

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 67, No. 5

March 1997

THE ADEPTS

SOME OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS TO THEM

[The following is reprinted from *The Path* for January 1893.

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IN this I purpose to give but the condensed form of some objections made to the theory of the existence of the Adepts, and of the answers which might be made. The objections are variously founded, applying as well to the names Masters and Mahatmas as to other designations.

"MASTERS" IS OBJECTIONABLE because contrary to Republicanism or Democracy or Individualism.

But *master* comes from *magister*, who is a teacher, an expounder as well as applier of the law; hence *magistrate*. Everyone, in fact, has a master, whether it be physically, mentally or morally; and this objection is but the old and foolish exhibition of contempt for regulations of a government from which America escaped long ago.

THE OBJECTOR HAS NEVER SEEN AN ADEPT. This would apply equally to the assertion of the existence of Napoleon or any other character one has not seen, and with more force. For there was but one Napoleon, while there have been and are many Adepts. The ancients all relate histories of Adepts; the Hindus of today do the same; many of the writers of the middle ages and the traditions of the same period speak of them as accepted facts; the traditions of

all countries not so new as this give similar testimony; the Chinese, Tibetans, Burmese and other Oriental people tell of such personages, while Chinese, Buddhist and Hindu literature teems with testimony. Hence to support the doctrine there is a mass of human testimony larger than that which declares that Bonaparte once dominated Europe. Lastly, several reputable Europeans and Americans, members of the Theosophical Society, affirm on their own knowledge the existence of these Adepts.

THE MODERN CRITIC SAYS: *First*, why do not these Adepts come out to satisfy curiosity if they are men? This question is out of the same spirit that creates the sensational, vulgar, and prying newspaper which spreads before the public, because it is called for by the public, the private details of everyone's existence. *Second*, why not appear and destroy evil if they have great powers? The Adepts have replied that there is no power to destroy the evil man has produced but in the efforts he himself makes for purification. *Thirdly*, why not come and wipe out abuses? *Fourthly*, why not multiply food in famine time?

Other replies to these may be thus tabulated:

(a) The nature of humanity at present is the product of evolution, and only evolution conducted in an orderly manner can alter by perfecting, refining and purging.

(b) It is ridiculous for the Western nations to demand that the Adepts shall multiply food when everyone knows there is at all times enough food in hand, either unused or locked up by the men of greed, to feed all the hungry.

(c) If food were multiplied thus in the Western world, those who did it would be imprisoned and classed as criminal, for inevitably either the food would be said to be stolen or else the charge of interfering with trade would follow. In Berlin in 1892 the starving people took bread from the shops and were punished for theft. The moral and conclusion are obviously against the objector.

(d) No one can disprove the claim made that Adepts have multiplied food in famine times in Eastern lands where condemnation and persecution do not follow that act.

(e) Admitting that the Adepts have great powers, they have

disclaimed the power to alter human nature in any other way than through the processes of evolution and always strictly under a rigid law of justice.

(f) The Adepts do not yet appear publicly and proclaim themselves to the world for reasons found in the above replies, and also because the cycle must run its course, since, if they proclaimed themselves out of time, a wrong result would be produced, just as a note, good in itself, is a producer of discord when sounded out of time, place, or tune. This reason is the reason deduced from the law of cycles.

WHAT, THEN, ARE THE ADEPTS DOING? Not possibly could all their work be stated. But, for a part:

(a) Assisting all good movements by acting on men from behind the scenes through mental influence.

(b) Preparing as many men and women who are fit for it so that they may, in their next incarnation, appear in the world as active devotees to the good of the Human Family.

(c) Spreading now, through impulses given in many places which must not be mentioned, a philosophy of life which will gradually affect the race mind, and in particular the active, conquering Western peoples, thus preparing the whole people to change and evolve yet further and further until evils disappear and better days and people reappear.

—WILLIAM BREHON

THIS Lodge [of Adepts] is not like exoteric societies which depend upon favour or mere outward appearances. It is a real thing with living Spirit-men at its head, governed by laws that contain within themselves their own executioners, and that do not require a tribunal, nor accusations, nor verdicts, nor any notice whatever.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE RISEN CHRIST MESSAGE OF EASTER

BIRTH and death, like light and darkness, are the world's eternal ways. Even in the life of every human being, the two main events are the birth of the body and its eventual death. Yet, how few are able to see the spiritual counterparts of these events!

In all religious, mystical and spiritual traditions, facts about birth and death are touched upon. Ancient Seers, who knew the fact and the reality of which birth and death are but symbols, tried in many different ways to impart the lesson of that most common experience. Among these ways was the institution of sacred festivals.

There are some preliminary ideas which we need to grasp. First, sacred festivals are physical events—days set apart to do certain physical acts—fasting, or feasting, or giving of alms, or listening to discourses, or reading of sacred texts, and so on. Such days were fixed by the great Teachers of the ancient world out of their profound knowledge of Astronomy and its soul—Astrology—not Astrology as is known now, but real Astrology, which is hardly known. One such festival is Easter, which the Christian world has borrowed from the Jewish and Pagan traditions, for Easter was celebrated ages before the fourth century when it began to be observed as a Christian festival. It is the harvest festival; people gathered the produce of what they had sown, and thus the seasons of the year were utilized as festivals.

