

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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He should raise the self by the Self; let him not suffer the Self to be lowered; for Self is the friend of self, and, in like manner, self is its own enemy. Self is the friend of the man who is self-conquered; so self like a foe hath enmity to him who is not self-conquered. The Self of the man who is self-subdued and free from desire and anger is intent on the Supreme Self in heat and cold, in pain and pleasure, in honour and ignominy.

—*The Bhagavad-Gita*

THE aspirant perceives at an early stage of his endeavours to mould his life according to the precepts of the Soul-science, that he is inviting the criticism of those who do not view life as he does. His inner attitude and outer behaviour towards events and people in the face of adverse criticism form a very important part of his discipline.

Honest self-examination would reveal that much of the condemnation is provoked needlessly. The aspirant, through his lack of discrimination, tact and wisdom, also brings Theosophy into disrepute. He should not court criticism by imprudence, as, for instance, by talking about the principles of conduct he is trying to observe or about the discipline of life he is trying to maintain. He must also guard himself against interfering in the concerns of others, trying to improve them or to discipline them. Then, he would not permit his zeal and enthusiasm to carry him away to the

extent that he becomes neglectful of his duties to others; in determining those duties he may no more allow his own desire, even the desire to live the higher life, to sway him than allow others to influence him to break his discipline. These precautions enable the student to avoid pitfalls; in themselves they are factors of discipline.

For the rest, he should learn not to feel hurt or resentful if he is criticized for controlling his own thoughts, purifying his own speech, sweetening his own disposition, refusing to be greedy in his own interest because he is trying to guard the interests of others, freeing himself from the shackles of creedal and communal superstition, and so on. He should not yield on matters of principle just to please others—if he is sure that a principle is involved and not his personal inclination only—or break his discipline under provocation, as by meeting intolerance with irritation, or anger with sarcasm, or ridicule with wrath. The preservation of inner equipoise, whether he be praised or blamed, also forms part of his discipline.

The discipline which the aspirant to the higher life, whose ways are the ways of *Raja-Yoga*, ought to adopt is, fundamentally, an attitude of mind. It consists primarily in the control of the psychic nature, *Kama-Manas*, and not in mere bodily habits and exercises. Mere discipline of the body will fail to bring about a reform in the psychic nature. The principle to be kept in mind is that when the psychic nature improves it naturally brings in its train opportunities and possibilities for physical reformation. The grossest of the constituents of the lower nature is not the body but *Kama*. Its main characteristic in conjunction with *Manas* is egotism, the aspirant's greatest foe, and it takes innumerable shapes.

Fundamentally, the question of discipline is to be regarded from the point of view of the Soul's need, "for after all is said and done, the purely bodily functions are of far less importance than what a man *thinks* and *feels*, what desires he encourages in his mind, and allows to take root and grow there." But to live the life of the Soul is not to neglect the life of the senses. To look upon the senses and organs as deterrents and on the world of objects as useless is to miss

the meaning of evolution and to fail to realize that the round of life is the Cycle of Necessity. The *Bhagavad-Gita* fully reveals the true *Raja-Yogic* position:

Those who practise severe self-mortification not enjoined in the Scriptures are full of hypocrisy and pride, longing for what is past and desiring more to come. They, full of delusion, torture the powers and faculties which are in the body, and me also, who am in the recesses of the innermost heart; know that they are of an infernal tendency. (XVII, 5-6)

Purification and discipline of the host of living intelligences of which the body is composed imply controlling their psychic activity and subjecting them to the noetic influence. The human Soul has a duty to them. By his own thought, will and feeling the Soul has to serve them and to raise their status. "The world of the elementals," Mr. Judge has written, "is an important factor in the course of the student."

The action of impure *Kama* pollutes the astral body, making its magnetism impure; and the astral body in turn pollutes the host of beings making up the physical tabernacle. No physical means alone can purify one's magnetism. Bodily cleanliness, right diet, total abstinence from alcohol and habit-forming drugs, living in a pure place, the company of pure people—these, however, will aid in the task, provided the prerequisite step is taken. What is that step? Evil magnetism results from erroneous beliefs even though they be sincere. A person's beliefs, religious practices, social habits and unrecognized superstitions attract around him hundreds of foreign influences, living entities, powerful agents.

The subject of magnetic purity is very important and the student-practitioner has to learn to distinguish between bodily and magnetic cleanliness. For example, bodily odour cannot always be eradicated by hot water and soap, because there is a psychic cause for it. A Master once wrote: "There's a moral smell as well as a physical one, good friend." Just as wicked conduct creates a malign magnetism, so wrong beliefs create an unspiritual magnetism. One may be pure as the world knows purity and yet attract to oneself elementals that

are undesirable. Even though they may be relatively harmless in ordinary life, they may positively injure the true practitioner.

Side by side with the control of the psychic nature, the student has to cultivate the noetic nature. By the study of metaphysics, by meditation on the universal and impersonal Spirit, not only is the personal *Kama-Manas* subdued, but also *Buddhi* is made active and intuitive perception is developed.

So rules of discipline are of two types—(a) those which purify the psychic nature, and (b) those which make it easier for the noetic force to act through the personality. Jointly they help the aspirant to raise the self by the Self.

In the first clarity of vision that comes to the aspirant in his endeavours to discipline the lower and to activate the higher nature, he comes to recognize that he must withdraw from positions, both mental and physical, which he has previously held. Dissociation from attachments with the lower forces within, complete self-abnegation, whole-hearted devotion to the behests of the Philosophy, "exemption from self-identifying attachment for children, wife, and household," which the *Gita* recommends, impersonalization of all emotions, charity for the weaknesses of others, the practice of non-violence in the daily affairs of life, are all rules of discipline that the aspirant must strive to adopt—with the object not of becoming something himself but of benefiting others. The voluntary imposition of these and other rules which each must formulate for himself will so purify the disciple's magnetism that no man can be afraid of him, and he has to be so centred in the True that he has no fear of man.

There is no greater disciplinarian than Nature herself and her method of restoring balance when harmony is broken is ever merciful because ever just. Many wince at receiving her justice; those who love discipline welcome it as a gift of mercy. The disciple attains to Divine Discipline by helping Nature and working on with her, and Nature in her turn reveals herself in all her glory to one who has learnt the lesson of true discipline, and leads him to the goal.

THE LIGHT OF ALL LIGHTS

IT does not take much imagination to think about the different kinds of lights we contact in the great universe. From the flickering flame of the candle to the brilliant radiance of the sun, we have physical light by which our eyes see. Then there is the light of knowledge with which our minds understand many things. Finally, there is the Spiritual Light by which we realize our divinity, see how the divine laws operate in and upon us as in and upon all others.

Let us consider first the metaphysical aspect of light. Light is the basis of all manifestation, and therefore Krishna says that "light and darkness are the world's eternal ways." Out of darkness comes light; darkness is the symbol of *Pralaya*, or cosmic obscuration, as light is the symbol of *Prabhava* or manifestation. In the metaphysics of the Esoteric Science or *Brahma Vidya*, darkness and light constitute the primary pair of opposites. Even before Spirit and Matter, *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, there are darkness and light, but the light was concealed within the bosom of darkness. The darkness of night or the darkness of an eclipse, as well as the darkness of blindness, or of insanity, or of ignorance, or of soul-denial, are but symbolic aspects of the dissolution phenomenon of the manifested cosmos.

