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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE SHARING OF THEOSOPHY

A WORD TO PUPIL-TEACHERS

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When we are convinced of the truth of a matter, there is no reason why we should not voice that conviction as strongly as the case demands, but there is no reason why, in such case, we do not demand acceptance of Theosophy; we point out its principles and their applications. Theosophy makes certain statements as being matters of knowledge by perfected men, but not as statements to be believed. It is shown that such knowledge, being acquired by Them from observation and experience in many bodies, can be reached by all men, and the ways to do so are pointed out. The reasonableness of the claim of knowledge takes the statement out of the realm of dogma.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

IN her message sent in 1888 to a convention of the American Theosophists, Madame Blavatsky warned: "Let no man set up a popery instead of Theosophy, as this would be suicidal and has ever ended most fatally." With noble humility she, the one chosen by the Masters to give Their message for the 19th-20th century, included herself in the statement: "We are all fellow-students, more or less advanced; but no one belonging to the Theosophical Society ought to count himself as more than, at best, a pupil-teacher—one who has no right to dogmatize."

The problem before each earnest student-server of Theosophy is not whether, but how, his effort to spread the teachings he has accepted and is trying to practise should be made. A reminder of Madame Blavatsky seems very pertinent to this question:

Evil is often the result of over-anxiety, and men are always trying to do too much; they are not content to leave well enough alone, to do always just what the occasion demands and no more; they exaggerate every action and so produce Karma to be worked out in a future birth.

Concerning the methods employed by the Masters of Wisdom, it has been written: "The Masters are governed by the law of action and reaction, and are wise enough always not to do that which might result in undoing all their prior work. By going too far at any one time with the throwing out of great force in the mental plane, the consequence would be that a reaction of superstition and evil of all sorts would undo everything."

We are told that They observe the law of cycles, restricting Their cyclic public efforts to certain periods of time, and then retiring from the public world, leaving the seed sown to sprout and bear its fruit. "It is the Master's work to preserve the true philosophy, but the help of the companions is needed to rediscover and promulgate it."

One of the Masters wrote: "...we cannot consent to over-flood the world at the risk of drowning them with a doctrine that has to be cautiously given out, and bit by bit like a too powerful tonic which can kill as well as cure."

How many students of Theosophy, carried away by the spirit of sharing what has meant so much to them, forget Mr. Judge's statement in *Letters That Have Helped Me*, that "no one was ever converted into Theosophy. Each one who *really* comes into it does so because it is only an extension of previous beliefs"!

The wish to share freely with others what means so much to us is natural and right, but excess of zeal too often defeats its own ends, arousing resistance or even resentment in the one it is desired to help. Even a timid animal resists when cornered. Consider our

own experience. How many active now in Theosophical endeavour to study, practise and promulgate the Teachings of our great philosophy were thus, so to speak, dragooned into our ranks? It would be safe to say, "Very, very few!"

The sower who goes forth to sow does not pound the seeds into the ground but drops them gently into the ploughed soil and waters them; or he may scatter them broadcast; and the seed tests the soil. Thus in Jesus' Parable of the Sower he described how

some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

It calls for wisdom and genuine humility to pass on the teachings of Theosophy from individual to individual, uncoloured by one's own interpretations and without arousing a suspicion of proselytizing or compulsion or—and this is no less undesirable—causing the one whom it is sought to help to lean on his informant instead of going to the Teachings themselves for further enlightenment.

Hence the emphasis placed in the United Lodge of Theosophists upon impersonal propaganda, on letting the platform speak, or pointing out to the inquirer the book or article that he will find of help in solving his problems or his doubts. Mr. Crosbie warned in one of his letters collected in *The Friendly Philosopher*:

It is a mistake to allow the impression to grow in anyone's mind that *he* is of importance to Theosophy. Theosophy was restored to the world for the sake of those who are looking for light, not for those who are satisfied with things as they are and life as they find it. So, to try to interest special persons is not worth the effort expended. The very effort made prevents by arousing either opposition or erroneous notions. To let as many

as possible know about Theosophy, but to seek out no one in particular, is the wiser course.

Where the desire or eagerness to learn is not equal to the willingness to impart, the willing sharer is in the position of one beating cold iron, which is a sheer waste of energy.

Mr. Judge, in the first of his letters printed in *Letters That Have Helped Me*, advised:

It is not that you must rush madly or boldly out *to do, to do*. Do what you find to do. Desire ardently to do it, and even when you shall not have succeeded in carrying anything out but some small duties, some words of warning, your strong desire will strike like Vulcan upon other hearts in the world, and suddenly you will find that done which you had longed to be the doer of.

Even in speaking from the platform as well as in conversation, too often we yield to the temptation to smother inquiry with too long, too erudite or too detailed an answer to a question, when what the inquirer needed was a reply simply expressed that would have stimulated further thought and queries. Students who are faced with this temptation and too often, alas, yield to it, would do well to read that short but important article, "Theosophical 'Smotherers,'" which was printed in our November 1955 issue. An excerpt from that article will suggest how well the whole of it would repay perusal:

What is a Theosophical "smotherer"? Usually an enthusiastic and well-informed student of Theosophy who buries a hapless inquirer under a perfectly correct, but otherwise unassimilable, avalanche of words....

Here was one who wanted to know, it is to be presumed. Otherwise he never would have asked his question. He asked it of one well able to answer. Just consider the stupendous operation of the Good Law in bringing about this conjunction! Out of the millions of the uninterested and uninformed, two beings—one interested and the other informed—are brought together. The responsibility of the informed is colossal. He rises joyously to it—and *kills* the inquirer, so to say, within the first

few moments of this epochal encounter!

Intentional? No, he probably never knows it. But what is the responsibility? Morally, he has passed his test. Otherwise, who knows for what aeons his lack of perception and discrimination may dog his steps? The "dead" inquirer may quite possibly be better off than the "smotherer." He knows less, but likewise less is his responsibility.

He who would really, in the words of that article, "be an effective pupil-teacher and thus fulfil the purpose of his Theosophic life" will do well to remember also that inevitably outsiders judge Theosophy by its students and exponents and that always our actions and our attitudes speak louder than our words. Unless the ethics of Theosophy find expression in brotherly attitude and actions, mere words, whether in conversation or spoken from the platform, carry little weight.

From a lighted candle, innumerable other candles can be lighted; from an unlighted candle, none. So is it with heart light. One of the Blessed Masters wrote in the last century to a correspondent:

Like the light in the sombre valley seen by the mountaineer from his peaks, every bright thought in your mind, my Brother, will sparkle and attract the attention of your distant friend and correspondent...and it is our law to approach every such an one if even there be but the feeblest glimmer of the true "Tathagata" light within him.

Silenzio, my dear, is almost as good as patience. He laughs best who does it last, and time is a devil for grinding things.... Use the time in getting calmness and solid strength, for a deep river is not so because it has a deep bed, but because it has *volume*.

