of Karma in its universal and cosmical aspect, that *Skandhas* are to the study of Karma as the law of ethical causation operating in the human kingdom.

Leaving these abstruse ideas, let us confine ourselves to simpler aspects of the doctrine of Karma. Karma is the law of exertion. This is the first fact we must grasp. Karma is not passivity; it is never at rest; Karma is active exertion. As perpetual motion, Karma shines in the dewdrop, gives weight to gold, determines the design for every form—always and ever working, from within outwards.

This action or exertion is everywhere present, in all the kingdoms, but in the human kingdom it is volitional action, determined by the individual. His power to choose makes him a free-willed being, and therefore he can fashion his own destiny, make his own Karma, exert himself as he pleases.

Our evil exertions as our good exertions bring forth their own evil and good. This gives us the general view of the Great Law. The oak is within the acorn. The man is within the child. Hunger is within idleness. Sorrow is within avarice. Justice is within dispassion. Compassion is within sacrifice.

We can see now how wrong and absurd is the view of Karma as fixed destiny. We overlook the aspect of motion or exertion which acts in a special way in the human kingdom. An example or two will illustrate the point.

The law of reproduction acts differently in the lower kingdoms: the flowers keep to their parent types; a crow can never sing and a bulbul can never bray; but in the human kingdom ugly and thorny children are born of beautiful and good parents; among humans we do get children who can sing like bulbuls when their parents can only caw; on the other hand, who has not come across asinine sons of wise fathers, who instead of copying their parents bray and bray! Free will and self-determination give a different turn to the Law of Causation which is not visible in the lower kingdoms.

Among large masses of mankind the understanding of Karma is subverted and the evil has arisen by which men and women sit down and say: "My Karma!" when they ought to be moving to improve and change by exclaiming: "Karma means exertion!"

There is one factor, more than any other, that has caused this confusion. That factor has to do with time—the time taken by the Law in producing an effect from a cause. Because all of us are not

able to trace the effect aspect of our Karma to its own legitimate causes in the past, we become confused. We must, each one, remove that confusion from our minds. What strengthens that confusion is the human tendency towards irresponsibility.

Each virtue and vice now present is an effect from a cause, both of which pertain to the person whose virtues or vices they are. Neither God nor parents created our virtues and vices for us, but we ourselves did. Because we are not able to see when and how our vices and virtues in the present arose, because we are not able to trace these effects now felt and registered by us to the causes that lie in the boundless past, we must not be confused. This problem is similar to the problem of the hen and the egg—which came first! Every virtue and every vice proceeds from another virtue and vice and they, in their turn, from others.

What is the remedy? We should try to see the *chain* of causes and not just the *line* of causes. Let us learn how virtues and vices are produced from ideation and imagination, from thoughts and desires. That is the practical aspect which needs to be emphasized.

Karma has two aspects—cause and effect; because now and here we are not able to connect these two, we become confused and reject the doctrine or twist it to serve our own ends and inclinations. The first step is to understand the right view of Karma. We have already exerted in the past and those past exertions have made our mind, our morals, our body, what they are today. Again, now and here, we are changing our mind, morals and body by our present exertions, and as we exert now will be our future. Of these two, that which we are making now is more important. What are we doing with our mind, morals and body? The individual himself uses his mind as the fingers use a pen. The individual himself creates his morals like a sculptor creates a statue. The individual himself is the builder of his body, healthy or sick, beautiful or ugly, for he lives and labours in and through that body. These three constitute Karma from the past; they are also the basis of future Karma. We exert mentally, morally and bodily, and through that exertion improve or spoil our mind, our morals, and our body.

So we are making a new mind out of the old mind that is already

ours. We are fashioning better morals out of the morals that are ours now and that came to us from our own past. We are improving or worsening our own body by use or misuse, and not just old age carries the marks of the youthful activities of that body, but even the new body of a baby has marks of the past activities of the former bodies that the returning soul had once used.

Just as our body, made up of cells and molecules, is full of living organisms, sentient points whose well-being or ill-being is dependent on the wisdom and purity of the one whose body it is, so also our feelings, desires and emotions are composed of living organisms which become nerves and channels carrying our impress. With this teaching is very closely knit the doctrine of the five *Skandhas*, so greatly misunderstood.

The important factor, however, is that our mind, morals and body are our weapons to destroy evil tendencies in us. They are also our tools with which we carve our future Karma, as the skilled carpenter carves the wood, or the jeweller fashions ornaments. To spoil our body, to be careless of it; to be heedless of our morals; to be inattentive to our mind—this, and this alone, is making evil Karma. Neither is poverty evil Karma, nor is wealth good Karma. The way in which we use our mind, morals and body makes Karma.

Of these three, the mind is the most important. A body that is beautiful or ugly, healthy or diseased, results from good or evil acts. Well-doing or wrong-doing produce sorrow and suffering in and of the body. Therefore morals are more important than body, because morals fashion the body through good and evil deeds. But morals themselves emerge from thought. Mind is the creator of morals. Evil and wrong-doing proceed from ignorance. Therefore mind is regarded as the most vital and viable of the three.

Each one of us is chained to his circumstances and these chains are forged by thoughts. "As a man thinks, so he becomes." Therefore mental action or mental exertion is the first step to be taken. But in what direction should we take that step? There is only one right direction—our mind must move to change our morals. We move our mind to do one thing or another—to obtain knowledge like a scientist, to obtain wealth like a merchant, to obtain the fulfilment

of a passion; nay more, we move our mind to give advice and instruction to others, to serve and help our fellowmen. But the very first step our mind should take, is in the direction of our own morals; all other steps, however good they may appear, are premature when not false.

People often complain that their circumstances in life prevent their paying any attention to their mind and morals. The tasks of earning one's livelihood, of looking after one's household, of rearing children and educating them, totally occupy one's time. But in those very tasks, in the sphere of our daily and hourly duties, we need the help and the guidance that comes from Great Ideas. All men and women must seek the company of Great Ideas, and those Ideas must relate themselves to their own problems—their own Karma. The mind of each must seek the knowledge that will help him or her to eradicate a weakness, to kill a vice, to polish a virtue, to bring to birth a faculty. We must learn to integrate ourselves; we must cease to live compartmental lives. We are one kind of person at home, another at the club; we behave in one way in the office, in another way elsewhere. This happens because our mind and our morals and our body have not been taught to work hand in hand, in close co-operation. An understanding of the Law of Karma prompts us to do this. So let us begin to seek the company of Great Ideas—such of them as help us solve our problems.