We need to grasp another important item of Esoteric Philosophy. There are two kinds of darkness spoken of. First there is the great darkness which makes light visible and possible. It is the mysterious darkness which envelops the lights of all gods and goddesses, all saints and sages. The *Ain Soph* of the Kabalists, the *Parabrahman* of the Hindus, the Absolute of true philosophy, is symbolized by darkness. Geometrically, it is the circumference without the centre, the serpent biting its tail, which has not yet begotten the six-pointed star of the interlaced triangles. It is of this supreme first darkness that the Buddha said: "Measure not with words the Immeasurable; nor sink the string of thought into the Fathomless." It is of this darkness that the *Upanishads* say: "*Neti, Neti*"—not this, not this; *i.e.*, not any form of life in the manifested universe. It is not evil any more than it is good; it is not hate, nor love; it is not being nor non-

being, says the *Rig-Vedic* hymn. H.P.B. calls it "Be-ness." *It is*. It is a state or condition which even the highest *Rishis* proclaim they know not, but in which they live their immortal aeons blessing universes. That mysterious darkness which *is*, contains within its infinite bosom the living *Jivan-muktas*, the ever-awake *Rishis* whose symbol is Light. The collectivity of all Emancipated Beings or *Jivan-muktas*, all *Rishis* or Resplendent Souls, is mistaken for God; Theosophy teaches that those who have attained perfection, those who can never fall and therefore are called *Achyuta*, compose the *Rishi-Mandala*, the Lodge of Adepts.

This *Rishi-Mandala* or Lodge of Mahatmas is the first Light, the source of Light, Parentless or *Anupadaka*. These Immortal Beings never sleep, never lose self-consciousness; for them *Pralaya* exists not. All lesser beings are put to sleep by the power of *Pralaya*, of dissolution.

The darkness with which *we* are familiar is the second kind of darkness, not the primary kind just described. That primeval darkness is felt only by the *Rishis*. The darkness *we* know and suffer from is that which arises from non-recognition of the Light of the Primeval Sages and *Rishis*. The first darkness is not of *Avidya*-nescience, any more than of *Vidya*-knowledge. The Light of the *Rishis* is *Vidya*, Knowledge or Wisdom; ignorance of that Light constitutes *Avidya*, the darkness which surrounds us now.

Let us understand this by an example. Ancient science teaches that there is invisible light, diffused and dispersed in the boundless universe. It is invisible, impalpable, intangible, unknowable. That Absolute Light is without qualities or *gunas*; in that boundless, limitless ocean of Invisible Light exist stars and suns, comets and meteors, planets and satellites, which are visible. All of us see the stars, but only *Rishis* feel the existence of the ultimate substance in which all stars live, of which all stars are formed. Let us raise our head to the sky and note how these two factors exist—visible stars by the millions, and the background in and on which they exist and shine. Now if we did not raise our eyes heavenward we would never see the stars, so too if we did not contemplate on the stars, we would never feel the presence of the Mighty Background. When we

overlook or neglect the existence of the Primary Light of the Shining Ones, the *Rishis* and *Mahatmas*, we plunge ourselves in the second kind of darkness, the darkness of ignorance.

Let us turn to the practical application of this metaphysical teaching on the subject of light. Human beings live and grow, labour and learn, by the assistance of light. There is sense-light, there is mind-light, and there is spirit-light. These three come to us from the source of Light—the Great Parents or Fathers, the *Pitris* in the real sense, of the human race. The light by which the eyes see, the light by which the mind understands, the light by which the soul realizes, issues forth from the source of Light which is Knowledge—*Vidya*.

He is enveloped by *Avidya* or ignorance who will not use his own light. The truly blind is the one who having eyes will not see, possessing a mind will not use it to understand, having a soul will not heed its subtle hints or its open commands.

We have a light within us, but we do not live by its radiance. That light is composed of our own human principles. Human beings have the same limitations everywhere; there are no superiors or inferiors. Superiority and growth can really be measured only in terms of the use anyone makes of his sense-light, his mind-light, his soul-light. The majority of men and women are ignorant because they live by the borrowed light of science, religion, or philosophy—that is the light of belief, not of knowledge. The difference between the light of knowledge and that of belief is that one makes for self-luminosity, the other generates dependence on others. We *see* by the light of knowledge, we are *shown* things by the light of belief. The light of knowledge is within, that of belief is without; knowledge acquired is permanent, but beliefs change. People do not recognize that though they read books of science they live by the light of belief. They fancy that when they believe in their own particular religious doctrines they are following the light of the soul; they are not; they are but following the light of the priests—a very different matter!

Theosophy says: *Live by your own light*; learn what sense-light is, what mind-light is, and what soul-light is. Let us learn how to

light this triple light, each one within himself or herself.

We must begin with the Lamp of the Soul, and not with that of sense as the moderns do. Modern science is still stumbling over the rock of mind being the product of the brain and the senses, and the brain and the senses being matter. To ancient Soul-Science, *Prakriti* or matter is *Maya*—not illusion in the sense of eluding our senses, but illusion in the sense that it so glamours the Light of Self—*Atman*—that its existence is forgotten, and therefore we speak of "the mighty magic of *Prakriti*."

Ancient science recommends that we begin with Soul because Soul is the parent and source of mind and senses. As the *Chhandogya Upanishad* puts it, the Self desired to hear and made the ear; the Self desired to see and made the eye; the Self desired to think and made the mind; and so on. The Self is the cause, the unknown cause, but it is knowable, can and should be known.

The Ancient Wisdom offers several steps for lighting our inner light:

The first step is the recognition of the fact that each one is a Soul—above the mind and beyond its powers of thought, of reason, and so on. Study of the human constitution as known to Asiatic Psychology and Ancient Science is therefore necessary. The Theosophical teaching as given by H.P.B. is identical. Study, analysis and meditation will reveal to each student that beyond the senses and the mind is the self-conscious intelligence, controller of senses and mind, and of all processes and powers within oneself.

The second step is to ascertain the innate nature of the Soul in relation to the Universe as a whole. Each must also recognize the stupendous fact that his own Soul or Self is a ray from the Universal Soul or Self—*Atma* and *Paramatma* are identical.

The third step is to learn that the principle of mind is the important instrument of self-consciousness, of human soul-intelligence. Though all facts are known to the innermost Soul or *Atman*, it is necessary for the mind to learn these facts. Individual immortality has to be gained by self-effort. *Atma* is immortal because it is of the very nature of *Paramatma*; but we are humans because of mind, the principle of self-consciousness, and through

that principle and by its help immortality must be obtained.

The fourth step for the mind to learn is that its immortality is dependent on its recognition and practice of the fact that through sacrifice alone it can go to the world of Immortality. Much confusion exists in the West about Christ dying for humanity because of human sins. Also great confusion exists here about *Yajna* or sacrifice as ritual, and as a philosophical proposition. Let us understand that it is the human self-consciousness, *Ahamkara*, the "I"-making tendency, that must be offered as a sacrifice on the altar of the senses. Religious priests have misunderstood and misinterpreted the doctrine that was taught as an allegory. Animal-sacrifice is a degrading custom and is but a misunderstood and faulty expression of the true sacrifice. The only scapegoat true Religion permits us to sacrifice is our own *Ahamkara*, the egotistical "I"-conception. It is to be remembered, however, that the "I" or *Ahamkara* is not to be destroyed but sacrificed for raising the senses and the body it creates and builds.