Rely within yourself on your Higher Self always, and that gives strength, as the Self uses whom it will. Persevere, and little by little new *ideals* and thought-forms will drive out of you the old ones. This is the eternal process.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE GREAT SACRIFICERS

ONE important mission of H.P.B. was to proclaim to the world the fact that Sages or Mahatmas or Great Teachers not only existed in a bygone age but exist today; to show the Path that leads to them; for they can be found and are willing to teach today as they were willing to teach in that bygone age. How could the teachings of Theosophy be true if the Teachers of Theosophy did not exist? The central truth of Theosophy in all ages and all climes has been that the teaching leads to the Teachers, who are the embodiments of Wisdom. We cannot accept the one and reject the other.

The Secret Doctrine describes the descent of the "Wondrous Being," the "ever-living-human-Banyan," from a "high region" at a time when man in form was not man in mind.

In the first or earlier portion of the existence of this Third Race, while it was yet in its state of purity, the "Sons of Wisdom," who as will be seen, incarnated in this Third Race, produced by *Kriyasakti* a progeny called the "Sons of Ad" or "of the Fire-Mist," the "Sons of Will and Yoga," etc. They were a conscious production, as a portion of the race was already animated with the divine spark of spiritual, superior intelligence. It was not a Race, this progeny. It was at first a wondrous Being, called the "Initiator," and after him a group of semi-divine and semi-human beings. "Set apart" in Archaic *genesis* for certain purposes, they are those in whom are said to have incarnated the highest Dhyanis, "Munis and Rishis from previous Manvantaras"—to form the nursery for future human adepts, on this earth and during the present cycle. These "Sons of Will and Yoga" born, so to speak, in an immaculate way, remained, it is explained, entirely apart from the rest of mankind.

The "BEING" just referred to, which has to remain nameless, is the *Tree* from which, in subsequent ages, all the great *historically* known Sages and Hierophants, such as Rishi Kapila, Hermes, Enoch, Orpheus, etc., etc., have branched off. As objective *man*, he is the mysterious (to the profane—the ever invisible) yet ever present Personage about whom legends are rife in the East, especially among the Occultists and the students

of the Sacred Science. It is he who changes form, yet remains ever the same. And it is he again who holds spiritual sway over the *initiated* Adepts throughout the whole world. He is, as said, the "Nameless One" who has so many names, and yet whose names and whose very nature are unknown. He is *the* "Initiator," called the "GREAT SACRIFICE." For, sitting at the threshold of LIGHT, he looks into it from within the circle of Darkness, which he will not cross; nor will he quit his post till the last day of this life-cycle. Why does the solitary Watcher remain at his self-chosen post? Why does he sit by the fountain of primeval Wisdom, of which he drinks no longer, as he has naught to learn which he does not know—aye, neither on this Earth, nor in its heaven? Because the lonely, sore-footed pilgrims on their way back to their *home* are never sure to the last moment of not losing their way in this limitless desert of illusion and matter called Earth-Life. Because he would fain show the way to that region of freedom and light, from which he is a voluntary exile himself, to every prisoner who has succeeded in liberating himself from the bonds of flesh and illusion. Because, in short, he has sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind, though but a few Elect may profit by the GREAT SACRIFICE.

It is under the direct, silent guidance of this MAHA—(great)—GURU that all the other less divine Teachers and instructors of mankind became, from the first awakening of human consciousness, the guides of early Humanity. It is through these "Sons of God" that infant humanity got its first notions of all the arts and sciences, as well as of spiritual knowledge; and it is they who have laid the first foundation-stone of those ancient civilizations that puzzle so sorely our modern generation of students and scholars. (I, 207-8)

There have, then, always been in the world those Initiates who keep the light of Wisdom ever burning bright.

For us who have been brought up according to our modern system of education, the questions naturally arise: How can we know that these Masters exist? How is it that there are no historical records of their existence? If they exist, why do they keep themselves secret? Why do they not come out openly and give to

the world what the world needs?

It is not so difficult to understand that those great spiritual beings do live and labour in the world if we believe in the existence of the human soul as an individualized entity, evolving stage by stage. When we see gradations of beings from the foolish man to the genius, from the sinner to the saint, living side by side on this earth of ours, is it not possible for us to conceive that when a being evolves further along the path of self-consciousness and deliberate evolution he may flower into the great Sage who knows and understands the mighty laws of Nature, and, understanding them, works them out in his own life and teaches others by the power of that life what those laws mean and stand for? If we are evolving individuals, if we grow stage by stage through the process of reincarnation and according to the laws of cause and effect, where can we come ultimately but to the stage of a perfected human being, perfected as we know perfection, measured by the limitations of our own knowledge and our own spiritual perception? The knowledge of a great scientist or of a great philosopher, for instance, would appear to a savage to be of the nature of a miracle. So also when we begin to contemplate upon the nature of those great Souls, those perfected human beings, we are apt to look upon them as the products of some miraculous process, while as a matter of fact they are the natural consequences of the natural law of evolution.

The Great Masters, then, were once human beings like ourselves, who have climbed the ladder of life stage by stage, by dint of hard and persevering effort continued self-consciously and deliberately through many lives, and by the help of the knowledge gained from their predecessors. The spiritual life is possible for all, but the spiritual life that leads to adeptship is a different and definite kind of a spiritual life, and the Master has attained to his high position by that particular kind of a life whose main impetus is deliberate and self-conscious effort.

A Master is a saint and a sage combined into one, and a soldier too, for he has had that indomitable courage to dare and to conquer the Kingdom of Heaven "by violence." A Master of Perfection has the saintliness of the saint by virtue of his purified feelings, the

wisdom of the sage because of the profound quality of his mind, and the indomitable courage of the soldier who has fought his way to light, to immortality and to perfection, sure of his way, removing all obstacles, because he has known what lies beyond the obstacles. He knows because he has understood the scheme of evolution and its meaning and the way by which the steps of the great ladder of life may be ascended. He has reached the light because to the purity of his character and the profundity of his knowledge he has added the power of his indomitable will, thus manifesting the quality of the true soldier.

Step by step, understanding the great process of spiritual evolution, he has conquered his own lower nature, and out of that conquest has come into existence the flower of compassion. Hence he is known as the *Master of Compassion*. Conquering the defects of his lower mind, he has brought into existence the flower of perfect wisdom, which makes no mistakes; hence he is known as the *Master of Wisdom*. By the indomitable courage of the soldier, removing the obstacles of darkness, he has come to the Kingdom of Light; hence he is known as the *Lord of Light*. Because of his Compassion, his Wisdom and his Light, what else can he do but serve the great race whose product he is and whose troubles he is fully cognizant of? Hence his fourth great name—*Servant of Humanity*.

Contemplating this fourfold quality of wisdom, of compassion, of light and of self-sacrificing service, we are able to understand a little about the nature of the Master of Wisdom. He is a conqueror of the world in which he finds himself, the world in which intellect takes the place of wisdom, personal attention takes the place of impersonality, the common concept of self-aggrandizement takes the place of self-sacrifice, intricate ways of darkness take the place of the straight path of light.