We must always bear in mind that nothing happens in the world of matter which is not a shadow or a reflection of what takes place in the World of Spirit. This Earth has sometimes been compared to a screen on which fall shades and silhouettes of the play of gods and goddesses. What happens to us here on Earth is a shadow of what happens to a spirit-soul in the higher worlds. Therefore these astronomical events and festivals are themselves but shadows and reflections of spiritual and cosmical events. We say that at the Vernal Equinox the Sun enters the zodiacal sign of Aries, the Ram. The motion of the Earth and the motion of the Sun produce this

phenomenon. But there is a soul-side to the Vernal Equinox and to the harvest festival. Every ancient festival, and Easter is one such, has a body and a soul, and unless we learn to get behind and beyond the body to the soul, we shall not be able to grasp the true meaning of the festival.

Next, Spiritual Teachers, knowing the facts of cosmic events, also knew the kinship between them and human events. They were past masters in the Science of Symbols. So these Gurus, great Occultists, made use of their knowledge of the festivals to teach humanity ethical and practical lessons. True, there is much ignorance and superstition prevailing today, but let us not with modern arrogance throw away the ancient Rites of Sacred Festivals. They have become empty, without force, magnetism and spirit, for we have a fallen, debased and greedy priesthood; but one of the tasks of Theosophy is to make each one his own priest, so that he may live in holiness and with knowledge. So these Gurus of old taught the masses to observe the festival, so that at least some might question and inquire, seek and find some soul-truths.

The Easter festival, then, which externally is the harvest festival, has its own soul. It has a cosmic aspect, but we shall here confine ourselves to the psychological aspect. Just as during harvest time farmers gather their corn and reap what they have sown, so in human life there comes a harvest season when the soul, gathering what he has garnered, rises to go out and provide his fellows with the harvest of his thoughts, feelings and deeds.

During Easter, Christendom observes two events: the Crucifixion of Jesus and his Resurrection. According to legend, he was crucified on a Friday and he rose from the dead the following Sunday. Easter represents Death and Life. There is a symbol of Easter which brings out this aspect of Resurrection or Life—the egg. People exchange coloured eggs at the time of Easter. The egg is a very ancient symbol with a universal meaning. The very word Easter is derived from Ostara, the Scandinavian Goddess of Spring. The old Norsemen exchanged coloured eggs on this Day of Ostara, so the Christians have derived this custom from the pre-Christian era. The Goddess Ostara was the symbol of Resurrection—New

Life hidden in the egg. There is also the Babylonian legend which says that Ishtar, the goddess who gave Life, was hatched out of an egg. In Egypt, too, coloured eggs were exchanged. All eggs issue from the Mundane Egg, which proceeds from the mouth of Kneph—the "unmade and eternal Deity." Hinduism, too, speaks of *Hiranya Garbha*, the egg or womb in which Brahma gestated.

The egg represents slumbering Life which, when the time comes, breaks open the shell and manifests itself. The ovum, the female germ cell, is an egg, which after fertilization grows into a new body. The growth of the human Soul follows a similar process.

Just as an egg has a shell, so has the human body before it is born; a chick comes out of a shell, a human baby comes out of a womb which is like an egg-shell. This physical phenomenon is but a shadow, a reflection, of a Spiritual or Soul phenomenon. The Soul, too, the Immortal Ego, is living for a whole period of antenatal life in his own shell. That shell must break and the slumbering Soul must come to birth and life. *Hiranya Garbha*, the Golden Womb, is the shell of the Egg, within which is the Soul. As our bodies need clothes for protection, so our Souls need protection. What every mother does in sacrifice of providing a protecting physical body for her baby, that Mother Nature does in compassion in providing a shell in which the slumbering Soul grows.

All of us are on the Cross—in the crucified state; all of us have to rise, to resurrect ourselves. We are living as eggs, and the bird is developing inside it; the birth of the Soul must follow. These two symbols, the cross and the egg, mean the same thing. Man on the cross is like unto the bird inside the egg; both will come to life, both will resurrect.

Turning to ourselves—each one should apply the symbol to himself or herself. Each of us is a Soul, capable of rising high in the heavenly empyrean, like *garuda*, or the eagle. That Soul is shut up in an egg, or in an envelope. Our physical body is like the outer shell, but as all of us know, there is a thin film or layer underneath that hard shell. We have two bodies, or two parts of one body—the physical and the astral. What blood is to the physical body, that our desires and thoughts are to the astral body. Blood circulates and

keeps the physical body alive, thought-feelings circulate and keep the astral body alive, and the Soul is caught a prisoner by the thought-feelings.

As we all know, our thoughts and feelings are alive, just as our physical blood is alive. Just as heat and cold affect the physical body, so pleasure and pain affect the astral body. Blood stops its circulation at the death of the body; astral blood or thought-feelings stop circulating when we cannot think or feel, and astral death results. Thus far man and animal are alike. But man's thought has behind it a self-conscious Soul, a Thinker capable of saying, "I am I."