So Karma is exertion; let us exert our mind to gather the wealth of wisdom that will bring us the freedom of life, the joy of existence, the bliss of the Enlightened One.

THE way gets clearer as we go on, but as we get clearer we get less anxious as to the way ahead.

—W. Q. JUDGE

BELIEFS SHAPE BEHAVIOUR

CREED and conduct are twins, always going together. Creed affects conduct; as is our creed, so is our conduct. At some period in his life every thinking man must establish his own creed, without crystallizing it into a dogma—or remain restless, discontented and unhappy. To mould character, to shape conduct, he must attend to his creed, which, too, he can change and alter according to his will. Change of creed must precede change of conduct. To try to transform our ways and habits, our character and conduct, without a corresponding alteration in our creed is of little value and inevitably the result is feeble.

What is creed? It is the inherent belief, or rather an aggregate of beliefs, of which a person may be conscious or unconscious, but by which, with or without his knowledge, his life is guided. It is his own attitude to the people around, to all things in his environment. Our ways, habits, tendencies, disposition, are all reflections on the surface side of things of an inner creed. The savage with his ghastly habits, the civilized with his refined ways, the materialist with his irreligion, the religious with his faith, the intellectual with his logic, the wise with his reason—all have an inner creed which manifests through their conduct.

It was said that creed belongs to the region of the within, the reflection of which, on the surface side of things, is conduct. We see this clearly proven in modern days, when caste-confusion prevails—caste-confusion in the true sense of the expression. There are more men of Christian creed, for example, outside of Christendom than within it; there are some truer Brahmans in foreign lands than in India among the Hindus; Shudras are soldiers; Rajputs are Vaishyas. Today, unlike former times, conduct, not birth; creed, not heredity, proclaim caste. This is because of the caste-confusion with which Arjuna was so much concerned.

Now the practical value of this is great. Educational reformers, leaders of men and servants of nations will achieve but little if, in educating the mass of boys and girls, or the mass of men and women, they are careless of the creed and attend only to the conduct

of the people. Individuals cannot change their conduct from bad to good, from good to better unless they change their creed. On a larger scale this also applies to societies, communities, nations, etc. Outer proselytism is useless; inner conversion is what is needed, for it affects creed—the basis of conduct.

This view shows the value of creed. We cannot do away with creed, though the sooner we do away with those dividing so-called creeds, the dark dancing shadows of the stable, guiding creed, the better for us and for the world. We must learn to distinguish between the true creed of every fellow-man and that so-called creed which is more or less imposed on him by himself or others. Inner creed changes, changes always, and the faster, the more progressive the person.

He who believes in material science, which teaches us to "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die," is more or less justified in living the frivolous life he leads because of his disbelief in deity, in soul, or in the hereafter, and his belief in the survival—which to him is merely physical—of the fittest. One who believes in Deity, soul and the hereafter must inevitably make, in great or small degree, the law of sacrifice the guiding principle of his life. It is the creed that affects conduct in both cases. Herein lies the value of definite knowledge. It is sometimes asked: "Why should I study Theosophical books and know of Theosophical doctrines, about the different planes of consciousness and reincarnation and Karma, as long as I lead a good, pious, harmless life?" Those who ask this can be answered: "Examine your conduct; this will make you recognize your creed. Question the reasonableness of your creed, analyse it, examine it. This will lay bare before you its strong and weak points; if you are reasonable, thoughtful, prudent, you will insist on congruity between your creed and conduct."

Creed pertains to the Self and keeps pace with its unfoldment. Conduct manifests itself in the vehicles of the Self and keeps pace with their evolution. The Self working in, through and upon its vehicles begets both creed and conduct—creed affecting the side of life, conduct influencing the side of form. Therefore every creed has some truth behind it; all types of conduct have an explanation

underlying them. The crimes punishable by the law of the realm, or sins condemnable in civilized society, are not punishable or condemnable among barbaric tribes. Cannibalism is justifiable from the standpoint of the savage, not from that of the civilized man. The killing of birds and beasts for sport or for food finds justification in the hearts of some, not in the more compassionate bosoms of others. Those who wish to take their evolution in their own hands must therefore first examine their creed and change it for the better, ever striving for perfection.

Herein also lies the explanation as to why the voice of conscience speaks differently to different people, for after all what *is* the voice of conscience? It is the self-made law ruling our conduct from within, in contradistinction to government-made or society-made laws ruling from outside. The self-made law of one individual does not touch others, for each has his own laws, his own voice of conscience, guiding and ruling his conduct. Therefore one's voice of conscience depends on one's creed begotten of experience. The voice of conscience may even lead us wrong. Then may occur our spiritual fall, our intellectual blunders, our mistakes of judgment of which we may not be cognizant. We err because of our creed, which can be made to broaden so as to transform our conduct for the better. Conduct enables us to fathom the strength or weakness, the goodness or badness, of our creed.

When a person is unable to guide his conduct from within, having no settled creed of his own, outside agencies take its place and rule him from without. Those who cannot guide themselves allow themselves to be ruled by the formalism and the dogmas of religions, by the second-hand testimony of men claiming authority. Therefore, the formation of an inner creed in the evolution of an individual marks a great step in advance; but it does not follow that any and every inner creed is perfect. No government-made laws are perfect unless they are based on the high principle of conformity with Nature's laws; similarly also with self-made laws which are creeds.

Let us not be too sure that because we have accepted the Theosophical teachings about man and his goal, about the law of

absolute justice and the spiritual unity of all, and think that we have made the ideal of human perfection and service *our* ideal, therefore we are making our lives conform to the Great Ideal. Most of us have more than one creed because we have two extremes in our nature, the spiritual and the material. Our minds and hearts are dual—impersonal and personal; that is what makes our lives so complicated. We cannot walk in two directions at once. Either the Self of Spirit or the self of matter must disappear. So let us decide what we really want for ourselves. What do we want to do or to be, failing which we feel frustrated? If we find the correct answer to this question we shall know what our creed is.