It is sometimes thought that a Master is one whose consciousness has so unfolded that he knows everything that is taking place at every moment of time and in every point of space. That is not the right way of describing the power of his wisdom. It can be said that he has the *faculty* of knowing anything that he wants to know.

Similarly he has evolved the faculty of loving all beings. It is these faculties that make the Master—the faculties of indomitable will, of the illuminated mind and of an immense love which makes us forget ourselves and enables us to realize that we, too, can become what he is.

Those who seek the Master from the side of the body do not get the reality and do not understand that body, but when the Master's love is touched, when his compassion fills our life, when his wisdom is made ours and his indomitable courage and will move us from within, then we come to see who a Master is. He is an individualized, unfolded consciousness who, though working in a body, does not work with the bodies of other people, but works with the consciousness or souls of other people, and therefore his work does not always require him to come out in the public world.

The Masters teach the laws of spiritual unfoldment, laws which enable individual souls to do in a short compass of time what ordinary humanity will be able to achieve only after long aeons. They are the custodians of that Wisdom which enables us to take our soul-evolution into our own hands and work deliberately and self-consciously according to the rules of the spiritual life, so that our unfoldment is quickened and we begin to perceive in a short period of time what otherwise we would take ages to find out.

The first of the necessary qualifications for contacting the Masters is an unshakable belief in our own inner powers; the recognition that each one is an immortal entity, the Initiator of Initiates. Having recognized ourselves as spiritual entities, we need to remove from our constitution all obstacles of thought, of feeling and of action which hinder spiritual expression, the purification of our moral nature and the unfoldment of that mighty quality of love which embraces all mankind. We need to do in a small way, in our own circle and in our own work, what the Masters are doing in their work and in their perfect way. We then come out of this world of matter and begin to live in the world of consciousness, of soul and spirit. It is not a different world, but the world with all its objects and beings and states becomes different for us because we look at it not with material vision but with spiritual vision. It is an

inner change which is brought about by that first of the necessary qualifications, an unshakable belief in our own inner powers. When we begin to live in that world of consciousness or spirit, everything in the world of material objects becomes a symbol, an idea.

We come ultimately to the great idea that at the back of all types there is an archetype, that at the back of all forms there is the formless; and the idea of the One expressing itself through the many forms, the many types, brings to us the conviction that we ourselves are not separate individuals but channels of that One Life. And when we recognize ourselves as channels we begin to think and act differently and to perceive who the Masters are.

They are not individuals as we know individuals. They are channels of that mighty Life and are able to show us the unity of that Life because they are Its pure embodiments. They are Light personified. It is said in many an Eastern scripture that the great Masters cast no shadows, and it is a profound truth. They cast no shadows because they are self-luminous; and because they are self-luminous and radiate that Light continuously, all those who come in the pathway of that Light are illumined themselves and see by the power of that illumination the true nature of all things.

This is the business before us. Knowing ourselves as spiritual entities, living in the world of the Spirit, beholding objects as symbols, we begin to perceive by the light that comes from the Masters the true value of all symbols. What shall we do to come to that position? "Awake, arise, seek the Great Ones, and learn!" is the Upanishadic cry—awake from the world of ignorance, selfishness and mortality; arise and walk the path of holiness.

The Masters are more anxious to find us than we are eager to find them. Their compassion is such that they wait, with extended hands, for one or another among us to come out of this world of illusion into that world of reality in which they live. They wait patiently, not year after year, not decade after decade, but century after century.

It is possible for us to reach them, for what men have done in the past men can also do in the world today. The resolve to reach them, carefully fostered, will one day bring us to that glorious

height. The Masters were men like ourselves in ages past. So there is hope for all. From their height they look into the valley below, into the darkness of the earth, and see a light here and a light there, the light of daring burning in the heart; and they feed that heart-light until it grows brighter and brighter. They bless and help all sincere devotees though the latter often know it not.

This teaching about the Masters that H.P.B. proclaimed gives us the enthusiasm and the energy to light within us a spark of the Tathagata Light and to go forward and find them.

In the case of Prometheus, Zeus represents the Host of the primeval progenitors, of the PITAR, the "Fathers" who created man senseless and without any mind; while the divine Titan stands for the Spiritual creators, the *devas* who "fell" into generation. The former are spiritually lower, but physically stronger, than the "Prometheans"; therefore, the latter are shown conquered. "The lower Host, whose work the Titan spoiled and thus defeated the plans of Zeus," was on this earth in its own sphere and plane of action; whereas, the superior Host was an exile from Heaven, who had got entangled in the meshes of matter. They (the inferior "Host") were masters of all the Cosmic and lower titanic forces; the higher Titan possessed only the intellectual and spiritual fire. This drama of the struggle of Prometheus with the Olympic tyrant and despot, sensual Zeus, one sees enacted daily within our actual mankind: the lower passions chain the higher aspirations to the rock of matter, to generate in many a case the vulture of sorrow, pain, and repentance.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 421-22

ONE WORLD, ONE HUMANITY

MADAME Blavatsky, in her *Key to Theosophy*, in the important section entitled "What is Practical Theosophy?" has mentioned the four Links of the Golden Chain—"Universal Unity and Causation; Human Solidarity; the Law of Karma; Reincarnation." She states that, if applied in daily life, these Theosophical principles not only bring about social amelioration, but also bind humanity into one family, one universal Brotherhood. It may seem strange to those not acquainted with Theosophical teachings that these abstract principles can bring about unity and harmony in this world of chaos and confusion, strifes and struggles! To a convinced student of Theosophy these principles become practical in the measure of his reflection over and application of them in daily living. They are all interrelated, and in order to establish true harmony and brotherhood their clear understanding is absolutely essential. Let us consider here the first of the four links.

One world and one humanity has been the cry for ages. Poets and philosophers have dreamed of it. Statesmen and politicians all over the world are trying to find a solution to the great problem of disunity. They have not succeeded yet because they do not have the right approach to this important problem. It is not through legislatures that harmony and peace can be established between different nations. What is needed is a change of mind and of heart on the basis of a correct understanding of the fundamental ideas and facts as given out by great Teachers down the ages. These ideas were resuscitated for the benefit of our civilization by Madame Blavatsky. The ideal of a united world appeals to the common man as to the scholar; but, unless a thorough understanding of the source of that unity is acquired, it is not possible to put into practice this ideal or to bring about the required result. Today humanity is divided into sects and cults, castes, creeds and classes, religious denominations and political ideologies, so that instead of bearing love and friendship for one another, nations and races are engaged in opposing and attacking one another.