The fifth step is the gaining of the clear perception that the senses have a dual function. The more generally known is that of the impressionability of the senses to outside impressions, but the function of the senses to act as channels for the mind and the soul is not much known and its real mode is still less understood. The senses are rightly called "the windows of the soul," through which the soul looks at the grand and beautiful universe without. But the senses are something else: each sense and each sense-organ is a light lit by the soul, and through these lights the Light of the Self or *Atman* is radiated on the world around. The eye is able to see because the soul has lighted the eye; and because it is lighted, others can perceive that light. The radiance of any man or woman is the result of the light of the soul streaming forth from the gates or orifices of the body.

To recapitulate: (1) Each one is a soul. (2) The nature of the soul is identical with that of the Universal Soul. (3) Mind is the instrument of the soul. (4) Mind has to learn and gain immortality. (5) The senses have a dual function—to be impressed by the universe without, but also to stream forth the power of the

universe within.

Now we have reached the familiar ground where practice is possible. Without understanding the philosophical propositions, there can be no safe and sound practice. People desire a higher life and soul peace, but do not know what soul is, or for the matter of that, what peace is! There are quacks and charlatans of soul-science as there are of body-science; so let us be on the lookout. The five steps enumerated above can be taken by each one for himself or herself, with the aid of the study of Theosophy. We may now consider some elementary exercises, beginning with the senses and the brain and going up to the self or soul.

Sense-light: In the body are eyes, ears, nose, pores of the skin, taste, speech, power of action, of excretion, of procreation, and then there is breathing. These ten organs and functions have to be looked after by the dual process of purifying them and training them.

Mind-light: Next is mind, *Ahamkara*, self-conscious intelligence. It is this principle that provides fuel for the ten lights of body or form. When the *Ahamkaric* mind thinks itself all in all, it goes from death to death, from darkness to greater darkness; when it recognizes that it is but an instrument of Divine Life, and will grow and become immortal through lending itself in sacrifice to the body of senses, it goes from life to life, and from light to greater light. Through self-examination, study and meditation this "I"-consciousness unfolds its powers.

Soul-light: When the "I"-consciousness, the purified and spiritualized *Ahamkara*, turns within and begins to commune with the universe within, there comes the great moment of the soul. Mental recognition that *Atma* and *Paramatma* are one becomes a realization, an experience. Perhaps an example will make it clear. Just as theoretical knowledge of astronomy makes a great difference in our enjoyment of the starlit sky, so does theoretical knowledge of the metaphysical cosmos. As children, we looked at the sky and perhaps enjoyed its beauty; but when we learnt that each star is a blazing sun, that they are millions and millions of miles apart, that their light takes millions and billions of years to reach the earth, and so on, what a different sky it became! So also when we have studied

metaphysical and philosophical propositions it makes a tremendous difference. When we meditate on the universe within after a study of the Great Philosophy, we recognize the shining stars of different magnitudes and humbly bow our heads before their majesty and mystery.

Our knowledge of astronomy tells us how wonderful and grand the heavenly bodies are in their life-histories, but a thousand times more wonderful and glorious is the vision of the mind-soul as it sees the universe within. So let us learn to turn within toward the source of Light—the Light of all lights, which is wisdom itself. Let us look within for the perpetual and immortal lights. In the heart of the soul stand Mercury and Venus, and there too are the Seven *Rishis* whose habitat is the constellation of the Great Bear. There we find *Munis* and Sages, *Siddhas* and *Suras* and all the Shining Ones, streaming forth from the source which some call Krishna and others Avalokiteshvara, which some name Ahura-Mazda and others Christ, which some invoke as Allah and others as Osiris. The twelve signs of the zodiac, the seven sacred planets, the twelve "gods" presiding over the months of the Hindu calendar are all powers and forces marking cycles, large and small, in the life of the great Universe as in the life of the small universe—man.

THERE is no wall of separation between means and end. We have control over means, not over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means....The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.

—M. K. GANDHI

"MAKE THY VICES IMPOTENT"

THE *Voice of the Silence* teaches:

There is but one road to the Path; at its very end alone the "Voice of the Silence" can be heard. The ladder by which the candidate ascends is formed of rungs of suffering and pain; these can be silenced only by the voice of virtue. Woe, then, to thee, Disciple, if there is one single vice thou hast not left behind....

Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey. (pp. 16-17)

The image of the Path is a graphic one and has been universally used. Another common image is that of the ladder. As the aspirant walks the path, some changes take place in his consciousness. The ladder's rungs are made of suffering and pain, because in going from one step to the next, his level of consciousness changes, and in order to step on the next rung he has to be prepared to leave the lower rung. This necessitates detaching himself from habits, ideas, desires, etc., he has grown fond of—not necessarily those at a lower level; they could even be perfectly legitimate acts or desires by worldly standards. Obvious base acts like lying and stealing are recognized as sins, but the very sense of separateness and selfishness is the greatest sin which each one needs to conquer.

Again, the pain referred to in the above-quoted verse from *The Voice of the Silence* need not be the result of some wrong actions in the past; it could be that pain which H.P.B. describes as being inherent in the evolutionary process and which arises because of the descent of spirit into matter. We are at the transition stage, and this can be compared to the adolescent state when one is neither a child nor an adult.

The sentence, "Woe, then, to thee, Disciple, if there is one single vice thou hast not left behind," must be understood well. It does not mean that the disciple cannot begin to walk the path until he has some vice or other left in him. In fact, as Robert Crosbie puts it, Theosophy is not for saints, but for sinners. It only means that the aspirant should not allow himself to admit of a single vice in

him. For instance, if he is prone to anger, every time he loses his temper he must become aware and not get carried away nor try to justify it. Nor should he give up after trying many times, but, like a spider, attack that vice again and again. When the aspirant stops trying, he puts the switch off at the mind level. This is very dangerous. Just like it is easy to remove one's foot from the wet mud, but very difficult once the mud dries up around the foot, making the foot heavy, so also our vices, if left uncontrolled, will grow and overpower us. For all our faults we must become vigilant. It is not that desires do not enter the mind of a sage, but when they enter, the sage takes the position of a mere spectator and regards that thought as an outside invasion. We are required to take a firm position regarding all our vices and not get carried away by any of them. We should not dwell too much on these vices so that it would push us into depression, but instead should dwell on the opposite virtue. A naughty child, if told continually by the adults around him that he is disobedient and worthless, is more likely to accept that and not try to improve.

We are told that if the aspirant gets carried away by a single vice, then the ladder will give way and he will fall. If not checked in time, his vices will take shape and bear him off a captive slave. For a beginner, it only means that not only should he not *do* anything evil, but also not *think* evil of anyone. For instance, some people have a very strong imagination, and if out of jealousy or evil intent such a person thinks that his neighbour's car should get stolen or get destroyed somehow, and this very thing happens, it is called the "evil eye." Besides, our thoughts, good or bad, have self-reproductive power.

In the case of an advanced disciple, when he wages war against his lower tendencies, these tendencies become strangers to him, as he is at a different level. They can take the shape of a vicious, devilish entity and try to dissuade him from his purpose of spiritual progress. If he gives in, then he is dragged down from the point he has reached. If he persists, then he has to be prepared to fight the opposition created by this entity, which is not someone outside of him but a mere projection of his own evil tendencies. It is termed

"Dweller of the Threshold." To fight it, and for that matter to swim even a little against the current—which arouses a lot of opposition both within and without oneself—needs courage. One of the qualifications for chelaship is "a courage undaunted in every emergency, even by peril to life."