Reasoning and analysis reveal that all laws and all creeds are imperfect and therefore more or less incorrect unless they are in complete harmony with the divine inward Light, the Higher Self, made known by its works through its one eternal way of action—Law. We should aspire to model ourselves on the divine pattern—intelligently, deliberately and with altruistic motive—but if we formulate a creed which is not in harmony with the Divine Pattern and the Divine Law, we are bound to meet with frustration in one way or another.

THE great quality of *Bhakti* (devotion) is that it cleanses the mind.

Hatred is a thing which greatly impedes the course of *Bhakti*.

Bhakti can be more easily practised by persons in every condition of life.

Pranidhana is that sort of *Bhakti* in which, without seeking results, such as sense-enjoyments, etc., all works are dedicated to that Teacher of teachers.

Bhakti-Yoga does not say, "Give up"; it only says, "Love, love the Highest!"

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE COMPELLING FORCE

Having obtained this finite, joyless world, worship me. Serve me, fix heart and mind on me, be my servant, my adorer, prostrate thyself before me, and thus, united unto me, at rest, thou shalt go unto me.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, IX, 33-34

WHEREVER there is manifestation, there exist life and matter and consciousness. They are in the seen and the unseen as also in the tangible and the impalpable. All solids, liquids and gases have them as also all other states of matter for which science has still no name. They are at the back of all forces and the elements and are in all gods, molecules, atoms and men. In all space, occupied or seemingly void, they exist; and wherever they be, there resides consciousness and therefore force—the power that moves life towards its fulfilment. All these—life, matter, consciousness and force—are the concretized emanations of that which Theosophy calls the Great Breath and which to some is the manifestation of God in its immanent aspect.

When a person sets his will in motion to fulfil a desire, he uses one of several types of forces that are locked up in the aril of Nature. He launches that force towards his target, giving it such guidance and power as he can muster. That force is initially colourless. It is neither good nor evil by itself. It is available to the good person as to the one of evil intentions. The selfish and the vicious draw their energy from the vast storehouse of force, charge it with the poison which they continually exude, and ensoul it with their own particular brand of unbrotherliness. There are vicious entities, both embodied and disembodied, whose power of hatred, lust and greed is so strong that the forces they generate may survive their death and continue to remain active in the earth's atmosphere as virulent entities that haunt and feed upon people. Even in the average person, uncharitableness, envy, jealousy and an unslaked thirst for earthly appetites exist. This means that these people, though they be of average calibre, are creating a vicious brood of living elementals

which they have charged with their unclean fancies. Time and distance are no barriers to these elemental lives which fly and attach themselves to such human organisms as are congenial. They are thus able to transplant ideas across vast spaces, taking their virus of degradation and psychic imbalance to those entities that are vulnerable to their onslaught.

For the most part, the average person is emplaced in his lower mind which through long association with men and matter in their lowest forms has acquired the intelligence, cunning and appetite of the animal. Such a mind is cluttered full with the knowledge and the images of noneternal things. It is wholly dependent upon intellect and reasoning—the two processes which are as deceptive as those that put full reliance on the senses. One who is centred in the lower mind fails just because the instrumentality of the senses and the intellect has not the power to take him beyond the plane of the physical and the psychic. Consciously or unconsciously he uses forces limited to those two planes only; and his falls are all due to the powers generated on those planes of being. When he succumbs to desire, he yields to a force which is psychic and which he either cannot or will not fight. When he becomes belligerent, he uses force with which he is familiar because it periodically erupts around him owing to the natural bellicosity of the animal man. Pitted against such forces and tainted by an almost daily familiarity with them, he has developed a tendency to offer too ready a submission to them and will know no better till the time when the lower mind arouses itself from its torpor of the ages and, realizing its errant ways, bows to the higher mind and vows to follow and servilely obey the behests of that mind. Whence the force that compels a person to go wrong seemingly against his will? Where is it stored? And lastly, what is the source of any force, be it spiritual, mental, psychical, physical, etc.?

Force can only be One. It inhered as Law and Consciousness in the first emanations that issued from the primal source. As life proceeded on its journey towards greater and greater concretizations, that one force had its reflections on planes

ranging from the most subtle to the most gross. This force which manifests on seven planes of being is colourless and is the emanation of the primary One Force that issues from the manifested Deity. Himself a radiation from the One, man is propelled down into matter under the force of the great evolutionary impulse.

As a consciously moral agent, he is expected to use such force as he can draw upon to further the plan and purpose for which his earth and universe were brought into being. He has his own field to tend and harvest to gather, but that work has to be carried out in harmony with the co-operative efforts of humanity considered in its totality. The crop which is assigned to each person is so planned that the yield from his field will supplement the yields from other fields, so that the sum total of the entire harvest of a vast variety of items becomes sufficient for the needs of all. When an individual starts having ideas that the effort entrusted to him does not measure up to his status and is not worthy of either his field or his abilities; when looking at the programme of others he becomes envious and disgruntled and starts neglecting his own, then will he have started a backsliding motion leading to a shortfall in co-operative production affecting all the units of the group. This lesson in co-operation applies not only to the individual but to families, nations, races and organizations. The individual is expected to subordinate his efforts, his goals, his precedence and even his liberation to the joint ideal so that his contribution to the team effort grows with the progress of time. Individual attainment, if it draws and segregates force towards itself, contributes to a diminishing of force available for the joint effort and thus constitutes an act of selfishness of greater or lesser intensity. Ploughing a lone furrow is not exactly a contribution towards Universal Brotherhood. Isolationism in life—religious, social or political—is fraught with great risk.

Man uses force and in turn is subject to the forces released by others. His contact with men and the lower kingdoms subjects him to forces some of which may be sympathetic and

others antipathetic. If a force which is inimical to his nature is allowed entry into his being, albeit unconsciously to himself, he may remain unaware of its presence for long periods, during which time the force may lie latent, to burst some day into a power clamouring for supremacy. During the course of previous existences, the average person has bound himself to certain desires with which he is very unwilling to part. At birth, these desires make up the attributes of his personality (a personal baggage, so to say, of the soul that accompanies it on its journeyings) and go to make up his character. These are the enemies of his own household, since they are a part of him and have staked their claim to be of his company. Besides these, there are the desires which the person allows to take root and grow within him during his present incarnation. These have their memories stored in that particular organ which he has used for either inviting those desires or for getting satisfaction at their fulfilment. These sense-images of the present combined with the traits from previous existences storm the citadels of the lower mind—where there is resistance to them—and enforce submission. If there is no resistance, or merely the semblance of one, they sweep over the person and make him deaf and blind to all else but the gratification of the appetite. The lower mind thus remains a playground of the senses. This same lower mind turns into a battlefield where the person's passional forces, allied to their devilish counterparts from the outer world, muster strong to give battle to any new-fangled idea he may have to convert his body into a living temple of a living god.