What exactly is meant by universal unity and causation? From

the Theosophical point of view, this universe was brought into being, not by a personal creator, but by an omnipresent, omnipotent, imperishable principle of Life, the root and the source of all that exists. It is Theosophically known as the rootless root and the causeless cause, as "Beness" rather than Being. In that eternal, imperishable background periodically appear and disappear and reappear numberless universes, called the "sparks of eternity." Each spark, each universe, has its active period of manifestation and rest; a Day of Brahma is followed by a Night, and another Day again. That principle of Life which is the omnipresent Reality and the one radical cause awakes and Causation starts at the dawn of manifestation, not in a haphazard way, but in terms of the Law, on the model and pattern of the preceding world. The one homogeneous Principle is behind all forms of Life; therefore there is universal unity. It expresses itself through various degrees of consciousness and various grades of matter on seven planes of being. Only the physical, objective plane is visible; behind and beyond the physical and interblended with it are the invisible planes, the higher and purer bringing forth the lower and grosser.

When this connection is understood, no doubt can remain about the unity and interdependence of all Life. Causation on all planes starts from within without, and the evolutionary stream is always in motion. The One Life is made up of infinitesimal lives which are constantly exchanged among different beings in terms of the law of consubstantiality. That is another reason why universal unity is a fact. All beings and creatures work under one Law, immutable, impersonal, universal; therefore justice and mercy equally prevail everywhere. Is this not proof positive that universal unity is a fact and a reality? All beings move towards the one centre, the Divine Spark, the goal of evolution; that is yet another evidence of universal unity. This is not recognized by the majority of human beings because of their ignorance of the One Reality, and therefore they take that which is real to be unreal, and that which is unreal to be real. That which is Light seems to them like darkness because they themselves are enveloped by the darkness of ignorance.

How to remove this ignorance? *The Voice of the Silence* instructs

on p. 61: "Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void." People are so glamourised by the allurements of the phenomenal world, are so absorbed in the ever-changing panorama of life, that they cannot realize that it is not worth while giving so much importance to this *maya* of worldly existence. They are so attached, now to one thing and then to another, that this earth has become a veritable Hall of Sorrow for them! They have been entrapped by their many delusions and cannot find a way out! The voidness of the seeming full can be realized as we detach ourselves and make proper use of the Law of Necessity. A toy is necessary for a child, not for a grown-up man or woman! This detachment can only come about through daily reflection upon the fulness of the seeming void. Intelligences, powers of light as also forces of darkness, exist in that seeming void. In the lower kingdoms there is no struggle between light and darkness, but man, through his self-effort and energization, can always try to ally himself with the powers of light. There is certainly needed a change of mental attitude, a correct evaluation of life, and then only the law of interdependence can be recognized and true brotherhood be established. It is more difficult to understand the fulness of the seeming void than to perceive the voidness of the seeming full. The invisible realms may lead one to great bewilderment and danger.

In order to demonstrate universal unity, Krishna described his Divine Excellences in the Tenth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and showed his universal form to Arjuna. This he was able to see because of his whole-hearted devotion to Krishna, the Supreme Spirit. In every task we perform, in every thought or feeling we generate, the Supreme Spirit should be remembered. Causation exists on all planes, but only human beings are responsible for the causes they generate; therefore either unity or disunity results, depending on the direction they take—whether they work with the Law or against it. To work with the Law is the only way to the practical realization of universal unity and the establishment of true brotherhood.

Universal unity and causation cannot be thought of by the finite

mind and cannot be spoken about by the mortal tongue but can be sensed and felt within the innermost consciousness. A truer realization of the Self, a profounder conviction of universal brotherhood can be cultivated. The relationship between the noumenal and the phenomenal has to be clearly grasped. Each is necessary to the other and to all; therefore they have to be viewed with equanimity.

We cannot do away with the phenomenal world, impermanent and transitory though it be. It is necessary to acquire experience and gain knowledge of the objective world, but these should be viewed with calm indifference though with just appreciation in a detached manner. Then none would act selfishly, looking only to one's own interest, apart from all others. "To act for and as the Self of all creatures" would be the rule adopted by everyone. Each would become his brother's keeper; each would see to his brother's good. All things and creatures would receive respect and reverence and help and guidance in their upward way, and no obstructions would be created in the harmonious working of the Law. As each man, each woman, changes his mind and heart in the right direction, towards the Centre of Light, he becomes an instrument for the generation of right causes which would lead to the practical realization of Universal Unity.

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.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

A SOUND BODY

Mens sana in corpore sano. (A sound mind in a sound body.)

—JUVENAL (*Satires*, x. 356)

THE first qualification expected in a chela is "perfect physical health." Why should this be so? What has health of the body to do with the internal governance of the person, his devotion and his line of life's meditation? This much is certain that he who becomes reckless of his health cannot aspire to chelaship. The rule is like other rules, binding upon the aspirant in all normal cases.

Medical men attribute ill-health to a germ, a virus infection, a malfunctioning of the organs, etc., and each decade adds to the long list of health-destroying bodies. Ill-health signifies that one set of lives in the body wages war, hinders work, obstructs channels of communication or consumes a larger amount of energy than its usual quota. This necessarily sets up an imbalance, and the process of adjustment entails a strain and an expending of the person's vitality which may leave him exhausted and starve other centres of activity which have perforce to be depleted of that vitality. In acute cases, the fatigue thus generated becomes so overpowering that the mind is thrown into a semi-dazed condition, and but too often becomes so engrossed in its own misery that it loses all inclination to take up another's burden. It is not unusual to find that ill-health forces attention to itself and sometimes the pain becomes unbearable to such an extent that it fully engrosses the mind. In those moments it becomes noticeable that the lower desires are for the time being pushed back, but so too are the higher aspirations and the discriminating faculty.

The preservation of health depends in a large measure upon whether one can control the inferior potencies, can discriminate as to food, behaviour and emotions, and can build habits which will keep the lives of one's physical and mental make-up in balance. This demands an excellence in the art of living, an adjustment of desires and forces in the psychic and physical natures so that an

equipoise is maintained on level as on broken ground. The adjustment has to be instantaneous, the watchfulness acutely sensitive. Yet, the chief question must always remain: Why do we desire health? Some covet it so that their passions and urges can be exercised unhampered; others want it because they are obsessed by the outer appearance of their faces and bodies; others still, so that they can enjoy a full life of ease and pleasure. Each of these tries to preserve health and in so doing each invites lives which make the body gross and, though outwardly without blemish, so full of the earthly elements as to hamper and in certain circumstances inhibit the movements of the Soul. The use of certain drugs, injections, serums and whatnot may ruin the chances of the Soul for an incarnation. Our physicians have yet to learn the effect of essences on human bodies.

A healthy organism may suffer a setback owing to numerous causes. Psychic upsets may be produced by scenes, sounds, odours, memories; emotional upheavals by jealousy, pride, anger, lust. Insatiable craving for undesirable things; the imbibing of foul psychic or physical atmosphere; the overdoing or neglect of functions, duties and ascetic practices; the coming under the influence of persons whose magnetism clashes with that of the aspirant—these and similar causes bring about a malaise, a lowering in the first instance of the tonal quality or the tensile strength of the instruments which the Soul is constrained to use for this incarnation at least. Then of course there are ills brought forward from previous lives as well as those to which a person is heir through atavism and heredity. Physical tendencies, lives and energies which bear our stamp of usage in previous lives return to us. They are chicken coming home to roost and which demand their liberty from the defiling touch which the desires and divagations of humans have placed upon them.