The Voice of the Silence speaks of the Great Ensnarer, *Mara*. "The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck." A footnote explains:

Mara is in exoteric religions a demon, an Asura, but in Esoteric Philosophy it is personified temptation through men's vices, and translated literally means "that which kills" the Soul. It is represented as a King (of the *Maras*) with a crown in which shines a jewel of such lustre that it blinds those who look at it, this lustre referring, of course, to the fascination exercised by vice upon certain natures. (p. 9)

"The unwary Soul that fails to grapple with the mocking demon of illusion, will return to earth the slave of *Mara*" (p. 9). Things like drugs or alcohol lure us to begin with and we find them pleasurable. But after a while they stop providing the pleasure or thrill that they did initially. So it is called "the mocking demon of illusion," as it creates the illusion of giving pleasure to the person but actually it cheats him. After a while, he neither enjoys that thing nor is he able to leave it altogether. Thus, he becomes a "slave of *Mara*." There is no escape from this unless he tackles it with deliberation.

In other words, this also means that the aspirant has to release his consciousness from the dictates of the flesh, or of matter. But then he has to pay attention to the natural demands of the body, *i.e.*, take food when hungry, etc. If the desire happens to be natural, then it will go away after its gratification. Natural desires come in cycles. Once he has satisfied his hunger, he will feel hungry again only after a few hours. We share many instincts and desires with the animals. Natural desires are necessary for the preservation of the body. Danger arises when these desires become unnatural. What makes them so? It is when mind intervenes that the problem arises.

When a person starts fussing about the taste of the food, it can lead him to gluttony. The intervention of the mind can vitiate a normal, natural desire.

Certain desires are *suppressed* in us, as we have knowingly pushed them to deeper levels of consciousness. The *repressed* desires are those we are not ready to own or acknowledge. The belief of some modern psychologists is that if a desire arises it must be fulfilled, else it could cause psychological problems; once satisfied, the desire would disappear. This is true only of natural desires. Any unnatural desire, once satisfied, goes on growing stronger without limit. For instance, a person addicted to drugs needs larger and larger doses to get a kick. As *The Voice of the Silence* points out:

Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Mara. It is by feeding vice that it expands and waxes strong, like to the worm that fattens on the blossom's heart. (p. 18)

Lust is generally interpreted as sexual desire. This is only in a narrow sense. In a broader sense, lust stands for any desire that gets out of control. The downward course that results from uncontrolled desire has been described in the *Gita*:

He who attendeth to the inclinations of the senses, in them hath a concern; from this concern is created passion, from passion anger, from anger is produced delusion, from delusion a loss of the memory, from the loss of memory loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all!
(II, 62-63)

On the other hand, when the desires enter the heart "as waters run into the unswelling passive ocean, which, though ever full, yet does not quit its bed," one obtains happiness.

Ultimately it means observing and controlling one's thoughts. One has to dwell constantly on good and ennobling thoughts. Thoughts have self-reproductive power. Once we allow base thoughts to enter the mind, they will keep on recurring with clockwork regularity. Sometimes when we are depressed and not

our usual self, these thoughts take firm root. Many of us do not necessarily have unwholesome thoughts, but we think too much about ourselves. We need to learn to think away from ourselves. If, for instance, we plan elaborate meals very often, then all our physical and mental energies are wasted in planning and preparing such food. Again, these thoughts would recur. Whenever we have such personal or unwholesome thoughts we must try to focus our mind on something else. With constant attempts to ward them off, they will recur only at long intervals, and ultimately fade away. Two different kinds of thoughts cannot occupy one's mind at the same time, hence displacement of base thoughts with noble thoughts is the remedy.

The first thing is to become aware of our lower tendencies, to know that we have to wage this war upon our own pet habits and weaknesses. In this fight we need to take help from our higher nature. Sri Krishna gives the assurance that even if a man of most evil ways chooses to do right, he is to be considered as righteous. Thus, even when a person feels totally crushed by his own sins, if he decides to change, he will receive help. Even at the eleventh hour one has a chance to turn to one's Higher Self and receive help. For, our Higher Self is like a jewel lost in a tank full of water. Even if this jewel has sunk in the mud at the bottom of the tank, it will be found, because it is a *jewel*, and therefore keeps its identity even in the mud.

EVERY Ego has the Karma of past Manvantaras behind him. The Ego starts with Divine Consciousness—no past, no future, no separation. It is long before realizing that it is itself. Only after many births does it begin to discern, by this collectivity of experience, that it is individual. At the end of its cycle of reincarnation it is still the same Divine Consciousness, but it has now become individualized Self-Consciousness.

SELF-RELIANCE AND SELF-DISCIPLINE

SELF-RELIANCE and self-discipline are fundamental to our development as human beings—that is, as thinking, *Manasic* beings. In the lower kingdoms, evolution proceeds by natural impulse; but once the human stage is reached, *Manas* takes control, the element of choice comes in, bifurcation of paths begins, and all further evolution is by self-induced and self-devised efforts.

For ordinary human beings, *Manas* is only partially developed in this Round of evolution, and *Buddhi* is almost latent, except in rare moments of intuitive flashes. In most people, the light of the Inner Self is obscured. For serious students of Theosophy, however, it will not do to drift along with the generality of mankind; they have to take their evolution in their own hands and quicken the process of self-development and arouse intuition, without which further progress on the Path they have chosen becomes impossible. Teachers, books, *Sat-sang* or companionship with like-minded individuals, are all a help, but in the final analysis we have to fall back upon the true Monitor within, for its light alone can direct our steps on the Path of Life. This is true Self-reliance, reliance on the Higher Self, on the Krishna or Christ within, and when that is attained everything falls into place. As we seek the divinity hidden within us, we discipline the lower self by the light of the Higher, and we unfold the sense of responsibility to all that lives and breathes.

Reliance on the SELF means the self-conscious use of natural laws. We surrender our vaunted "independence," which is an illusion, and conform to the Law. This surrender of the personal will to the One Will has been spoken of by all Teachers. Was it not Paul who told us not to "kick against the pricks"? Are we not told: "Give up thy life if thou wouldst live"? Plotinus said: "Leave nothing of myself in me"; and the *Gita* tells us: "Place then thy heart on Me, penetrate Me with thy understanding."

H.P.B. tells us:

It is only when the power of the passions is dead altogether, and when they have been crushed and annihilated in the retort

of an unflinching will; when not only all the lusts and longings of the flesh are dead, but also the recognition of the personal Self is killed out and the "astral" has been reduced in consequence to a cipher, that the Union with the "Higher Self" can take place. Then when the "Astral" reflects only the conquered man, the still living but no more the longing, selfish personality, then the brilliant *Augoeides*, the divine SELF, can vibrate in conscious harmony with both the poles of the human Entity—the man of matter purified, and the ever pure Spiritual Soul—and stand in the presence of the MASTER SELF, the Christos of the mystic Gnostic, blended, merged into, and one with IT for ever.