The lower mind is the ray and projection of the higher mind. It becomes the profligate, the truant son, when it gets so enamoured of matter and of the desires with which matter surrounds and captivates it, that it turns its back upon its illustrious parent. Intellectually, the lower mind may admit its divine lineage as also the potency of the higher mind (the *manasic* or higher Ego), yet the glamour of earthly joys and woes is so strong that all too often it turns its face away from the light to haunt again its familiar pleasure-grounds of the

senses. It is only when for the first time the lower mind longs for a dissociation from the illusory oscillations of life that it starts its search for the unexplored and hitherto neglected perspectives of human and divine horizons.

The search for the path (it may barely be a trail) which leads to the higher Ego is not easy for the lower mind. That path has been overgrown with weeds and poisonous growths and is littered with obstructions and frightening barriers—all self-raised through acts of commission and omission spread over long and dreary incarnations. These growths and obstructions have to be surmounted or removed and the path cleared for willing yet unaccustomed feet. The soiling substances at one time valued and laboriously gathered, the dirtied and tattered clothing inherited from irresponsible and guilty lives, have to be cleansed, mended or abandoned. This cleansing-eliminating process is no pleasant exercise. Desires are still with the person. True, they are being struggled against and denied approach, but they are none the less there, haunting him with memories, longings, regrets. Is one's devotion to the Self exclusive, his sight trained unwaveringly on the goal? Or does one still have a wavering, shifting quality which makes him crane forward at one time while at other times it makes him steal a glance backward at that which he bravely wants to renounce but which he still misses with a twinge and a pang? Much will depend on his power to resist without resisting, for though the fight is inevitable, he has to make gain and loss, victory and defeat, equal to himself; and he can do this only when he has acquired the power to spring back from the lower to the higher mind at his very thought, even when at the moment he is in the thick of the fight.

The acceptance of the suzerainty of the higher Ego must ultimately lead to a revaluation of life and the formulation of a new code of conduct in both mundane and spiritual affairs. The higher Ego, the Self that incarnates from one life to another, is immortal. Its clothings of matter, both astral and physical, which it assumes at the commencement of a life and drops at each death are mortal. The higher mind can have no consubstantiality

with those perishable parts. It is only the lower mind which is the projection of the higher that can reach that higher, if it can for any length of time paralyze or neutralize the pull of the mortal elements that surround it. If the senses and even the functions of the lower mind have to be paralyzed on this plane, then it can only mean that the paralyzing process should not be such as to bring on a total oblivion, but should be so induced as to carry the consciousness with the lower mind to its conjunction and union (howsoever temporary) with the higher.

The lower mind needs the help of the intellect to devise ways by which the hold of the lower elements can be loosened. The intellect can grasp the injunctions of the Scriptures; it can understand, in however limited a sense, the demarcation between right and wrong, between the selfish and the altruistic. It can be used therefore to extract from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *The Voice of the Silence* and *Light on the Path* guidance suited to the needs of each aspirant. It can lay down a programme to follow, including the practice of observing silence for certain periods of time to enable nature herself to speak to him who comes to her for guidance. But long before any programme can be thought of, the aspirant has to burn this truth into his consciousness that he is emanated like all others from the one uncreate beam and that he cannot, dare not, try to join cliques. He cannot be unbrotherly and expect to taste the fruits of brotherhood.

The lower mind is not of an essence different from the higher. Therefore, because of the oneness of its essence, it will have the tendency to fly back to the higher mind (it is its projection and ray) as soon as it can free itself from the dead weight of material cravings. But then, the first steps homeward have to be initiated by the lower mind. If the desire is strong, it can gather enough guidance from devotional texts to draw up a programme of discipline. Yet, the best practice is adoration, the longing to merge in the higher mind, the devotion to serve that higher mind, and the patience to await that event which shall prove beyond doubt that the way has been found and that worthy feet may now tread that ancient path.

THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL

WHY do students of Theosophy devote so much time and energy to the study of the Three Fundamental Propositions of the ancient Wisdom-Religion as given by H.P.B. in the Proem to *The Secret Doctrine*? Does she not say that the Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable Principle that she postulates as the First Fundamental is "unthinkable and unspeakable," quoting the *Mandukya Upanishad*? Then why should we bother with it?

How careless we are when we read with the sense of sight only! Has man no faculty of mind save that of ratiocinating? Is there no part of his nature which he uses in order to understand life and to become a part of the world in which he lives?

Man feels, loves, hates and intuits. He can aspire and receive inspiration. He can "sense" things through channels other than the five senses that are in use today.

When we ordinarily sense something through our present sense-organs, we begin to think about it, we give it form, for the mind visualizes the impression received. As we try to understand it, we reach a stage where the visualization ceases and we reach the "idea," and, as we go on, we reach the stage of union with the abstract idea behind. We cannot then say that we see or hear or feel a thing, but we can say that we sense it. We can also sense things without having seen them, by the use of the higher senses which are at present undeveloped.

Do we not first learn through our senses and sense-organs? Is not the second stage that of interpreting mentally what we have seen, heard, etc.? Is not the third stage that of understanding what we have seen or heard? A child is shown an orange and asked to draw it, and he draws a round shape. Then he is told to feel the skin, and he draws another round shape with a rough skin. Later he learns about the inside of the orange, where it came from, how it grew, and comes to know that it is food for man. What causes the fruit to grow? Life. Life is One, omnipresent, eternal, immutable. We can "sense" it, but we cannot see or hear it. There are many degrees of understanding Life. What about the intelligence there? When we

begin to grasp that Life is not only everywhere but that it is a "PRESENCE" which can only be sensed, aspired to and worshipped, in the true sense of the word, then we begin to understand and reverence all Nature, or the PRESENCE in all Nature.

Therefore does H.P.B. say that we must grasp firmly the Fundamental Propositions, for without them we cannot understand Life. All her symbols, explanations and summaries are to help us to grasp the stages of evolution from the One Reality, which we must postulate, she says, since we cannot think or speak of it, to the tiniest speck of sand or living entity.