Pain and uneasiness are the destroyers of meditation. So is any urge of the body for sleep or rest. These can set up a persistent clamour which may become sufficiently strong to drown all other voices; and till the man has learnt to withdraw himself into the

Silence, the attention is compelled to focus itself on the one absorbing centre of pain. H.P.B. showed in her own life that intense physical pain, mental torture and the anguish of friends turning into traitors can be lived through and not allowed to divert a man from the chosen fields of duty. *The Voice of the Silence* admonishes the pupil thus: "Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy soul as limpid as a mountain lake." However, that is a stage to be devoutly wished for. Till then, for the student, his safety lies in preventing ill-health. Karma alone can decide how much of bodily infirmities can be released from the storehouse of past Karma so as to become a necessary teacher, a force which through the resistance that it offers will help develop that aspect of the spiritual force which will dominate pain and neutralize its distraction.

When the aspirant desires physical health, he desires it for a purpose. He wants to lead a dedicated life. To make that dedication effective, there can be no trifling with such things, manners, environment, as raise barriers and thwart progress. The health which is desirable is not that of someone of muscular build or of the athlete which demands an all-exclusive attention, but rather a serenity in well-being which becomes ingrained in the person and which having reached its level remains there with hardly any extra effort, thus leaving his energies and attention free for employment elsewhere.

The maintaining of health depends on numerous factors, some of which can be summarized thus:

The careful selection of foods and drinks, dividing them into sattvic, rajasic and tamasic (see Chapter xvii of the *Gita*).

Living in places which afford fresh, clean air and which provide surroundings conducive to health of mind and of body.

Taking care to provide the appropriate recreation, the donning of clothes which suit the occasion and the demands of caution against conditions of weather.

The periodical and effective cleansing of the whole bodily system (the observing of silence and fasting are only two of several

methods) and the maintaining of a healthy system for eliminating waste matter.

The keeping of the skin and breathing system unclogged and undamaged by avoiding excesses or harmful practices of a psychophysiological nature.

The adopting of a few ascetic rules and the practising of restraint in matters connected with food, sleep, etc.

The keeping in check of emotions, desires, passions and cravings which have a directly injurious effect on certain organs of the body.

A working knowledge of polarities, of sympathies and antipathies which work in and upon the human body, and a recognition of the effects felt on the body by the phases of the moon.

An appreciation of the effects caused on the body by: (a) minerals, (b) herbs and plants, (c) water and water-contents of fruits, etc., and (d) meats, skins and furs of animals.

The effects of the exhalations of humans, animals and places, and the power of talismans, charms and hypnotic influences.

The understanding of hazards to the brain and other parts of the body through certain drinks and drugs.

The influence of the seasons as also of certain personal cycles.

The effects of sound and colour on the lives which make up the organism, and the recognition of dangers that lurk in crowded places.

These are but a few out of several factors which each student has to study for himself. Yet, the chief consideration must always be for the entity who is the dweller within the body. It is for him that the mansion is prepared for an incarnation. That mansion can be filled with *objets d'art* or with things which while away the idle hours, or again with those aids which the Soul may use to exalt itself. Health must therefore be sought not for enjoyment, not for the ease which it confers, nor for longevity where the thread of a useless life is stretched with hardly any chance for soul achievement. Perfect physical health is desirable only for the purpose of providing a ready tool to the masterhand of Soul. Service

even in the ordinary worldly sense demands that the instruments to be used are such as are fit for attaining the maximum output and efficiency. How much more then must our responsibility be to see that we give the Soul instruments and vehicles which are the best that we can provide or make!

So what do we do? Everyone knows the planet is in bad shape, but most people are resigned to passivity. Changing course, they reason, would require economic sacrifice and provoke stiff resistance from corporations and consumers alike, so why bother? It's easier to ignore the gathering storm clouds and hope the problem magically takes care of itself. Such fatalism is not only dangerous but mistaken....

The Global Green Deal is no silver bullet. It can, however, buy us time to make the more deep-seated changes—in our often excessive appetites, in our curious belief that humans are the centre of the universe, in our sheer numbers—that will be necessary to repair our relationship with our environment.

None of this will happen without an aroused citizenry. But a Global Green Deal is in the common interest, and it is a slogan easily grasped by the media and the public. Moreover, it should appeal across political, class and national boundaries, for it would stimulate both jobs and business throughout the world in the name of a universal value: leaving our children a livable planet. The history of environmentalism is largely the story of ordinary people pushing for change while governments, corporations and other established interests reluctantly follow behind. It's time to repeat that history on behalf of a Global Green Deal.

—MARK HERTSGAARD

THE POTENTIAL OF FLEETING MOMENTS

"I SEIZE a few moments to acknowledge your letter." With these simple words does Mr. Judge begin one of the most valuable of his *Letters That Have Helped Me*, letters originally written to his close comrade, Jasper Niemand, but now the inheritance of all students of Theosophy. Readers who have the book by them may care to open it and run their eye over Letter VIII in Volume I, noting how many key points of W.Q.J.'s teaching are to be found, set like gems, in this one letter.

Yet, presumably, it was not written in some quiet study, certainly not in some leisure hour of philosophic calm. No, he was at that time a busy Editor, a tireless writer of books and articles; a diligent lecturer touring the States on behalf of the Movement; a practising lawyer, too—such was his profession—and, alas, a man whose health was already failing. But his mind was utterly one-pointed. He had but to lift his pen and Theosophic wisdom flowed from it, so that even "a few moments" could be turned to account, those little moments that, all too often, others let slip as heedlessly as grains of sand running through their fingers. Small as they are, he sees them in several different aspects. He appraises their potential and their quality. He dignifies them by calling them "the sons of Kala."

Think, first, of their potential—yes, the potential of those tiny things, the moments, which race away from us with every tick of our watches but are yet to be met up with again in the days and years ahead. "The future, then, for each," says Mr. Judge, "will come from each present moment. As we use the moment so we shift the future up or down for good or ill; for the future being only a word for the present—not yet come—we have to see to the present more than all. If the present is full of doubt or vacillation, so will be the future; if full of confidence, calmness, hope, courage and intelligence, thus also will be the future."

Do we think of the moments like that? Can a moment really play a part in the making of our Karma? Why not?—for moments are successive, leading on through hours and days and years until

our life-span is completed. It would be folly to underrate them merely because of smallness. Are not our bodies themselves made up of atoms?

Mr. Judge sees this principle of succession clearly. "The moments as they fly past before us, carrying all things with them in long procession, are the atoms of Time, the sons of Kala." These words occur near the beginning of his strange story "The Magic Screen of Time" which ends with the injunction, "Listen to the march of the Future." But the future can only come because of the moments, tiny as they are. And rightly does Mr. Judge say that according to our use of them will that future be good or ill.

It is our usage that gives them their quality, for the moments themselves are neutral. If some prove of value to us and others not, that, again, is our own doing, and before we can avow as firmly as Mr. Judge that "we care not for those moments which relate alone to our body," we must have learnt, to some extent at least, to "live in our hearts," *i.e.*, in our true selfhood where we "prove that space and time exist not."