Such a change cannot take place without suffering. To die is to give up earth-life; to be born is to give up *Devachanic* life; to live in spirit is to give up the personal life; to become obedient to the One Will means the death of the lower personal will. With our limited vision we think that this surrender means bondage or vegetative existence. We have to learn to understand that such Self-dependence is complete freedom. Our "independence" is shown in that, in spite of all friends and custom, we decide to be dependent on the SELF. The impersonality of the Law is our safeguard, and on the moral and spiritual planes there is no more compulsion on us to obey the laws than on the physical plane. If we refuse to listen to those who have done so, whom can we blame if we kill ourselves? If we refuse to study the moral and spiritual laws, or, after listening to those who have studied them refuse to live in accordance with them, whom shall we blame if we destroy ourselves?

"Increase your confidence, not in your abilities, but in the great All being thyself," advises Mr. Judge. We *are* the Self. We have to remember this at all times, in all situations. Self-reliance and self-discipline are needed at every step along the way, even in the seemingly small and petty affairs of life. It is the small, plain duties of life that go to make up the larger Duty—of the lower self to the Higher Self, of the *Chela* to the *Guru*, of the individual to all Humanity of which he is an integral part. If we are waiting for

some special trials to come our way, we are waiting in vain; for we are tried every day and at every step, in our inner and outer life, as we make Karma and reap its effects. It is self-reliance and self-discipline that will keep us firmly rooted, even though storms may blow. The Goal may seem beyond us in this incarnation; what is expected of us is to "get our mental luggage ready" for the next. If we try now, we can change our Karma for the better in the future. "TRY is the battle-cry taught by the teacher to each pupil," says H.P.B. The only failure is ceasing to try.

For self-discipline and self-improvement the starting point is the mind. We must first discipline the mind and make it exercise asceticism. Mental action is causal; wrong philosophical formulae lead to mental vagueness and weakness and then wrong emotions follow. Mental vagueness and vagaries are removable, without strain, if the mind is directed to the Self, our Inner Star and God — itself a beam of Immaculate Light of the One Self, the Supreme Spirit. Under the influence of *Kama*, the pure ray of mind becomes enslaved. Will should be used to raise the mind to the source of Light (Knowledge) and of Warmth (Compassion), first during the period of meditation, until the practice becomes permanent. This is Self-reliance—freeing the personal self from the bondage of desires and raising it with the help of Knowledge and Love to Self Impersonal. As Mr. Judge states: "Seize the sword of knowledge. With it, and with Love, the universe is conquerable."

"Desire only that which is within you," states *Light on the Path*; "for within you is the light of the world—the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere." Further:

There is a law of nature which insists that a man shall read these mysteries for himself. By no other method can he obtain them. A man who desires to live must eat his food himself: this is the simple law of nature—which applies also to the higher life....Each man has to accomplish the great leap for himself and without aid; yet it is something of a staff to lean on to know that others have gone on that road....Your teacher, or your predecessor may hold your hand in his, and give you the utmost

sympathy the human heart is capable of. But when the silence and the darkness comes, you lose all knowledge of him; you are alone and he cannot help you, not because his power is gone, but because you have invoked your great enemy. By your great enemy, I mean yourself. (pp.30, 55-57)

Self is its own enemy. "Raise the self by the Self," says the *Gita*. For this great achievement no special gifts are possible; it is only personal effort and merit that will lead us to the goal, and it is while in a human body that the goal must be reached. "Death disappoints the Soul." And that is why at higher stages of Chelaship the Chela's discipline requires that he sacrifice the bliss of *Devachan* and take a quick rebirth. Success on the Path of Chelaship is made up of many sacrifices, many acts of self-discipline. And the summation of self-discipline in human development is reached when the Perfected Soul stands at the threshold of *Nirvana*, yet refuses to enter it, repeating after his Illustrious Predecessors: "Myself in the body am the Great Sacrifice."

WITHIN the Essence of Mind all things are intrinsically pure, like the azure of the sky and the radiance of the sun and the moon which, when obscured by passing clouds, may appear as if their brightness had been dimmed; but as soon as the clouds are blown away, brightness reappears and all objects are fully illuminated. Learned audience, our evil habits may be likened unto the clouds, while Sagacity and Wisdom are like the sun and moon respectively. When we attach ourselves to outer objects, our Essence of Mind is clouded by wanton thoughts which prevent our Sagacity and Wisdom from sending forth their light.

—*Sutra of Hui Neng*

THE SCIENCE OF DEVOTION

BHAKTI or devotion is a subject difficult to make useful to both Eastern and Western students of philosophy, or even to aspirants to the spiritual life. This is so because its real implications are now almost unknown in the West, and sadly misunderstood, for the most part, in the East. In the West, the expressions of *Bhakti* may be dimly recognized in the lives of the true Christian mystics; in the East, it is often perverted beyond recognition by many false claimants.

In order to understand *Bhakti*, we must study it as a science. This statement may sound strange to many, but not so to students of Theosophy.

In India, treatises such as the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* have existed for untold centuries, but without a clear intellectual grasp of their meaning and intent, wrong applications have been made of their teachings.

Generally speaking, it may be said that *Bhakti* deals with the heart side of the discipline required to live the spiritual life. But in neither East nor West is it seen as but part of that discipline which, if properly understood and undertaken, involves the threefold use of Head (Knowledge), Heart (Devotion) and Hands (Action). Without knowledge, *Bhakti* becomes a sort of passive, sentimental quietism, if not worse and more dangerous—mediumship; and without works, *i.e.*, the expression in action of both knowledge and love, it is fruitless and of no benefit. The understanding of the mind and the apperception of the heart are not sufficient unless they produce altruistic action.

The *Bhakta* or devotee is called a "Lover of God" or of the Self—that God seated in the heart of every being, that Self which is the life and intelligent core of every creature. Otherwise he is not the true "Lover." But there is an insidious danger in this conception. We are warned against the subtle temptations that beset those who choose to believe that *Bhakti* is the only requirement for living the life of Occultism. It is not; and the Path of the Spirit is strewn with lofty failures caused by acquiring a higher

understanding and intuition which see universals but which, at the same time, leave this sad world and suffering humanity out of their concern.

Certain temperaments are attracted to the Path of the Spirit by a "love of knowledge"; others by their natural sense of "devotion" to the divine, to the true, the good and the beautiful; others by the urge to do service and "good works." But H.P.B. makes it clear that all three disciplines must become one, or else the goal, Self-conscious life in Spirit, will not be reached.

She points out that "great intellect and too much knowledge are a two-edged weapon in life." They may be instruments for evil as well as for good. This is not difficult to understand. But, although the heart can save the mind, it is not so easy to realize that it, too, must be saved by positive, active work for others. Otherwise the *Bhakta* will drift into the selfish sleep of peace and rest, known in India as *Mukti*.

Let us consider some of the teachings of the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*. Narada is said to have been a great *Bhakta* and was one of the seven great *Rishis*, a Son of Brahma. In *The Secret Doctrine* and in *The Theosophical Glossary* we are told something about him. He is "one of the most mysterious personages" in the Brahmanical sacred symbology; he is a ruler of events during various Karmic cycles; the personification, in a sense, of the great human cycle; a *Dhyan Chohan*. Some of the most occult hymns of the *Rig Veda* are ascribed to him. He was cursed by Daksha, the personified Creative Force, because he persuaded Daksha's sons to remain celibates and *yogis* and to be reborn time after time on this earth. He was the inventor of the "soul-echoing" *Vina*. H.P.B. tells us that Narada was "rebellious" and "incomprehensible" and closely connected with occult doctrines and secret cycles, a *Deva-Rishi* of Occultism.