Just as the Three Fundamentals can be reduced to a few symbols or geometrical signs or numbers, from the One or the point, the three or the triangle, and the four or the cube, so can all life be so reduced. We can see this up to a point, for we know that all mathematics starts with the one; the largest computation is based on it, and the most intricate building is based on the idea of the triangle. We have to apply this to daily living. More, we must never forget the immaculate disk, the "darkness" around the Pavilion of God. We must never forget the coming into manifestation and the going out of manifestation, the outbreathing and the inbreathing.

What does this immaculate plane mean? How does the emergence of a universe take place, and why?

Are we not told that there is such a law as that of Necessity? It has sensed our difficulty and told us to visualize in our thought the bounded and the boundless. Whatever we think of, we think of as in space; and yet space remains, whether we think of things in it or not. We know that stagnation is death, that Life is motion. What does motion *mean to us*? Movement of objects. Look at Space as Abstract—the abstract conception of space. Then, to draw us further away from the mental endeavour to limit space, we are given the adjective "Absolute." So that we have as symbols Absolute Abstract Space and likewise Absolute Abstract Motion. There is nothing for the mind to hold on to, yet we sense or know that these conceptions are real. They are symbols of the One Reality.

This is an interesting intellectual exercise, but of what use is it

to us in our daily life? We live in space and in time; all around us are limitations, boundary walls and change. We can ourselves change things and the conditions of living. We can destroy and we can create. We can not only destroy *things* but also our and others' intentions, and lead ourselves and them to do evil or to do good. What use is this thinking of the One Reality, limitless, boundless, immutable and eternal, when we can shorten a man's life, upset the Natural Laws, travel physically into greater areas of space and range mentally through vistas of space and of time? Especially so as the One Reality antecedes all manifested, conditioned being. How does IT affect us, or we, IT?

Did not the people in the cave in the story of Plato refuse to believe that there was light outside the cave, and even refuse to go and see? Think, cogitate, and again think. Are we not always confronted with changes, some pleasant, some unpleasant? What enables us to remember past conditions, experience present changed conditions, and visualize future changes? Must there not be some permanent aspect of ourselves which sees these changes? Does that not make us see that there must be the Changeless as well as the changing? Where do changes take place? In space. Does the space change? Do we not see that space must be eternal, immutable, omnipresent and boundless? That it is unaffected by whatever happens in it and whether or not anything happens?

These ideas, though in reality abstract and absolute, are reflected on the plane where we can experience them. But what brings about change? How can one make changes? By the use of one's intelligence. There is intelligence in all beings, throughout space, and it is One Intelligence. Nature's Laws are intelligent and harmonious. Man's use of his intelligence brings destruction. As he learns, his intelligence blends with Nature's Intelligence and once more we come to the idea of Unity, the ONE. Does not the idea of Unity begin to dawn on us even when we are surrounded by differentiation? If we can glimpse this, can we not take a further step and see that we are ourselves in the real sense immutable, eternal, omnipresent, absolute? Would not this conception help us to see things in their right proportion, to see what is real in the unreal and what is unreal

in our understanding of life? Viewing ourselves as essentially immortal and permanent, can we fuss as we do over the small events of life?

Let us apply the knowledge gained to all events. There is always a choice between different courses of action. If we remember the First Fundamental we shall know that there are never just two courses; manifestation starts with the three. Therefore we should look for that which is above the pairs of opposites; search for that point in which the two merge, the middle path, the impersonal, rooted in eternity, not in the morrow, in an environment not limited to that which we see, but limitless. This long-range view is what we all miss, and hence we act in terms of what we think is present necessity and thus sow wrong actions and reap bad effects.

Let us remember the three, which become the four, making the seven and the ten. This is one of the fundamental laws of the Universe, so it must apply in all circumstances and to all people. It is, then, necessary that we learn this law and its ramifications. We must first learn accurately and then the law of analogy will come to our aid. If we do not learn, if we do not see the pattern behind seemingly isolated incidents, we fail. When we have learnt we must apply. How?

We have the three in us: We have Life or Will or Spirit in action; the heart which is the substratum of all, Buddhi, universal in scope; and the head which represents the Universal Mind. The head must see the universal pattern or law in all. The heart must be made universal; it must take in all; passion must become compassion. Life must be seen as Spiritual Will, which stimulates all activity and dispels *tamas*. The mind gives the power to look into the heart of the seed. The heart thrills in response to the greatest inspiration or aspiration and floods the being with joy; but the suffering of the tiniest insect also sets it vibrating. Do we not see and sense the common kinship of all manifestation? And further, remembering the ALL-PRESENCE, do we not feel the wonder of our kinship with the greatest as also with the lowest? From the limitations of personal affection we proceed to the limitless Bliss; from the separative tendency of "I and mine," "you and yours," we begin to sense the

union of all as we watch the descent from the One Reality to abstract space and motion, to universal consciousness and mind, to the individual consciousness of different grades of being; and then the ascent "homewards," with the aid of those who have gone before and who wait to help us travel upwards. Do we not learn in a small degree that all blends into final harmony, that *we* blend into final harmony? What is that final harmony? The One Reality, so bright that it appears as darkness, where the "spark" is lost in the Flame, in the Bliss of Union. To know IT is our function as self-conscious beings.

How can we know IT when we do not know the Self?

By dwelling on IT mentally IT can be realized. The mind, it is said, is like a mirror which becomes dusty as it reflects. Wipe away the dust of the separative self so that the great Intelligent Universal Ideas or Laws can be reflected through our mind upon Life. Thus will we know our Self by losing our self.

A PROGRESS built on the exploitation of poor people and of labourers is but another car of Juggernaut plus a false nose. One has the right to prefer even a quiet death under the manchineel tree to the progress of the rich and learned classes achieved over the bodies of thousands of poor and ignorant people. The Chinese of California, are they not our brothers? The Irish driven from their huts and condemned with their children to die of hunger, do they prove the existence of social progress? No, a thousand times no! As long as people, instead of fraternizing with and helping each other, claim but the right to safeguard their national interests, while the rich man refuses to understand that in helping a poor stranger he helps his poor brother in the future, and sets a good example for other countries; as long as the feeling of international altruism remains an empty phrase in the air, progress will accomplish no other function than that of executioner of the poor.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE VIRTUOUS LIFE

WE hear a lot about living the virtuous life, the Higher Life. But what *is* the Higher Life? To try to live it, we need to know what it is and to make it vivid before us, instead of letting it remain vague and illusive.