Such a transition is not easily achieved and Mr. Judge's advice concerning it may at first seem somewhat paradoxical. We would expect him to bid us make, perhaps, a tremendous effort of self-control, to *will* ourselves into becoming different, to renounce this, that or the other. But see what he says—actually in the very letter he sat down to write in those "few moments." The first step in *becoming* is Resignation. Resignation is the sure, true, and royal road....Assert to yourself that it is not of the slightest consequence what you were yesterday, but in every moment strive for that moment; the results will follow of themselves.

What a maxim for a lifetime! *In every moment strive for that moment.* Our own potential, like the moment's, would be exploited to the full by such one-pointedness of action. Free from regret for lost or misspent time, from dissatisfaction or foreboding due to "what you were yesterday," a student acting on that advice would gain a bonus of energy for the work on hand. Mr. Judge debars futile looking back. "I care not what I *was*, or what anyone *was*. I only look for what I am each moment. For as each moment is and

at once is not, it must follow that if we think of the past we forget the present, and while we forget, the moments fly by us, making more past. Then regret nothing, not even the greatest follies of your life, for they are gone, and you are to work in the present which is both past and future at once."

Does not this bring home to us how weighty the moment is? It, too, is in a state of constant becoming—becoming, mysteriously, both past and future simultaneously. Well may Mr. Judge remind us that "nothing in the material world endures absolutely unchanged in itself or its conditions, even for the smallest conceivable portion of time. All that *is*, is forever in process of *becoming* something else. This is an old established doctrine called, in the East, the "doctrine of the constant, eternal change of every atom from state to state."

To one holding the doctrine of *becoming*, every moment even as it passes matters much, yet Mr. Judge tells us that "the soul of all is measured by the whole of Time and not by a part." He enlarges upon this in a reply to an inquiry evidently put to him by his correspondent. "You ask about the 'moment of choice.' It is made up of all moments. It is not in space or time, but is the aggregation of those moments flying by us each instant. It is referred to...as a period not yet arrived for the race, when it will as a whole be compelled to make choice for good or evil" (*Letters*, p. 5). This is a true view of inner direction; no one moment, however apparently meaningful, really determines it; rather does every moment, however unconsciously lived and used, have its cumulative effect on the individual, so that a crisis, if it come, must needs be dealt with by him *as he then is*. But that, Mr. Judge warns us, is by no means the end of the matter. "Even if it"—the choice for good or evil—"be presented to him and he refuse, he will be brought to the choice in future existences." Then will he find, as already stated, that that moment is made up of *all* his moments.

A solemn thought, and one that we may flinch from believing, fearing that as our progress is lamentably slow, *the* moment when it comes may find us unready. But again Mr. Judge draws encouragement from the doctrine of Becoming, in which the tiny

fleeting moments play so important a part. "The processes of preparation go silently on till the individual, all unconscious, reaches the moment when the one needed force touches him, and then every prepared constituent falls instantly into place and the being is—as it were—reconstructed at once. Conceptions, relations, aims are revolutionized."

How this comes about must remain a mystery to us, we looking at our life's events mainly from the outside and often misjudging them. We may have to go a pretty long journey into time before realizing that what seemed "all wrong" for us was in reality "all right." Again Mr. Judge speaks his word of wisdom. "It is best not to inquire into some of the mysteries of life, but surely a full reliance upon the Spirit within and upon the law that the hands that smite us are our own, will relieve the pressure of some events that seem mysteries. I find the greatest consolation in these reflections, and then I see that each moment is mine, and that when gone it is passed and merged into the sum of my being: and so I must strive to Be. Thus I may hope to become in time the conscious possessor of the whole of Being."

This ultimate goal of *Being*, as opposed to the ever-changing flow of becoming, is to be attained to moment by moment, which is why anything that Mr. Judge has to say of these often disregarded, even despised, scraps of time is so valuable. Yet none could speak with greater insight than he of the mystery of Time itself. We have two fine articles from his pen on this great subject, the one on "Cycles," to be found in *The Heart Doctrine*, the other, on "Cyclic Impression and Return and Our Evolution," a reprint of the lecture delivered by him before the Convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, held at Chicago in April 1892 (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 24*). In THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for October 1991 appeared an equally valuable reprint of another of his addresses, this time on "Cycles and Cyclic Law," delivered to the Theosophical Congress at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago World's Fair, in September 1893.

In all of these he sounds the depths and they call for close study, for he is dealing with what Patanjali himself sees as a most

recondite theme. Says that Sage in Book III of his Yoga Aphorisms (Verse 53): "A great and most subtile knowledge springs from the discrimination that follows upon concentration of the mind performed with regard to the relation between moments and their order." On this Mr. Judge comments: "Patanjali speaks of ultimate divisions of time which cannot be further divided, and of the order in which they precede and succeed each other. It is asserted that a perception of these minute periods can be acquired, and the result will be that he who discriminates thus goes on to greater and wider perception of principles in nature which are so recondite that modern philosophy does not even know of their existence."

The mere perusal of these words may quicken in us a sense of the deep mystery and sublime order prevailing in the cosmos. But understanding is far beyond us. And what matter? More immediate are the tiny sons of Kala.

It is with these that Mr. Judge would have us concern ourselves. He does not bid us look at "the grand clock of the Universe," as he calls it, but he speaks for all of us when he claims, "Each moment is mine," and urges, "In every moment strive for that moment."

Fellow students, let us keep watch. Let us have done with "stray moments." Rather let us seize them, even as Mr. Judge did, in their flight. So acting, or endeavouring to act, we have his assurance, backed by his wisdom and experience, "When the hour strikes it will then find you ready."

THERE is one eternal Law in nature, one that always tends to adjust contraries and to produce final harmony. It is owing to this law of spiritual development superseding the physical and purely intellectual, that mankind will become freed from its false gods and find itself finally—SELF-REDEEMED.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 420

EXPANDING MENTAL HORIZONS

The seeds of wisdom cannot sprout and grow in airless space. To live and reap experience, the mind needs breadth and depth and points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

THERE is a good deal of discussion these days about the need to liberate the mind from all the factors which condition it. While much is but idle talk, some there are who show genuine concern; and to these the following remarks may be of some value.

It is true that most people today have minds which are conditioned to such an extent that they have become incapable of thinking independently. A conditioned mind is prejudiced and limited, narrow and sectarian.

The mind needs breadth. Its horizon must expand; its frontiers must be enlarged. The mind must be liberalized. But the mind also needs depth. A shallow mind thinks on the surface and is incapable of probing below the appearance of things. It lacks understanding altogether.

Madame Blavatsky in her exposition on the true objects of education states that children should be taught "more than anything else to think and reason for themselves." Alas! the art of independent thinking is a lost one in our civilization, and many there are who are content to have their thinking done by proxy. Their opinions are borrowed from their background, their environment, the party they belong to, the newspaper they read.