Bearing all this in mind, Narada's 84 *Bhakti Sutras* become all the more interesting. They are divided into five sections: (1) The Form of Supreme Devotion; (2) The Importance of Supreme Devotion; (3) The Culture of Devotion; (4) Devotion beyond Words; (5) The Marks of the Devotee. A free rendering of some

of these *Sutras* is attempted below.

Narada defines *Bhakti* as love of the Divine, by attaining which one becomes contented and happy, neither desiring nor loathing anything. *Bhakti* is not led by desire but finds expression in the renunciation of the fruits of action. The true devotee is one-pointed in his devotion and leans on nothing else. But this one-pointed devotion to the Divine does not mean neglect of the humdrum routine of life. One cannot devote oneself adequately to the service of the Divine if the care of the body is neglected.

According to Narada, devotion implies the dedication of all activities to the Divine and the feeling of great anguish in losing It, the highest Ideal, from memory. This is allegorized in the many delightful stories of the *gopis* or cow-maids of Vrindaban, who were single-hearted in their devotion to Krishna and felt extreme uneasiness in losing Him from their midst even for a short while. Without a vivid awareness of the majesty of the Divine, devotion cannot be a means of spiritual development and is dragged down to the level of profane love.

There is said to be a regular course of training for the cultivation of *Bhakti* and the *Sutras* set forth the conditions under which the spark of devotion may gradually come to illumine one's entire inner and outer life. Renunciation of attachment to objects of sense, listening to and singing the glories of the Divine, companionship with the Great Ones and the grace flowing from Their divinely compassionate nature—these are some of the means whereby *Bhakti* may be cultivated. Companionship with the Blessed Ones is difficult of attainment and is possible only for him who is saturated with Divine Love. Evil company should certainly be shunned, for it gives rise to lust, anger, delusion, loss of memory, loss of discrimination and loss of all. Giving way to evil tendencies may seem at first like playing in ripples, but constant association with them turns them into a stormy sea.

He who has crossed over the ocean of illusion and is free from all worldly attachments, who has become free from the influence of the pairs of opposites, who is selfless, who dedicates all his actions to the Divine and conforms to Its will, develops an

undivided and uninterrupted flow of love towards the Divine. Such an one overcomes all limitations and helps others to do likewise.

Love of the Divine, says Narada, is not capable of being described in words. It is self-evident and needs no proof. When one is completely contented and at peace, words are not needed to prove it. The devotee forgets everything and lives in the Divine and for the Divine. But this, it is reiterated, does not mean running away from life and need not interfere with one's worldly duties. What is implied is surrender to the Divine of all consequences resulting from action.

The single-hearted devotees radiate holiness wherever they go. They are the purifiers of their families, countries and of all mankind. They see the presence of the Divine everywhere and at all times. The whole earth rejoices at their devotion and feels secure. They have transcended all distinctions of birth, learning, appearance, wealth, tradition and the like. By observing harmlessness, truthfulness, cleanliness of body and of mind, kindness and other excellences of character, they draw nearer and nearer to the Divine.

The *Bhakti Sutras*, like the *Gita*, enjoin constant meditation, and the Divine, being invoked, fills the devotee with Its influence. He becomes Compassion Absolute, a living embodiment of the Law which moves to righteousness.

H.P.B. gave her pupils *The Secret Doctrine* so that the metaphysical principles behind and within all things might fecundate their minds. She translated the Golden Precepts of *The Voice of the Silence* so that the head might be linked with the heart for their mutual education and unfoldment. And she wrote *The Key to Theosophy* so as to guide the awakening intuition to find expression in altruism. Thus, with head, heart and hands united, the true *Bhakta* or Devotee will come into being and bless the world.

ALL that is in tune with thee, Universe, is in tune with me!

—MARCUS AURELIUS

METHODS OF PROMULGATION

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

—I. *Corinthians*, XIII, 1

EVEN though ideas may sway large masses of people, they have a tendency to lose their hold and be lost to humanity if the latter through perversity and indifference ceases to give them life through a studied usage. Sri Krishna refers to this phenomenon in Chapter IV of the *Bhagavad-Gita* where he says that in the course of time the once-prevalent mighty art was lost. It is through disuse, neglect and short memories that ideas start losing their power and ultimately cease to govern the actions of men. It is therefore necessary that ideas based on the true be constantly reimplanted in the memory of successive generations and be continually charged with that vitality which conscious human usage can alone provide. The life-term of any idea is determined by the enthusiasm or the indifference with which it is communicated and received,

The ideas that Theosophy puts forward are but a reiteration of those same ideas of the mighty art which were repromulgated by Krishna and which were again lost in the wilderness of man's increasing materiality. The Theosophical effort was made to instruct the public in the doctrine which asserts the existence of an indissoluble link that prevails between man and man and man and the universe. Once the idea of Universal Brotherhood gets accepted in principle, the allied ideas of philanthropy, self-sacrifice and charity are bound to be readily recognized as worthy of practice. The Theosophical Movement was started to promote among people the idea of this great Oneness, and especially so among scientists and religionists who were parcelling humanity into two camps, each hugging its own fantasy to its breast. The teachings on Karma and reincarnation; states after death; the seven principles in man and nature; the

birth and evolution of systems of worlds; the progression of man—all these were given out and shown as dovetailing one with the other and as forming part of one synthesizing whole where no one part was in conflict with the other. Theosophy shows all evolution as proceeding under a just and conscious LAW from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, to be ultimately reabsorbed (with all the experience gathered) into the original Unity. All these Teachings were revealed in books and instructions, periodicals and correspondence, with the hope that those who benefited from them would in their turn pass on that benefit to others who were in need of it. The wheel of promulgation had thus been set revolving. It was expected that the realizing of the truth of Universal Brotherhood with its applications in daily living would make man act in all things and always as his brother's keeper.

Since those far-off days of 1875, the Movement has spread far and wide. The efforts at promulgation had necessarily to be directed towards the furthering of the original impulse and the giving of momentum and strength to the efforts at weaning away men from paths of error. The present effort emphasizes the spreading broadcast of the ideas of an impersonal, all-pervasive god-principle, of a just and all-seeing Law, and of a human evolution that must run its cyclic rounds helped or hindered by the free will of man. Societies and Lodges will always remain the ephemera of a day and their utility is judged by their adherence to the three fundamental propositions set out in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 14 *et seq.*). If they have failed in this task, they can always pick themselves up and continue the work in the light of Truth and the Divine Paramitas. Whatever the record, the future and the present hold vast potentialities for good which can be tapped by the promulgation of the True. There is no time limit to effort.

It is a fundamental duty of Theosophists to hold forth to the public that anyone who is searching for the Perennial Philosophy can have easy access to it at places centrally situated, and that even if these remain far removed for some, clarification, advice

and instruction can be readily available through correspondence. Once that such centres of force are established, therefrom must flow such information and instruction as would dissolve in men's minds the hard encrustations of superstition and bigotry with their attendant evils of fanaticism and casuistry. The pernicious, soul-destroying idea that one need not fear the effects of wrongdoing because absolutions, gifts and favours can be purchased by grovelling before and fawning upon a god has to be shown to be the fabrication of the clergy in most religious systems. Old and decrepit edifices built on crumbling foundations of half-truths and deceits have to be pulled down and good ideas planted on clean places. In this task, Theosophy has to fight intolerance, prejudice, ignorance and selfishness which hide under the mantle of faith in a personal god and behind the assumption of an air of piety. To gather the strength necessary to do all this, the student has to clean his own Augean stables lest with soiling substances residing in him he become the centre of a turbulent force which gathers strength at each occasion when he allows disharmony to prevail between word and act. In trying to introduce reforms and present a new orientation, care has to be taken that the public is not roused to useless criticism and that storms are not unnecessarily raised where complete calmness is essential to make minds receptive to new ideas.