There are two kinds of Higher Life: one leading to *Nirvana* or Liberation, and the other to constant service of mankind through renunciation of all wish for happiness or freedom.

There are also two kinds of lower life: the one *tamasic* and negative, leading to stagnation and decay, and the other a life of positive evil and destruction, leading finally to annihilation—annihilation not in the sense of "blowing out," like the flame of a candle, but in the sense of conscious falling apart, brought about by the very destructive powers that the person used and followed for lives.

We have, therefore, the following divisions:

(a) The good life of the good man who does no evil but also no actual good to others, who pays off his debts to life and becomes free from mankind's problems. He uses his freedom to sink into the bliss of *Nirvana* and cut himself off from his fellow beings for the whole *Manvantara*. At the dawn of the new *Manvantara*, however, he has to begin again until he does reach, finally, the Path of Renunciation.

(b) The life of the man who is virtuous because he wishes to follow the laws of the Universe. He uses his virtues to help all beings, sacrificing his desires for them. He works with and uses the great Laws of Harmony, taking nothing for himself, demanding nothing, but sacrificing himself for all others.

(c) The life of those who are neither positively virtuous nor positively evil; those who drift, who break away from life through negation.

(d) The life of the truly evil ones.

We need to ponder over these divisions to find out to which of them we belong. If we just want to be good and virtuous, all we have to do is to practise the rules of propriety that society demands

and die respected by all. This is a good stage, but only a stage. It must lead to a further stage in time or it fails of its purpose. To help us in this we need to analyse what we mean by the various virtues.

In order to overcome our vices and develop in their place the opposite virtues, we have to destroy the roots of those vices that inhere in the subtler parts of our being. The path of action has to be virtuous, but the emotions and desires, the mind or mental characteristics, have also to be virtuous, or we shall fail.

To take an example: A common command in the virtuous life is not to kill. Few of us would take up a gun or a knife to kill a fellow human being. But how do we feel about killing animals, either for food, or for the pleasure of hunting, or for fashion, or in the name of scientific research? Most of us have got past the stage of killing another in anger, though probably not past killing in fear. But what about "killing" by gossip, by hatred, by destroying another's confidence? These methods of "killing" are in a sense more dangerous than the slaying of the body. We all know that we can "feel" another's anger, that it might even make us ill, for anger is a force, a vibration, and vibrations affect us either for good or for ill. "Kill not" is a command that runs through the other virtues like a thread, for by stealing, incontinence, bearing false witness and lying we may "kill" another.

The same idea holds good with regard to stealing. What do we steal? Again most of us have got beyond the stealing of money or things from another. But is there no other kind of stealing? What of the stealing of ideas and using them for our own profit? What about mental stealing by harbouring covetousness, etc.? What about stealing favour and credit that belong to another? Stealing the place that belongs to another?

With regard to bearing false witness also we have much to learn. We are all to some extent false witnesses, for our speech, sight, mental understanding, etc., are often not true and accurate. Why is this so? Because we do not *listen* and we do not *look*. In other words, we do not pay attention to what is seen or what is heard. Sight and hearing are possible because images fall on the eyes,

vibrations are received by the ears. But these images and vibrations have to be paid attention to, to be analysed, to be cogitated upon by the mind, if we would learn to draw correct deductions from what is actually sent up to our brain-mind by our sense-organs. This important fact is succinctly expressed by Patanjali: "*Correct cognition results from Perception, Inference and Testimony.*" Memory also plays a part. For, though we may at the moment see or hear correctly, we forget, and our fancy affects our remembrance. All of us know this, for we change our story of what we have seen or heard if we are questioned about it after some time. Are we not then telling "lies"? Any inaccuracy in speech is a lie, an untruth, whether consciously known by us as such or not. And much damage is done by such inaccuracies. It is also bearing false witness. If only we realized the harm we do by careless speaking!

At the foundation of much of this "lying" is incorrect listening. How often we hear a few words spoken and jump to a conclusion, and then repeat our false version before others! Let us learn to listen accurately, and for this we need the right mental attitude. Listening and speaking are closely linked. We learn that before the ears can hear they must have lost their sensitiveness (*i.e.*, must be free from emotion); and before the voice can speak it must have lost the power to wound (*i.e.*, it, too, must be free from emotion).

To have "lost the power to wound" is a striking phrase. It does not just mean that we have such control over our speech that we say the right thing at the right time and in the right place; but it means that there is no *power* in our words that can wound another. This is important in living the Higher Life because speech is creative; speech is sound, vibration, and we learn that the Universe was created by the sounding of the WORD. Our speech is connected with the creative power of the Logos; we build or we destroy, we harmonize or cause disharmony by our speech. If any doubt the power of sound, let them listen to discordant loud noises for an hour or more and then look at their emotions, their nerves, their inner disharmony. Then let them listen to devotional songs or "good" music and watch the difference. The first destroys, makes

the astral body storm-tossed. The other is like a gentle breeze calming the storm. So with our own words and the *tone* which underlies them.

Also concentration comes into play. We can neither see nor hear nor speak accurately unless we are concentrated and know what we are doing. Though it will take us a long time to achieve the condition of absolute truthfulness, yet we shall be helped towards this end if we ask ourselves constantly, "Why did I think, say, or do such-and-such a thing?" And the reverse, "Why did I *not* think, say or do such-and-such a thing?" We can help ourselves along these lines if we will, and then we shall be making a beginning to live the Higher Life.

In order to clear the mind, the Kama-Manas in us, we have to silence our thoughts and slay the "army of the thought sensations" that creep into our consciousness. If we watch what our thoughts and feelings are when we are so to say "at rest," *i.e.*, when there is nothing actually claiming our immediate attention, we can gauge our character. For this reason we are told to have some noble or spiritual idea at the back of our mind, so that the mind rests on it during periods of repose. Spiritual ideas such as we find in devotional books like the *Gita*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path* and the *Dhammapada* are powerful, vital aids in purifying our consciousness and the vehicles through which that consciousness works.

Following the injunction, "Silence thy thoughts," comes the remark, "Fix thy whole attention on thy Master, whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest." Let us remember that we have to deserve for ourselves the name of "Diamond-Soul."