A school of thought has arisen which prescribes a drastic remedy: namely, no reading, no political views, no cultural or religious traditions. These are all factors which condition the mind. Reject them and be free! Have no ideals, no ideas!

Apart from the utter impracticability of following such a course—for how can one break away from all associations, when life in the body is itself conditioned existence!—would it be desirable, would it be conducive to the real freedom of the mind? Or would such a course lead to self-delusion and ultimately to

insanity?

Must then the mind be void of all ideas? Is it the ideas *per se* which condition the mind, or the content of any idea? Small and narrow ideas, selfish and petty thoughts, do condition the mind. But the reverse is equally true: great and liberal ideas, generous and noble thoughts, enable it to soar higher and yet higher and thus to free itself. The secret of a free mind lies in the quality of one's ideation, and the remedy is, therefore, not the rejection of all associations but a discriminative and deliberate rejection of all those that are narrow, superficial, and ugly and the simultaneous cultivation of high, universal, and great ideas.

To breadth and depth of mind must be added the high ideas and the true ideals which provide the "points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul."

It is those "points" that give meaning to life itself. But if you have ideals, argues the advocate of freedom through the rejection of all ideals, you are a hypocrite; for you know you cannot live up to them. This is sheer sophistry. If you are striving towards your ideal you are *not* a hypocrite; you are an honest person trying to reach up to the highest you can perceive and formulate. How well did Gandhiji understand this! To him "life was an aspiration and life's mission to strive after perfection of our weaknesses or imperfections." And again: "This faith in one's ideals constitutes true life, in fact it is man's all in all."

How misguided is the one who attempts to decondition his mind by ceasing to have ideals and even trying to do without ideas at all! The very nature of human consciousness demands that we should think, and so the problem lies in learning to think well. "Thought makes the whole dignity of man," exclaims Pascal; "therefore endeavour to think well, that is the only morality."

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

—SHELLEY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Writing on "Two Cultures" (*New Scientist*, October 7), Michael Snowden argues that science thrives where people learn to confront authority and reject religion.

The philosophical base for modern science [says the author]—the pursuit of knowledge through deductive reasoning and facts—has often been attributed to the Renaissance of Western Europe. W. T. Jones made this point in 1952 in his book *A History of Western Philosophy: Hobbes to Hume* in which he argued that the pursuit of science emerged from a society that became increasingly disillusioned by religion. I'd go even further than Jones and argue that a desire for pure science might actually depend upon that historical development. Thus countries...that did not experience the Renaissance do not have the cultural attitudes—such as a willingness to confront authority and status quo—that are necessary to the pursuit of pure science.

There is in reality no conflict between true religion and true science. Reconciliation between the two was urged by H.P.B. in her article "Is Theosophy a Religion?" Both are important elements in the social wisdom of mankind. They are not opposed but mutually complementary. Conflict arises when religion is equated with "churchianity" and science with crass materialism. Says H.P.B.:

The modern Materialist insists on an impassable chasm between the two, pointing out that the "Conflict between Religion and Science" has ended in the triumph of the latter and the defeat of the first. The modern Theosophist refuses to see, on the contrary, any such chasm at all. If it is claimed by both Church and Science that each of them pursues the truth and *nothing but the truth*, then either one of them is mistaken, and accepts falsehood for truth, or both. Any other impediment to their reconciliation must be set down as purely *fictitious*. Truth is one, even if sought for or pursued at two different ends. Therefore, Theosophy claims to reconcile the two foes. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1*)

In some countries, including India, the belief persists that watching a solar eclipse may be so stressful that it is bad for one's health. British researchers Omar Mian at Manchester University and Rubina Mian and Doug Thake at Coventry University were skeptical of tales about eclipses making people sick, and even causing deformities in unborn babies. To find out if there was any evidence either way, Rubina Mian took her graduate students to a field in Briey, France, to watch the 1999 summer eclipse. By analysing their blood samples with a luminometer, the researchers found that leukocyte activity increased by 8.7 per cent during the eclipse. These white blood cells usually help our immune system, but if overstimulated they can damage DNA by releasing free radicals. Experiments after the eclipse showed that darkness, silence and temperature had no effect on leukocyte activity. But in other studies being prepared for publication, Rubina Mian has found that stress can have a big effect.

If watching the eclipse was stressful, by her own admission, for impartial researchers, then, she says, "it must be worse for those who don't understand what an eclipse is, or who believe legends about the phenomenon."

There are other "legends" relating to the phenomenon besides its effect on physical health. Referring to solar and lunar eclipses, *The Secret Doctrine* states that their "mythical explanations...we find to this day in India and Ceylon, where anyone can study the allegorical narratives and traditions which have remained unchanged for many thousands of years" (II, 380). *The Secret Doctrine* goes on to explain the mystic meaning behind the mythological tale of Rahu, a *Daitya*, a demi-god, the upper part of whose body represents a Dragon's or Serpent's head, and the lower part the tail; the two being the ascending and descending nodes. He is said to devour the Sun and Moon occasionally, thus causing eclipses. (II, 381)

So little does Christian theology understand the paradoxical language of the East and its symbolism, that it even explains, in its *dead letter sense*, the Chinese Buddhist and Hindu exoteric

rite of raising a noise during certain eclipses, to scare away the "great red Dragon," which laid a plot to carry away the light! But here "Light" means esoteric Wisdom, and we have sufficiently explained the secret meaning of the terms *Dragon*, *Serpent*, etc., etc., all of which refer to Adepts and Initiates. (S.D., II, 94 fn.)

Scientific researchers have yet to recognize that physical phenomena often mirror circumstances or conditions of quite another sort—developments of a moral, intellectual, or spiritual nature, or all combined.

Many decades of thought and experiment have been devoted by researchers in animal behaviour to the question: Do animals think? In his book *Wild Minds*, Marc Hauser examines what makes animals behave the way they do, and whether they have any mental abilities and emotional lives. Do they have a sense of self? Can they learn or teach? "Humans," he argues, "may be the only species to have evolved the mental tools for imitation and teaching." Hauser concludes that animals are not moral agents; they are not responsible for their actions, do not know right from wrong, and feel neither guilt nor shame. Yet he does believe that some animals have thoughts, though they are without language, or at least language as we characterize it.

The animal is certainly endowed with intelligence, but intelligence in kingdoms lower than the human is of a general or class order. Animal intelligence, though seen now in a new light, differs from human intelligence in *kind*, not merely in degree. H.P.B.'s article, "Have Animals Souls?" (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, March, April and May 1970), raises some interesting points on animal consciousness, that consciousness being hierarchical rather than individual as in man. In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 525 fn.) H.P.B. makes this suggestive statement: "The *monad* of the animal is as immortal as that of man, yet the brute knows

nothing of this; it lives an animal life of sensation just as the first human would have lived, when attaining physical development in the Third Race, had it not been for the Agnishwatta and *Manasa Pitris*—the celestial hierarchies responsible for awakening the mind in man. Earlier in *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. explains the mystery of, and the gap between, “the informing principle in man—the Higher Self or human Monad—and the animal Monad, both one and the same, although the former is endowed with *divine* intelligence, the latter with instinctual faculty alone.” (II, 102–3)

Scientists see man as just another animal, leaving out the thing that makes him special, writes Kenan Malik in *The Sunday Times*, London. The barbarous history of the 20th century has left many people disillusioned about what it means to be human. Such pessimism has also helped shape scientists’ views of what it is to be human.