Whatever be the form that the act of promulgation may take, the state of the inner man—harmonious or disturbed—is bound to percolate through to his audience. When a sage or saint writes or speaks, his message carries an inner atmosphere that has the quality of his wisdom, compassion and piety. Common words and familiar ideas get invested with a new import and emphasis that seem to run with his message and remain potent for good across large periods of time. On the other hand, when the student becomes lethargic in the fight against his lower nature and starts preaching that standard of morality which he does not take the trouble to maintain himself, he sets up an inner turbulence that keeps him on the boil. His imbalance percolates through his speech, denuding it of its power to help and benefit and protect.

Where promulgation is through the spoken word, the level of intelligence of the audience has to be taken into account and the speech adjusted to that level. The effort at dissemination should not resemble that of a condescending elder talking to children. Such an attitude is irksome and the hold on the audience is to that extent weakened. The exposition should not be over-simple, nor on the other hand should it go over the heads of the majority. The atmosphere of the meeting should not be that of a new prophet laying down the law to errant mortals, nor should it be apologetic because the enunciation of truths may offend the susceptibilities of some or clash head-on with their preconceived ideas. The exposition should be in such manner as to imply that the lecturer is but passing on that which he has heard and benefited by, and which he now desires to make available for the good of the many.

Any disquisition, however lucid, on one or the other aspects of the Wisdom is bound to degenerate into mere oratory and fine talk unless the words are impregnated with a sincere desire to help. Such a desire carries the strength with which Nature endows him who is impersonal and altruistic. But to invoke that benign strength, the promulgation must be of the True and therefore not violative of any law in Nature. A deviation prompted by personal or other exigencies or a dilution of the teachings to inflate one's ego or to suit local prejudices and loyalties carries the taint of falsity and therefore spreads no beneficence. A good speaker gone astray will at best touch only the emotional and psychic chords of his audience. In such case, there can be no accretion of spirituality nor any appreciable enlightenment.

There are of course modes of promulgation other than by the spoken or the written word. Health may fix a man immobile to his bed and yet his promulgation may be effective for good. His noble thoughts directed by a purified will may roam free and carry his message of hope and cheer to those who may be in sore need of it. The power of human thought when directed by an altruistic will can create a floating storehouse of refined energy that can be tapped by those who can tune in to the higher

vibration. The image-making faculty can be used to visualize a sequence of scenarios picturing in action the triumph of right over wrong, of love over strife and of sacrifice over slavery to the personal. Such picturizations remain in the unseen atmosphere and if ensouled with a desire to serve can contribute valuable support to the movement for human amelioration. The typist at his machine can effect wonders if, instead of seeing his work as a drudgery, he approaches his desk all enthusiastic and eager to join in the grand experiment. Albeit unconsciously, he pours forth from eye and finger his enthusiastic message of hope and loving sacrifice, contributing that as his mite towards the recognition and establishment of Brotherhood. And he can be sure that his message will go far and wide and be of help and comfort, for the power which he uses is of the awakening soul. Has he not read that "the soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit"?

Where will practice, application and promulgation lead to? What should be the ultimate aim of the aspirant? The Maha Chohan who was referred to by Madame Blavatsky as "the *Paraguru*—my Master's MASTER," wrote in the early days of the Theosophical Movement:

The incarnations of the Bodhisattva Padmapani or Avalokiteshvara, of Tsongkapa, and that of Amitabha, relinquished at their death the attainment of Buddhahood, *i.e.*, the *summum bonum* of bliss, and of individual personal felicity, that they might be born again and again for the benefit of mankind. In other words, that they might be again and again subjected to misery, imprisonment in flesh, and all the sorrows of life provided that they, by such a self-sacrifice, repeated through long and weary centuries, might become the means of securing salvation and bliss in the hereafter for a handful of men chosen among but one of the many planetary races of mankind. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 33*)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Speculations are rife as to what the next century (or even the millennium) will be like. One thing is certain, says Sir John Maddox, former editor of *Nature*—in many fields the pace of discovery will be even faster than it is now, and the social and ethical dilemmas created by the exploitation of new knowledge even more haunting. Writing in *Time* magazine, he reflects on what can be expected in the future:

Our understanding of the world has deepened at an accelerating rate since the beginning of modern science 500 years ago. Our century, for example, has had the wit to ask how the universe is constructed, how even the tiniest particles of matter move and how life manages to exist in the face of all the odds against it....

The 20th century has made science more exacting. We demand more of its explanations. To say that the earth goes around the sun is no longer sufficient; we insist on knowing why. And in some fields—space research, for example—decades can go by while novel instruments are designed and built. A further complication is that every discovery provokes new questions. The more we know, the more we do not know.

To predict what lies ahead, we must often rely on guesswork. But the nature of our present ignorance points to problems science cannot avoid. The most obvious of these is the question of what happens in our head when we are thinking. Nobody yet has a compelling answer for that. People surmise, but no surmise can yet meet the tyrannical test that every assertion about the nature of the world must be proved by experiment or observation.

Maddox mentions some of the scientific and philosophical issues that will be studied in greater depth in the coming century: (1) Human evolution and the history of the human race from its beginnings. (2) The grander question of how life began and evolved over billions of years. (3) Understanding life, which means not only figuring out how the processes essential for survival are carried out within the cells of living creatures and what all the genes do,

but also understanding the subtleties of human behaviour and how human personality evolves by the interaction of genetic and environmental influences. (4) How man manages to think—"a conundrum with a millennial time scale," says Maddox. (5) A theory of everything, which can explain how the universe began and what its true nature is.

Investigators in various fields of study are realizing how little they know in comparison to what needs to be known, and this is evoking in them a sense of humility. "We should discard the idea that scientific inquiry will ever be complete," says Maddox. "What we know so far is that each question answered merely spawns another."

As H.P.B. stated at the end of Volume I of *Isis Unveiled*:

The few elevated minds who interrogate nature instead of prescribing laws for her guidance; who do not limit her possibilities by the imperfections of their own powers; and who only disbelieve because they do not know, we would remind of that apothegm of Narada, the ancient Hindu philosopher:

"Never utter these words: 'I do not know this—therefore it is false.'"

"One must study to know, know to understand, understand to judge."

There is increasing apprehension that today's scientific discoveries and their applications present certain risks for society. There is also a growing alarm that some decisions are taken without a full appreciation of their ethical implications and values.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council for Science (ICSU) held a world conference on science in Budapest this June, bringing together several scientists, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society. This first global conference on science in 20 years was planned to adopt a "world declaration on science and the use of scientific knowledge," and a framework for action, intended to

provide scientists and others with new ground rules for common thinking and joint action.

According to UNESCO, new developments in the life sciences—including cloning and genetically modified organisms—have provoked great public concern and have made it imperative that ethical concerns be at the forefront of research in the 21st century. This concern stemmed from the birth of Dolly, the sheep, in April 1996 in Scotland—a living being produced by cloning a single mammary cell. The worldwide attention that followed raised urgent questions on the consequences of research in the life sciences.