These feelings and thoughts, this astral blood, confines and absorbs the Soul to such an extent and so forcefully that it is not able to exert its pure influence directly. It is completely influenced by the body and senses, by the mind and emotions. Next, just as our senses draw us out and lead us away to a million objects, so that the proper functioning and development of the senses is hindered, so also the emotions, which are like the senses of the mind, lead us out to a million likes and dislikes, hindering the true evolution of the mind.

The self-conscious Soul, absorbed by the astral blood of thought-feelings, loses its divinity—its real, pure nature. Just as our food assimilated becomes physical blood, so also our soul-activity absorbed by likes and dislikes becomes astral blood. Soul is sacrificed to mind and its senses and emotions, as our food is sacrificed to our physical blood. Impure food pollutes the blood, so also impure emotions and ideas pollute the Soul, further deadening it, and sometimes killing it. There are living men and women who are Soul-dead. Each Soul is on the cross, crucified by the senses, by feelings or sensations, by emotions and thoughts. The cross on which the Soul's blood is spilt is fourfold—one arm of act, another arm of word, the third of feelings-thoughts joined like the two feet, and the fourth the head-heart, the symbol of the living man. What brought Jesus to the cross? Not the Jews, not Pilate, not the Roman soldiers, not even Judas—all of them were but outer agents. By his own will and volition, by his own action, Jesus was crucified.

Perceiving that the ordinary life of the senses and the mind is not real life but death—living death—he made a sacrifice of it. Historically speaking, there is no record of Jesus' crucifixion, but mythically and mythologically every Soul or Christos is crucified, and each of us must one day or other do what Jesus did—"Give up thy life, if thou would'st live."

And so we come to the Mystery of Sacrifice, the Feast of the Passover. For the Jews, it is a festival commemorating the liberation of Israelites from Egyptian bondage. In ancient times, one of the traditions connected with the festival was the slaying and eating of the paschal lamb. Blood-sacrifice in any form is wrong, unspiritual and irreligious. Spiritual life, which is the life of compassion, cannot be attained by blood sacrifice. It is the degradation of a spiritual symbol. What needs to be sacrificed is the animal passions. The feast of the Passover symbolizes the passing from living death to real Life. People think that they live; they only exist. The actual killing of a young lamb by the Hebrews, as also by some Hindu *tantric* worshippers, is a gruesome and irreligious act. Symbolically, the young lamb is the new chela, the young disciple, who as one "newly born" resolves within himself to give his astral blood—his mind and senses—to the service of the Eternal. He goes voluntarily to the Cross, which means that he understands the significance of crucifixion in his own life. All of us are on the Cross, all of us are being crucified, but how many of us know it!

Now examine this same truth with the help of the egg symbol. Like the ancient Egyptians, even today in some communities there is the custom of breaking eggs—sacrificing them—on auspicious occasions. It is believed that thereby evil is banished and good results. Also, eggs are sent as a present, as a good omen. The Human Soul, the Real Man, lives within the egg of the astral body. Let us break that egg. How shall we do it?

First, let us resolve, with knowledge, to Live. That knowledge consists in realizing that Life is one grand Sacrifice. We must sacrifice the senses to the mind, the mind to the heart, the heart to the Soul, the Soul to the Spirit, the individual Spirit to the Universal Spirit, *Atma* to *Paramatma*. This knowledge is necessary—the

knowledge of the Law of Sacrifice.

There are three stages of sacrifice:

(a) Ordinary personal sacrifice: "I don't like to do this, but I guess I had better do it." There is no joy felt in this sacrifice. "I must give this to my kin or friend; I will be poorer for it, but I must sacrifice." This is the first step—mortification. Our lower nature is mortified for the sake of other lower natures.

(b) Extraordinary, but still personal, sacrifice. We sacrifice the senses and passions and mind because we want to grow and evolve. We sacrifice our own personality for securing Soul-peace, Soul-knowledge, Soul-power. Pain is faced and accepted in the hope of spiritual bliss to come. This is a dangerous stage, for spiritual selfishness and pride break out, and the sacrificer himself becomes the victim.

(c) Spiritual sacrifice, which begins with the life of true Chelaship and never ends—for at the foundation and centre of the Universe the Grand Sacrifice abides. The mark of the Spiritual Sacrifice is confidence that the Great Law works, and therefore one grows by joyous dissociation from the senses while every sense-duty is performed. Let us sacrifice the Inner Soul on the altar of outer service. The virtue of balance is in the mind, and the virtue of skill in the body, with which every duty is discharged.

All progress is in these three stages of sacrifice. Every sacrifice has its crucifixion and its resurrection aspects. Theosophy asks us to pay greater heed to the resurrection aspect, for thus New Life is touched. Man ever and ever renews himself in youth, till the Eternal Youth is born in him and he knows that he has "passed over"; he knows that he is the Risen Christ.

As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as water in river-beds, and as fire in the friction-sticks, so is the Self (Atman) apprehended in one's own self, if one looks for Him with true austerity (*tapas*).