However much we learn about our brain, our genes, or our evolutionary history [writes Malik] we will not learn fully what it is to be human. Because humans are not simply natural creatures, and cannot be understood as if they were. A paradox of science is that its success in understanding nature has created problems for its understanding of human nature....

Humans do possess consciousness and will. Most of us are happy to view human bodies as machines; but what we value about our fellow human beings is that they do not act as animals or machines but as people. Humans are unique because, alone among organisms, we are both objects of nature and subjects that can shape our own fate.

We are biological beings, and under the purview of biological and physical laws. But we are also conscious beings with purpose and agency, the possession of which traits allows us to design ways of breaking the constraints of biological and physical laws.

This is another way of saying that human beings are

transcendent, not in a religious, but in a very human way. We are able to transcend our immediate circumstances, break free both from our culture and our nature. We are shaped by our genes, as we are shaped by our environment. But we also have the capacity to transcend both our genetic and our cultural heritage. It is this transcendental quality that makes us human, not animal.

It is our Mind, *Manas*, the self-conscious Thinker, that makes us unique among all creatures. It is “our tempter and Redeemer, our intelligent liberator and Saviour from pure animalism” (*S.D.*, II, 513). It can make us rise higher than the gods or make us sink lower than the worm or gnat. The choice is ours.

“Manas is dual—*lunar* in the lower, *solar* in its upper portion,” says a commentary. That is to say, it is attracted in its higher aspect towards Buddhi, and in its lower descends into, and listens to the voice of its *animal* soul full of selfish and sensual desires; and herein is contained the mystery of an adept’s as of a profane man’s life. (*S.D.*, II, 495-96)

The phenomenon of “phantom sensation” in amputated limbs is not uncommon and has been the subject of medical and psychological studies. The amputees retain the feeling of still having the lost extremity and sometimes experience pain which remains undiminished for years. Neuroscientists believe this is because neurons in the brain that used to receive sensation from the limbs are still firing. “Most people think sensory representations of ourselves do not develop in the brain unless there is sensory input,” says Peter Brugger of the University of Zurich Hospital. If we have never had an arm, goes the theory, “we never develop the neurons that ‘feel’ an arm.” (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 97, p. 6167)

But some people born without limbs also say they feel “phantoms.” These claims, once dismissed as fantasy, are now

being taken seriously. "This is an intriguing observation," says Vilayanur Ramachandran of the University of California, San Diego, a leading researcher on phantom limbs. "It shows that the brain's map is genetically specified," he adds.

What scientists call the "innate sensory map that we are born with," is in Theosophical parlance the astral body. It is possible to feel arms and legs even though the physical limbs have been amputated or are missing from birth, because the real seat of sensation lies in the astral form. In some rare cases, when one is born without physical arms and legs and yet "feels" them, the astral counterparts are evidently still intact, and for some physiological reason the molecules did not have the chance to make the physical limbs.

Scientists have known for some time that bacteria can exist even under the most inhospitable conditions—in the interior of the Earth's crust and underneath the ocean floors. The latest discovery is that they can be revived from suspended animation even after millions of years. Bacteria in a salt crystal have been reawakened lately after a 250-million-year sleep. (*The Express Magazine*, November 5)

The bacteria's age beats longevity records set by other organisms. Scientists say that this could open a window onto a prehistoric world "that was both dying and being reborn." DNA tests indicate that the prehistoric germ is related to the present-day bacillus, found in soil, water and dust, says Russel Vreeland, a study author and biologist at Pennsylvania's West Chester University.

Not only is Life everywhere, but it is also eternal. It never was not, nor shall it ever cease to be, from the beginning till the end of a *Manvantara* or life-cycle.

Let tolerance be the world's religion, suggests Feodor Starcevic, Director, United Nations Information Centre. In a talk on the International day of Tolerance, November 16, in New Delhi, he said:

Tolerance, as defined by UNESCO Declaration of 1995, is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of the world cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is the virtue that makes peace possible and it contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace....

There is potentially no greater agent of tolerance than religion. All religions preach morality, civility, kindness, compassion, love, tolerance and peace. So prominent is the teaching of universal love among all religions that it could be taken as a common goal to them all. Yet, people have been persecuted, tortured and killed in the name of religion throughout history. Religion has been misused in the cause of division, discrimination and death....

But one thing should be clear: religion itself is not to blame. As UN secretary-general has said, the problem is usually not with the faith, but the "faithful." All great religions are equal streams of a civilized human co-existence, parallel depositories of spiritual wisdom and complementary sources of social guidance. All must therefore learn to give due respect to each other, and to each other's view of human life. The key to it is to foster knowledge, understanding and profound respect for all the world's spiritual traditions....

The question is not whether the religious communities and their leaders should co-operate. The question is only how best they will co-operate, for co-operation is an imperative if religious intolerance is to be kept in check and hopefully eradicated in this 21st century.

The question is also how to prevent religious intolerance through education, in schools and elsewhere. How do the individual communities in their religious education view other

religions? How is religion treated in the education curricula of schools in the country? Do textbooks reflect the diversity of the society and do they impart sufficient, equitable, unbiased and sympathetic knowledge about every religion, leaving no room in young minds for bigotry later? And if they do not, how can religious leaders co-operate in improving curricula and textbooks? And many more such questions.

Everything in space is in motion, heading somewhere. Even galaxies trudge along—giant packages of stars moving in unison toward unknown places, or sometimes toward other galaxies.

According to an AP report, when two galaxies collide, the collective gravity of all the stars and other matter in each causes a colossal interaction that forces the creation of new stars. A newly-released Hubble telescope image shows such an interaction. A large spiral galaxy is stripped into an odd shape while its central area hangs together. The wispy edges of the galaxy are pulled across space toward a smaller passing galaxy, only partly visible in the image.

From atoms to galaxies, everything is in continuous motion—not just at the physical level. *The Secret Doctrine* refers to "the philosophical metaphysics of a beginningless and endless series of Cosmic Re-births."

The immutable law of Nature is ETERNAL MOTION, cyclic and spiral, therefore progressive even in its seeming retrogression. The one divine Principle, the nameless THAT of the Vedas, is the universal total, which, neither in its spiritual aspects and emanations, nor in its physical atoms, can ever be at "absolute rest" except during the "Nights" of Brahma. (*S.D.*, II, 80)

Outside the boundaries of the solar system, it is other Suns, and especially the mysterious "central Sun" (the "Abode of the invisible deity" as some reverend gentlemen have called it) that determines the motion of bodies and their direction. (*S.D.*, I, 673)

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