Ethical issues, such as the potential misuse of genetic information, the question of who owns genes and genetic code, and the acceptability of cloning human beings for reproductive or other purposes "need serious reflection," UNESCO says.

Earlier, UNESCO's 55-member International Bioethics Convention (IBC) drafted a "universal declaration on the human genome and human rights" that explicitly outlawed human cloning for reproductive purposes as "contrary to human dignity." The declaration was adopted unanimously by UNESCO member states in November 1997 and subsequently by the U.N. general assembly in December 1998.

According to Noelle Lenoir, former IBC president, "Human dignity, inherent to each individual, excludes all practices that tend toward the 'reification' of an individual or his or her 'instrumentalization.' In other words, a human being is a subject, not an object for science."

Scientists admit that they have not always discussed with the public the problems that science sometimes brings. To the ICSU, which represents the scientific community worldwide, as well as to large parts of the public, the core of such problems is the fact that the gap between the scientifically possible and the ethically unacceptable is closing rapidly.

The pineal gland is perhaps the least understood of our

physiological organs with regard to its exact function. At one time it was believed to be an entirely useless, although harmless, structure. But scientific investigators are now beginning to look into the purposes it serves.

It is now established that the rhythms of behaviour and of physiological functions of humans and animals do not depend merely on changes in the environment but are internally generated, and that it is the pineal gland which acts as the regulatory "biological clock." Roger Dobson writes in *The Sunday Times* (London) :

Hidden deep inside the centre of the brain, it is no bigger than the size of a pea, yet it sees all and knows all. To Hindu mystics it is the third eye, while for ancient philosophers, the site of the pineal gland was nothing less than the soul, the spiritual heart of the body.

Some sects still believe that this tiny ball of living tissue is the departure point for the soul after death. But despite the reverence that has surrounded the pineal gland over the years, doctors and scientists are only just unravelling some of its mysteries.

What they now know is that it is part of the body clock, an internal timer that regulates the production of hormones, which, in turn, control human activities from sleeping and growing to sexual development and maternal instincts. Far from continually being in a steady state, our bodies fluctuate from hour to hour, from night to day, month to month, winter to summer, and our lives are dominated by these rhythms....

In fact, "each of us runs on an internal clock that deeply affects our individual moods, performance and health," says Professor Michael Smolensky of the Chronobiology Center at Texas University. This realization of the importance of body rhythms is influencing the treatment of a wide range of diseases and disorders, from asthma and arthritis to cancer and epilepsy....

According to Professor William Regelson, an expert on body rhythms...there is still much to learn about body clocks and, in particular, the pineal gland....The pineal gland enables us to live in perfect harmony with our environment.

The pineal gland has other important functions as well, about

which modern science knows nothing so far. A study of the section entitled "The Races with the 'Third Eye,'" in the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (pp. 289 *et seq.*), will reveal many truths on the subject. In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 119), H.P.B. describes the pineal gland as "in truth the very seat of the highest and divinest consciousness in man, his omniscient, spiritual and all-embracing mind."

Scientists at the National Science Foundation's Center for Biological Timing have discovered that the body's 24-hour cycle may be controlled by tissues and cells throughout the body, not just by the brain. The researchers found that fruit fly tissue responds to light with no message from the brain, leading them to speculate that the skin, liver and other tissues of humans may also have their own "clocks." (*Health and Nutrition*, April 1999)

This amounts to an admission on the part of modern science that every organ, tissue and cell in the body has its own peculiar discrimination, intelligence and consciousness.

Occultism tells us that every atom, like the monad of Leibnitz, is a little universe in itself; and that every organ and cell in the human body is endowed with a brain of its own, with memory, therefore, experience and discriminative powers. The idea of Universal life composed of individual atomic lives is one of the oldest teachings of esoteric philosophy....If plants can be shown to have nerves and sensations and instinct (but another word for consciousness), why not allow the same in the cells of the human body? (H.P.B. in "Kosmic Mind": *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 20*)

What makes some youngsters engage in violent behaviour? The recent U.S. school massacre has stirred a debate over parental responsibility and the role of movies, music and video games in shaping a culture of violence among young people. That and relatively easy access to guns have often been cited as possible

factors in the Columbine High School rampage by two student gunmen. Most ethicists interviewed were hesitant to place the entire blame on parents for the behaviour of their children, saying it reflected wider societal woes. The general feeling is that everyone involved is accountable, including the entertainment industry.

In India, too, the rise in the juvenile crime rate has become a cause for concern. Ranjit Khomne writes in *Bombay Times* (May 21):

Crime thrillers on TV are very popular among kids, say industry sources...."Not all but certain gory details or visuals do affect certain vulnerable children," says psychiatrist Yousuf Machiswala of J.J. Hospital. He sees at least five parents a day who complain that their wards are exhibiting behavioural problems. "It's the same problem with slum children since TV and newspapers are everywhere now. But few seek medical help except in extreme cases if the child has scholastic or temper-related problems," he says.

Psychiatry points out that a timid child watching gory visuals tends to become an introvert or fearful, while the child with conduct disorders turns aggressive. "Kids like to experiment. They steal, smoke, watch uncensored films. It gives them a kick. But these tendencies disappear over time. It's when they don't, that it becomes a behavioural tendency."

Psychologist Dayal Mirchandani too receives a lot of children with phobias/nightmares. "Some are inhibited and feel that the world is a dangerous place while others are hardened and become aggressive. They often quarrel, thinking that revenge is the only way of getting justice. I consider violence more dangerous than sex," he says. "Unfortunately, newspapers or TV programmes are home-delivered, leaving little scope for discretion."

True, good parenting is fruitful. True also that violence in the media affects child behaviour. Yet psychologists and other behavioural experts have no answer to the question why it is that not all children who watch the same movies and TV shows resort to crime, as also why children belonging to the same family and brought up in the same home environment do not behave alike. Is

it not because these "experts" are oblivious of the fact that each child is a returning soul who brings his own *samskaras*—germs of propensities and impulses from previous births, to be developed in this or coming incarnations? These impressions and tendencies from the past are connected with Karma and its working.

Even with closed eyes, some people have the feeling, and rightly so, that they are being looked at. Biologist Rupert Sheldrake conducted a study of 5000 people over two years and discovered that most people, even if blindfolded, could tell that somebody was looking at them. The volunteers guessed correctly 55 per cent of the time, the success rate rising to 90 per cent in some cases. (*The Times of India*, May 7)

Sheldrake, while admitting that the phenomenon depends on factors as yet unknown to science, suggests that perhaps some sort of field is generated by the act of looking which the person being looked at can detect.

Is not the explanation to be found in the fact that the real senses are centred in the astral body, "those in the physical body being but the mechanical outer instruments for making the co-ordination between nature and the real organs inside"? (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 37)

People who can forgive offences, studies find, have better emotional health than those who nurse grudges, a habit that is tied to high anxiety and low self-esteem. (*Health and Nutrition*, May 1999)

Trying to get even with those who have hurt us only leads to a vicious circle of retaliation. Genuine forgiveness is not passive but is a positive act that requires spiritual strength. It has more than a therapeutic effect.

"Forgive, forgive and largely forget." "Cast no one out of your heart." These sayings of Mr. Judge have a mantram value.