—*Svetasvatara Upanishad*

FAITH IN THE TRUE

BETWEEN the acceptance of a Truth and its application lies the abyss of defeat. To take a ready illustration, Universal Brotherhood is now accepted by governments as well as by large masses of people. They believe in it. They have faith that a practice of it will be the panacea to much of the world's woes. Yet, wars have been fought over the years in one part of the world or another. Mankind is convinced of the truth, but is failing in its expression.

With the individual, it is much the same. He speaks and lives untruth with full knowledge of his deviation. He pleads exigency, he pretends that his wrong is justified and that were he to act otherwise, he would be running a losing race. To such an one, Right is an ideal worthy of stronger souls than he. At his level, he feels that truth must be diluted lest his very existence become of doubtful value. Thus, ideals have toppled as civilization becomes decadent, and men and women, losing their faith in morals, seek their pleasure in a surfeit of sensual delights. This phenomenon is nothing new. It was there at the fall of Egypt, Greece and Rome. Even now, it is creeping like an evil cancerous growth over the modern mind. The betrayal of faith is bringing forth its crop of evil brood. Parents have fallen from grace. Youth is steeped in lawlessness. The pall of darkness lies heavy over the veil of matter.

To the earnest student the advice, good at all times but more appropriate for circumstances such as obtain in our times, is to come out from among the multitudes and be separate. In the implementation of even such a simple advice as this, there is the test of faith. While being as one apart, the student must preserve Brotherhood, must rush to the aid of the distressed, must seek his comfort in the good of others. No article of faith can advise the harbouring of unbrotherly feelings, or of ideas of superiority and exclusiveness.

It is not possible that Truth can be inimical to Truth or that its workings clash with the implementation of other Truths. The basis of Brotherhood is just this: the adherent of truth is by that very fact a friend of other adherents of other truths. Not so with untruth. A

lie will readily oppose any other lie and fight it tooth and nail. A lie destroys Brotherhood and encourages the processes of fragmentation. On the other hand, Truth will find its sympathy and unison with any other Truth everywhere and always. Thus, departure from the Truth once it is known and recognized, becomes the betrayal of a trust in the Highest. It is the letting go of all that is precious and noble and the running after the will-o'-the-wisps of shadows cast by the deceptive light of the Great Illusion.

The stigma and blot of personal depravities is not limited to the life and circumstance of the evil-doer. It leaves its marks of degradation on all whom it touches, and thus by stages filters through into the national life. We thus see in the rulers of a nation a loss of integrity, a desire for quick and ill-gotten gains, prevarications in speech, and actions which belie the words that precede them. We have before us instances of a deliberate departure by nations from the paths of rectitude and honesty. Nations have supported nations in acts of pillage, carnage, rape, murder and arson, and, remaining behind the scenes, have abetted these wrongs and even defended them in the comity of nations, smothering the Truth under mountains of verbiage. Villains have oftentimes acted thus. To the student, they provide valuable examples of results which must inexorably follow upon a betrayal of the Truth. Today, the profession from pulpit and parliament of a faith in the Right is a sham and a front for the practice of untruth and unabashed hypocrisy.

Be that as it may, the student cannot separate himself from the degradation and the shame. He is a part of the race and inherits his linkage with this evil brood by his own actions of a hoary past. He can "come out from among them" in the only way possible for him to do so, namely, by affirming over and over again his faith in the True. Such affirmation takes various forms. It may be the proclamation of the Truth to the very face of lie. It may be the rescuing of some one soul from the morass of falsehoods. Devotion to the Truth furnishes the motor power. The rest but follows the initial action. Ere the student can do all this, he has to question the force and quality of his own convictions. Has he the strength to purge the lie

and lust of self from his blood? Can he erase the memory of past divagations? Has he cast his anchor of hope in a place where no storm will break it loose? Has he lost the fear of nameless dreads, of horrifying sights and sounds, of a vast and frightening nothingness? It is when he has achieved mastery over himself to some appreciable extent that he can call himself a recruit to faith—a soldier of the morrow.

The large quantum of faithlessness that prevails outside, impinges on the disciple's life at every turn and maintains a relentless pressure that makes his struggles all the more difficult. The insidious power of the general badness sets the traps for his unwary feet, his earthly appetites pull him in the opposite direction, and erstwhile friends and associates try their best to deflect him from a path which according to them could only lead to troubles galore. The force of a faith based on the True is strong enough to counter all these; for, in kinship with the True the disciple can draw upon unlimited reservoirs of energy that reside in Brotherhood. The disciple may know all this and still become untrue to his faith. His divagations may vary from the subtle to the gross and his mind may be rendered so dull that long years may pass before he can see the events in retrospect and understand how he came to betray that which he never doubted. This practically unconscious betrayal is to be guarded against and for the earnest student some indications may be given to prevent a malaise of the Soul:

(1) Indulging in gossip and slander, condemning of another on the say-so of others, are strengtheners of the heresy of separateness and indicate a betrayal of faith in the corollaries that stem from the theorem aspect of Brotherhood.

(2) The use of any force in life-action—be it even a thought—that harms a fellow-being or injures Truth is a negation of faith.

(3) Faith is abandoned when the pupil fails to propagate the philosophy once that he has reposed his trust in it.

(4) When he gives up the fight against untruth and evil and ceases to try, that moment he proves himself unfaithful to his trust.