Indeed the path of perfection has a razor's edge!

THIS is the sum of duty: Do not do to others what would cause you pain if done to you.

—Mahabharata

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Our age has been called the transition age and humanity today is transiting into what might be called a global society. The nation-state has become one of the major hurdles to human unity, and in many spheres of life a rapid process of globalization is in progress.

Wm. Van Dusen Wishard, president of WorldTrends Research, hails globalization as "humanity's great experiment" (*The Futurist*, October 1999):

The world has embarked on the most ambitious collective experiment in history: globalization. If it succeeds, humanity may enter an epoch of opportunity and prosperity for a greater proportion of the earth's inhabitants than ever before. If it fails, it could retard progress for generations.

Globalization is the long-term effort to integrate the global dimensions of life into each nation's economics, politics, and culture. National development has ceased to be an isolated procedure and has now become part of a global process....

Economic globalization has inevitably led to political globalization. Already we see national sovereignty diminishing....Relations between nations can no longer be founded on respect for sovereignty—they must be founded on respect for human rights....Cultural globalization entered a new phase with the advent of global TV and the Internet....

If globalization is going to fulfil its potential, it must be more than just a technical process. It must be a human process, a psychological process, a spiritual process, a process of deepening consciousness and increasing sensitivity to other people and cultures....

Globalization is not simply an abstract activity "out there" somewhere. It makes personal demands on each of us as individuals. Globalization requires each of us to become a more integrated personality, for common sense suggests that it takes integrated personalities to create an integrated world.

In the final analysis, globalization is the result not only of technological achievement, but also of the quality and harmonization of human attitudes and perspectives.

Globalization is more than harmonizing the world's separate economies, governments, and cultures. The process of globalization may be defined as one whereby the world becomes a single place in consciousness. There are people all around the world in different countries who have a sense of one world, a sense of a common origin and destiny of the human family, of belonging together. This unity needs to be realized concretely in political and social structures and in the way people organize life on the planet.

British scientist James Lovelock has for 30 years promoted the idea that Earth regulates itself as if it were one huge living organism, not just a collection of millions of relatively independent life forms. He called this system *Gaia*, after the earth goddess of the ancient Greeks.

The idea that the Earth is alive and that organisms act with a sense of purpose, interacting with one another to maintain conditions suitable for life, was once dismissed by scientists, but now even skeptics are taking a second look, writes Oliver Morton in *Discover* (October 1999). Some of the ideas flowing out of Lovelock's thinking have been proven correct, and a growing number of scientists have decided to centre their work on the Gaian concepts. Some of them gathered at Oxford for the third meeting of the Gaia Society, which sponsors this sort of research. These scientists are searching for insights to prove the Gaian theory that life and the environment come together to form a self-regulating whole.

Even among believers [says Morton], there is no real consensus as to what Gaia is or how it really works....Lovelock started to think that Earth was in some sense alive, its various cycles part of a great physiology.

Of all those who objected to the idea, no group was more vehement than evolutionary biologists. They believe creatures are out to help themselves and their relatives survive, not to help strangers. The idea that some creatures waste effort making the world a better place for others didn't make sense to them....

For the hard core, Gaia is about biology, not earth science or

complex systems. Their battle cry is symbiosis, the many varied ways that creatures have of coming to depend on one another. That's something Gaians think traditional evolutionary biologists don't know how to deal with. William Hamilton, who has done more than anyone else to understand how genes can, in some circumstances, make the creatures that bear them nice to one another, disagrees with that. But he agrees that there seem to be long-term stabilities in the environment that he and his colleagues may have underplayed. This intrigues him deeply—and that may help bring Gaia a new respectability.

That all forms of life are closely interrelated and go to form a gigantic whole is no new idea. It was certainly known to the ancients and it is gratifying to find some present-day scientists rediscovering this old, old truth. "Let us make peace with Gaia on her terms," says Lovelock, "and return to peaceful coexistence with our fellow creatures." We must recognize that we are "a part of, or partner in, a very democratic entity," and not the masters of the planet. We resist this view at our peril, for nature may retaliate.

Startling progress has been made with computers. The computer age has been characterized as "both the greatest wonder of technology and our worst nightmare" (*Discover*, November 1999). In only a few decades, these often mystifying machines have transformed our existence, "yet there is something in most people that does not love a computer. We remain suspicious of its power and potential."

Recently, *Discover* magazine, in conjunction with the Disney Institute, invited a group of outstanding scientists to Orlando, Florida (U.S.A.) to discuss the issues of the computer age in a daylong debate. What follows are a few excerpts from their dialogue:

The real impact of the computer, as with the car and the telephone, is that it is dramatically changing the way we interact. Automobiles and phones changed social life. They changed families, dispersing them throughout the nation. The real impact of computers today is on the communications

network. The computer is the computational brain behind it. Now, suddenly, we can always be in touch with each other. That's what the real revolution is about. It's not about a better keyboard. (Don Norman)

Computers really don't do very much yet except computations. ...Computers today don't understand the simplest thing that even a five-year-old understands pretty well. At some point, people will figure out how to get computers to understand what words mean and how they fit together and represent ideas. And then, suddenly, there will be a new entity that's maybe as smart as you. Then, as many science fiction writers have noticed, if it can be as smart as a person or smarter, we'll have a new set of problems. (Marvin Minsky)

On this business of feeling some emotional attachment: There's a real paradox in society that has nothing to do with technology at all....We have a culture that has gotten so complex that most people can't understand it. And people are not comfortable with what they can't understand. Computers fall into that group. So there has been an attempt to imbue them with emotional characteristics, and we've given them some anthropomorphic properties that really dazzle people, like you can talk to them and people actually think: It listened to me. (Dean Kamen)

I think we're heading for some altogether new relationship with technology, which seems to be becoming fundamentally incomprehensible and fundamentally self-generating. I think our relationship is going to be more like the one we have with nature. Namely, we can influence it in certain ways, but we won't be able to really control it in the way we are used to controlling machines. All we may be able to do is try to keep the weeds out of the garden. (Danny Hillis)

The subject of "computer intelligence" keeps cropping up again and again. It is important to understand what thinking and intelligence are, since there prevail today as many misconceptions about the concept of mind as of matter. A good "thinking" machine can remember, classify, choose between alternatives on the basis of logic and, acting on past experience, can even correct itself; but the activity of any one machine is strictly limited to the instructions with which it is fed. In spite of its speed, precision and infallibility,

the most "intelligent" computer *cannot* correlate dissociated ideas and events spread out in time and space, or present an original thought, or answer an unexpected query. Truly creative thought must forever remain in the province of the human mind.