(5) The disciple is weak in faith when he fails to protect Truth from defilement. Christ cautioned against casting pearls before

swine. Krishna said the same thing centuries before Christ when he admonished thus: "Thou must never reveal this to one who doth not practise mortification, who is without devotion, who careth not to hear it, nor unto him who despiseth me."

(6) Leaving Truth to fend for itself; leaving its propagation to the moment's fancy; not paying to it its due of homage and gratitude—these are signs of betrayal of the faith.

(7) Thinking that it is all too difficult and that at one's own level much may be forgiven and therefore much left undone—this belongs to the pessimistic disciple and reflects some of the despondency of Arjuna. As Krishna pointed out, this attitude is disgraceful and leads not to honour.

Any breach of faith of such or similar nature may be likened to the act of a deserter in battle. He does not care how his own defection will affect the lives and fortunes of others. He seeks his own safety in flight. The path of the faithful is arduous. It is thorny and also perilous. There are mountaineers who are undaunted and risk their lives for the glory of the climb. There are Souls who dare to dream bold dreams and to whom martyrdom is a culmination of their anchorage in faith. Round the Pilgrim-Soul there swirl passions and sensuous delights; ridicule dogs his steps; friends drop away as from a leper. But, if his armour of faith clothes him round and forms an aspect of the guardian wall, he remains protected.

Betrayal of faith brings its own reactions on the individual. That is nothing. But it intimately affects relatives, friends and co-disciples; and that is everything.

THE fish in the water is silent, the animal on the earth is noisy,
the bird in the air is singing.

But Man has in him the silence of the sea, the noise of the
earth and the music of the air.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ONENESS OF HUMANITY AND UNITY OF RELIGIONS

WHEN Madame Blavatsky launched the Theosophical Movement with its primary aim of promoting the ideal of Universal Brotherhood, she made it amply clear that we could hasten the advent of the Golden Age only if we would practise in our everyday life certain cardinal principles, such as,

altruism, brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once men do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the GOLDEN AGE will be there, indeed.

But if not, then the storm will burst, and our boasted Western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such a sea of horror that its parallel history has never yet recorded.

Here is a grave and clear warning that the dark powers of evil will have sway over us unless we wake up soon to our own responsibility and, learning the lesson of Universal Brotherhood, gradually do away with all our national, racial and religious prejudices which, if not eliminated, will only go to strengthen the great dire heresy of separateness. It may take a long time before people in the mass respond to the ideal of Universal Brotherhood, but in the mean time there is much that individuals here and there can do to create a proper climate for the acceptance of the ideal.

The great ideal of Universal Brotherhood is based on the spiritual oneness of humanity. As Thomas Carlyle put it: "Of a truth, men are mystically united; a mysterious bond of brotherhood makes all men one." It is a highly commendable position for any individual to be able to appreciate the truth that even though there are many different religious systems in the world today, and though "there are as many ways to God as there are breaths of the children of men," yet all these seemingly different paths will ultimately lead to the selfsame goal. They all converge to one central point of Self-realization for all, exactly as the spokes of a wheel meet together in

one common centre. Thus, while we may have different religious beliefs, we should be sufficiently open-minded to realize that we are all nevertheless essentially human souls, bent upon a common Divine Pilgrimage through life and approaching, by one way or another, nearer and nearer the goal of human evolution, which is the same for all and culminates in our spiritual perfection. No great religious teacher or prophet has ever made any distinction between men and men, but all have spoken of the Brotherhood of all humans at all times—Brotherhood based on our common origin and destiny. This point is well emphasized by Lecomte du Nouÿ in his book, *Human Destiny*:

Religions are opposed to one another in their form, in the material details of the cult, and in the human interpretations of symbols. They all agree on the existence of God, on the virtues, and on moral rules. Purity, goodness, beauty, faith are venerated everywhere, and it is they which should rule.

Jesus did not say, "Love thy Christian neighbour as thyself," but said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," being aware of the spiritual oneness of Humanity as a whole. In one of the sayings of Muhammad, the Prophet of Arabia, we find a similar declaration of the spirit of real brotherhood which should unite all human beings everywhere into one great family:

The best of men is he from whom good accrueth to humanity. All the creatures of Allah are His family; and he is most beloved of Allah who trieth to do most good to God's creatures.

Let us bear in mind that even though forms of worship may be very many, and all of them different one from the other, nevertheless the underlying aim and object of all worship of people everywhere is almost identical. Once again here is something that can convince us that Universal Brotherhood is an established fact in Nature, although those who are still blinded by their religious creeds and dogmas may fail to realize this.

If we can to any extent appreciate the truth underlying the words of Robert Crosbie that "God is not an outside God, but is to be sought in the very innermost recesses of our own nature—in the

silent chamber, the temple, within us—and nowhere else," then we must also come to the realization of what St. Paul was trying to convey when he said: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Whenever and wherever there are really sincere people who are true lovers of the one Godhead and of all their fellow men, we always find them asserting the truth about the unity and sanctity of life. Their daily life is their temple and their religion; and true prayer is for them a way of life.