Concepts about God are changing along with people's advancing comprehension of the universe. Is God dead today? Not according to philosopher Robert Mellert, who suggests that scientific progress may change humanity's conception of God rather than extinguish faith (*The Futurist*, October 1999). The transcendent image of God as someone "out there" and separate from nature and man may well be dead, or at least in its last throes, says Mellert. At the same time most people are loath to embrace atheism. He offers instead a "reconceptualization of God" that will be more acceptable to humanity of the future:

As the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead put it, "It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God as that God is immanent in the World." Whitehead developed a notion of the "consequent nature" of God that encompasses all of reality, every puff of trivial existence. A similar idea of God and His relation to the world can be found in a grand synthesis developed by the French Jesuit thinker, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, for whom God is all in all, the final cause of reality, overcoming all evil and drawing all things into his ultimate Self.

This image of God is in some ways similar to the Eastern (especially Hindu) idea of *pantheism*, which literally means that God is all. Every bit of matter and energy is a part of God; every event is a manifestation of divine Being. God is these things, not a cause of them and not separate from them....

The Western counterpart of pantheism, as expressed by Whitehead and Teilhard, for example, can better be called *panentheism*, which means that God is all, yet more than all. Like pantheism, it identifies God with the totality of reality, but it also asserts that God is more than the sum total of everything. It is based upon the notion that the whole is actually more than the sum of its parts, just as a person is more than the sum of his cells or organs.

In other words, the whole (God) is more than the sum of His parts (all the elements of reality), yet He is made up of these parts....

I am convinced that this general way of thinking about God will become more widespread in the future. Pantheism and panentheism accord with many important themes in contemporary thought....The presence of God is the force behind change and the unity of the evolving universe itself.

These are old, old truths finding support today, and they may become even more acceptable in the future, as Mellert predicts. The idea of a personal, anthropomorphic God, a God who rewards or punishes and who can be propitiated, has been the bane of humanity's soul-progress for centuries. How much more elevating is the concept of God as "a Universal Divine Principle, the root of ALL, from which all proceeds, and within which all shall be absorbed at the end of the great cycle of Being"!

Our DEITY is neither in a paradise, nor in a particular tree, building, or mountain: it is everywhere, in every atom of the visible as of the invisible Cosmos, in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for IT is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality. (H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 64)

India is teeming with astrologers and with people who have faith in their predictions. The true science of astrology, however, has long been gone from public knowledge and what passes under that name today is the degenerate and largely haphazard descendant of something once rigidly scientific and accurate. It is upon cyclic law and the "mystic and intimate connection between the heavenly bodies and mankind" (*S.D.*, II, 500 fn.) that genuine astrology is built. There is enough evidence for the view that movements of the planets have a relationship to events on earth.

If astrology is a science based on sound principles, then why do astrological predictions go wrong? asks Kireet Joshi in *The Times*

of *Astrology Annual Issue* for 1999. Apart from the fact that those passing off today as astrologers are often lacking in scholarship, proficiency, and above all in intuitive power, Joshi advances various other reasons:

It is not a matter of debate that astrology is basically a psychological science, or that it deals mainly with psychological concepts. It is also not debatable that astrology deals with individuals in their highly complex individualized situations. It is, therefore, not surprising that applications of general principles of astrology could be highly misleading if individual differentiations are not sufficiently understood and appreciated....

Are events so predetermined that they will inexorably occur? In fact, this is the real issue.... This brings us to the issue of the nature of events and to the issue of determinism, predeterminism and free will. If all events happen by chance, then there is no standing-ground for predictability of events, and there is no justification for astrology at all. If, on the other hand, there is an intelligence working in the world, one can expect design, teleology and even some kind of determinism.... It is only if we can arrive at a sound knowledge of the nature of determinism, predeterminism and freedom that we can decide the right criteria for judging the claims of astrology with regard to its predictions and with regard to certainties and probabilities of these predictions.

Now it is very well known that Indian astrology assumes the law of Karma.... According to the scientific theory of Karma, soul or spirit or spiritual state is superior to Karma, since Karma is only a machinery and it does not constitute but is constituted by the soul or the spirit. What is in the chain of Karma is determined, but the soul in itself is free and there is always a possibility, in varying degrees, for the soul to intervene freely and change the determinism of Karma.

Astrology recognizes this basic truth.... It recognizes both determinism and predeterminism but it admits clearly that the course of events can be altered by free will.

There is a real and a false use of astrology, and Occult Science warns of the dangers of the latter and the value of the former. Are

we at the mercy of the planets and the stars, moved hither and thither without our will? The key to the value of a knowledge of astrology is the Law of Karma, as rightly pointed out by Kireet Joshi. We are self-produced beings. "We produce CAUSES, and these awaken the corresponding powers in the sidereal world; which powers are magnetically and irresistibly attracted to—and react upon—those who produced these causes" (*S.D.*, I, 124). We do not have to submit passively to the influence of the stars, nor do we need to try to fight it. We need to *use* it. As was written by H.P.B. in her article on "Astrology" in *The Theosophist* for June 1884:

All our thoughts and actions thus produce the vibrations in space, which mould our future career. And astrology is a science which, having determined the nature of the laws that govern these vibrations, is able to state precisely a particular or a series of results, the causes of which have already been produced by the individual in his previous life. Since the present incarnation is the child of the previous one, and since there is but that ONE LIFE which holds together all the planets of the Solar system, the position of those planets at the time of the birth of an individual—which event is the aggregate result of the causes already produced—gives to the true Astrologer the data upon which to base his predictions. It should be well remembered at the same time that just as the "astronomer who catalogues the stars cannot add one atom to the universe," so also can no astrologer, no more than the planet, *influence* the human destiny.

I BELIEVE internal happiness produces health. Not always, but most of the time. The greatest medicine is to have a positive outlook. To be satisfied with what one is doing, to trust people. When you're distrustful and angry, you're setting up an internal enemy which undermines your body, nullifying all the healthy effects of diet and exercise.

—BITTU SAHGAL