It is only when religion becomes a way of life for us, so that we can dedicate all our actions on the altar of human service, in terms of Universal Brotherhood, and discharge all our duties in a spirit of devotion to the Lord of the Heart, the God within, that we can hope to be reborn from the inner and spiritual point of view and can claim our kinship with those who may be called the "Twice-born." This is what Jesus meant when he said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This second birth of the Christ within is an experience that is well known to the mystics of all ages, and it is about this that William Law has remarked:

No creature can have any union or communion with the goodness of the Deity till its life is a spirit of love....Thy reason and senses, thy heart and passions have turned all their attention to the poor concerns of this life, and therefore thou art a stranger to this principle of heaven, these riches of eternity within thee. For as God is not, cannot be, truly found by any worshipper but those who worship Him in spirit and in truth, so this Light and Spirit, though always within us, is not, cannot be, found, felt, or enjoyed but by those whose whole Spirit is turned to it.

When therefore the first spark of a desire after God arises in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care; give all thy heart unto it; it is nothing less than a touch of the divine lodestone that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time unto the riches of Eternity. Get up therefore and follow it as gladly as the Wise Men of the East followed the Star from heaven that appeared unto them. It will do for thee as the Star did for them; it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus, not in a stable at Bethlehem in Judea, but to the birth

of Jesus in the centre of thine own fallen soul.

H.P.B. too has indicated that Divinity, or the Christ-principle, lies deep within every human heart and requires but to be unfolded by the man himself through his own aspiration and effort to control and direct his lower nature and live up to the dictates of the highest within him:

Christ—the true esoteric SAVIOUR, *is no man* but the DIVINE PRINCIPLE in every human being. He who strives to resurrect the Spirit *crucified in him by his own terrestrial passions*, and buried deep in the "sepulchre" of his sinful flesh; he who has the strength to roll back *the stone of matter* from the door of his own inner sanctuary, he *has the risen Christ in him*.

True worship, then, can be paid only to the God within, to the Divine Presence within our heart, and this highest form of worship has been described thus by H.P.B.:

The ever unknowable and incognizable *Karana* alone, the *Causeless Cause* of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through "the still small voice" of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it, ought to do so in the silence and the sanctified solitude of their Souls; making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the *Universal Spirit*, their good actions the only priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*.

From the citations that have been brought together here it should be self-evident that true worship has nothing to do with external forms and methods or with man-made churches and temples; that the most sacred temple we know of is the human heart and consciousness itself; that it is our duty to keep it pure and undefiled; that we must fully recognize our spiritual unity and oneness with all human beings, Divine Sparks like ourselves, and "be in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother." Unless this mystic transformation of the second birth takes place

within our own heart-consciousness and we become like unto the Twice-born, we may have as many more Saviours and Teachers in the world as we have already had and yet they will not profit us in any way and we shall have only despair in our hearts.

Having surveyed the nature of true religion and worship, we can well appreciate what it is that prompts all those who have the good of humanity at heart to spread the Light of Truth and of Wisdom in every part of the world. They do so with a view to bringing about greater understanding, friendship and brotherly love among people of different nations, professing different beliefs and ideologies. As a matter of fact, in spite of the many conflicting creeds we see around us in the world today, there can be in reality but one true Wisdom-Religion which can be described as eternal and immutable. Is it not sad to see people who may be generally regarded as religious and God-fearing often inflicting, because of their total ignorance of these great truths, a good deal of unnecessary grief on others—even on those who may be among their own kith and kin? We thus come to a deeper realization within ourselves of the need to do our utmost to spread these truths everywhere around us, not only for our own immediate benefit but also for the good of generations yet to come.

From the ideas we have so far considered, we come to the inevitable conclusion that, although many of our fellow men still fail to realize it, Brotherhood ever remains a fact in Nature, since it is based on the essential spiritual unity of the whole human family. The next step is to pursue the comparative study of religions, which alone will bring to light the fundamental truths underlying all great religions.

It will be worth while seeing what the actual truth about RELIGION is as it is elaborated in Theosophical writings. Although the number of people we can expect to find in the world who are beginning to think along the same lines may still be rather woefully small, yet some of the most advanced thinkers have expressed views that are in line with Theosophical teachings. The following statements from H.P.B.'s writings bring home to us the very essence of true RELIGION:

There is but ONE Eternal Truth, one universal, infinite and changeless Spirit of Love, Truth and Wisdom, impersonal, therefore bearing a different name with every nation, one Light for all, in which the whole Humanity lives and moves, and has its being. Like the spectrum in optics, giving multicoloured and various rays, which are yet caused by one and the same sun, so theologies and sacerdotal systems are many. But the Universal Religion *can only be one*, if we accept the real, primitive meaning of the root of that word. We, Theosophists, so accept it; and therefore say, "We are all brothers—by the laws of Nature, of birth, and death, as also by the laws of our utter helplessness from birth to death in this world of sorrow and deceptive illusions. Let us, then, love, help, and mutually defend each other against this spirit of deception; and while holding to that which each of us accepts as his ideal of truth and reality—*i.e.*, to the religion which suits each of us best—let us unite ourselves to form a practical nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RACE, CREED, OR COLOUR" ("What Good Has Theosophy Done in India?" *Lucifer*, April 1888; THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, March 1979)

Theosophy is not *a Religion*...but RELIGION itself, the one bond of unity, which is so universal and all-embracing that no man, as no speck—from gods and mortals down to animals, the blade of grass and atom—can be outside of its light. Therefore, any organization or body of that name must necessarily be a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD. ("Is Theosophy a Religion?": *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1*)

It is perhaps desirable to state unequivocally that the teachings, however fragmentary and incomplete, contained in these volumes [*The Secret Doctrine*], belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these. Sprung from it in their origins, the various religious schemes are now made to merge back into their original element, out of which every mystery and dogma has grown, developed, and become materialized. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, viii)

Lest anyone should make a false deduction from the above

quotations, let it be clearly understood that Theosophy, or the Wisdom-Religion, is to be looked upon, not as a synthesis of the different religious teachings, but rather as that ancient and undivided whole which is the source from which all religions have sprung and of which they represent partial formulations. The following remarks of H.P.B.'s may further clarify our understanding of the nature of this One Religion:

Unity of everything in the universe implies and justifies our belief in the existence of a knowledge at once scientific, philosophical and religious, showing the necessity and actuality of the connection of man and all things in the universe with each other; which knowledge, therefore, becomes essentially RELIGION, and must be called in its integrity and universality by the distinctive name of WISDOM-RELIGION.

It is from this WISDOM-RELIGION that all the various individual "Religions" (erroneously so called) have sprung, forming in their turn offshoots and branches, and also all the minor creeds, based upon and always originated through some personal experience in psychology. Every such religion, or religious offshoot, be it considered orthodox or heretical, wise or foolish, started originally as a clear and unadulterated stream from the Mother-Source. The fact that each became in time polluted with purely human speculations and even inventions, due to interested motives, does not prevent any from having been pure in its early beginnings. There are those creeds—we shall not call them religions—which have now been overlaid with the human element out of all recognition; others just showing signs of early decay; not one that escaped the hand of time. But each and all are of divine, because natural and true origin...All are true at the bottom, and all are false on their surface. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1*)

There was, during the youth of mankind, one language, one knowledge, one universal religion, when there were no churches, no creeds or sects, but when every man was a priest unto himself. (*S.D.*, I, 341)

The religion of the ancients is the religion of the future. A few centuries more, and there will linger no sectarian beliefs in either of the great religions of humanity. (Isis Unveiled, I, 613)

The above extracts go to indicate that in reality there is but one RELIGION in the world, the WISDOM-RELIGION, which calls upon us to follow the path of the Good Life from day to day, in all spheres of human activity, acting always in terms of the law of unity and upholding the ideal of Universal Brotherhood—first, last and all the time. It is important to keep in mind that the very word religion is derived from a Latin root (*religare*) which means to bind together or to reunite, and that therefore true religion has really nothing to do with dogmatic creeds and rituals, superstitious beliefs, petitional prayers, or salaried priests, for man requires no intermediaries to commune with the Inner Ruler, the Divine Presence in his own heart, his "Father which is in secret."

We might well ask, What is likely to be the nature of the Religion of the future which H.P.B. has referred to in the last of the quotations given above and which she says will be the same as the religion of the ancients? Emerson visualized it in the following words:

The new church will be founded on moral science. Poets, artists, musicians, philosophers, will be its prophet-teachers. The noblest literature of the world will be its Bible—love and labour its holy sacraments—and instead of worshipping one saviour, we will gladly build an altar in the heart for everyone who has suffered for humanity.

In view of the facts outlined above, it behooves us, as thinking men and women, to endeavour earnestly to follow the words of wisdom which the Teachers and Prophets have given us, replacing our blind belief with knowledge, our rituals and ceremonies with the way of the Good Life based on the recognition of Universal Brotherhood.

WHOEVER knocks persistently, ends by entering.

—ALI

LETTERS TO A STUDENT

VI

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

DEAR SIR AND COMRADE:

Your "panacea" is known to me, and well; but "*perfect* trust," "*utter* disregard of self," "*divine* carelessness," and the rest of your formula if obtained *in reality*, would make an Adept. So it is evident that we have not got them.

Man has the power of choice. He can awaken the spiritual will or not, as he may choose. In the *Secret Doctrine* it says, the Higher Self is powerless *on this plane*, and may be mastered by the lower principles *on this plane*, unless the mind of man conquers these lower principles, attunes itself to those higher planes above it. They are *planes of force*. The body has *its* Samadhi, and every organ has its. That is, the trance or quiescence into which it must be thrown is, *to it*, what the higher Samadhi is to the higher Principles. And all this is effected by the generation and use of a dynamo-spiritual force, to be generated in the magnetic inner body and mind. Every individual must grow himself, but the right growth of one helps all. Common sense is highly valued in occultism. Even learned students may err in their methods and are not authority.

Pardon the haste incidental to absence. I hope you continue well. I should not feel as you do about silence at Branch meetings, for each should have his turn, and due proportion of time to speak, as all views are in the All, and are useful as lessons.

Fraternally,

J. NIEMAND, F.T.S.

BEFORE you desire to control the universe, you must first be able to completely control yourself.

—SUN MYUNG MOON

THE PRECONCEPTIONS OF SCIENCE

WILLIAM Q. Judge in his *Letters That Have Helped Me* has written of the grooves of thought in which the minds of students run. He likens general human nature to an engine which is flanged and run for a certain size of track, and adds that the would-be occultist must remove the flange "and have a broad-faced wheel that will accommodate itself to the other mind and nature."

It is a common view, particularly among scientific workers, that the scientist, through the discipline to which he subjects himself, has found the way to accommodate his mind to nature; or, in other words, the scientist is a student of nature, free from prejudices and assumptions which so hamper the searcher for truth who is devoid of scientific training. But is this so? Scientists make assumptions at all stages of their research, albeit often unconsciously. These assumptions may arise from personal bias, from past training, or, more significantly, from the scientific and philosophical temper of the age.

It is in the light of prior assumptions that scientific facts are selected and their meaning interpreted. Philosophical assumptions and postulates are literally basic to science in that its validity is inseparably related to *their* validity. But, although this is apparent to any scientist who is more than a technician, axioms and presuppositions are seldom held up to criticism in the same way in which the scientist demands that other theories be examined and analysed. The growth of science consists not merely in extending its range of valid data, but in the revision and reconstruction of its theoretical foundations. If these are false or inadequate, they can deprive an experiment of meaning. More important, they can hinder the entire development of science until revised and corrected.

While the lesser scientists plan and carry out their experiments and calculations within the framework of the dominant assumptions and presuppositions of scientific orthodoxy, it is the few great scientists who can adopt a position of philosophical detachment from science in an attempt to relate it to the wider issues of contemporary thought, and to subject these assumptions and pre-

suppositions to a critical analysis.

A comparison might be drawn at this point between science and religion. The life-giving message of a great spiritual Teacher is crystallized by his followers into an orthodoxy. This orthodoxy must be destroyed by the next Teacher before he can begin his constructive work. The work of a Newton at first enlarges the frontiers of science and then is converted into an orthodoxy which hinders progress, until the inadequacies of the system are revealed by an Einstein.

As an example of scientific orthodoxy: There is no warrant for the view that the purpose of science is to reduce everything to matter, and the scientist, regardless of his field, has no valid justification for assuming the metaphysical theory of materialism at the start of his research. Science simply seeks to penetrate the mysteries of the universe, yet many scientists entertain the erroneous view that science naturally presupposes materialism. This leads to a dogmatism which is as unscientific as it is unphilosophical. In the social science it has led to the mechanistic standpoint that the world of mind and thought, being unreal, is powerless to affect the course of historical and sociological events, and to the naive but fashionable methodological principle that the range of the measurable is identical with the range of the knowable.

It could be said that wherever and however truth is sought, the mind is constrained to run in grooves. Unconsciously, whether one is studying nature, listening to a lecture, or studying *The Secret Doctrine*, there is a tendency to select material in conformity with preconceived ideas and to interpret that in the light of those preconceptions. The first step in the gaining of true knowledge is to detach the mind from the influence of all those ideas which have been derived from personal bias, past training and the general climate of thought of our age.

Nevertheless, the philosophical analysis of the main principles, the dominating concepts and the working rules of science, which is the unique contribution of the few great scientists, however necessary it may be, is essentially destructive. Truth was never discovered by analysis or by reason or by any brain process, for it is

realized with the awakening to consciousness of the Divine nature of man. The second unique contribution of the great scientists is a constructive one—the new light which they shed upon a familiar field, so that known facts are seen in a new relationship. Their cogitations so energize their nature that the problems pondered are raised to a higher level of consciousness, there solved, and the solution reflected down into the brain consciousness again. This reflection is possible only because of their detachment from the scientific grooves of thought, but it is just a faint and distorted reflection because their detachment from these grooves and from all the other outside influences on the brain-mind is only partial.

The EGOS of a Newton, an Æschylus, or a Shakespeare, are of the same essence and substance as the EGOS of a yokel, an ignoramus, a fool, or even an idiot; and the self-assertion of their informing *genii* depends on the physiological and material construction of the physical man. No Ego differs from another Ego, in its primordial or original essence and nature. That which makes one mortal a great man and of another a vulgar, silly person is, as said, the quality and make-up of the physical shell or casing, and the adequacy or inadequacy of brain and body to transmit and give expression to the light of the real, *Inner man*; and this aptness or inaptness is, in its turn, the result of Karma. (H.P.B. on "Genius," *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*, p. 3)

It is the scientist's lack of comprehension of the nature and powers of the Inner Man and their relation to the physiological brain and outer man that marks the essential difference between science and Occultism. Both are based upon observed facts, but the facts of science are restricted to those which pass through the mesh of the preconceptions of science, while the mind of the Occultist is attuned to nature, visible and invisible. As stated in the article "Who Possess Knowledge?" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 32*):

The physicist devotes all his efforts to the careful elimination from the mass of materials on which he builds up his conclusions, of everything except that which he conceives to be real fact—and it is exactly that which he conceives to be real fact—anything clearly appealing to the senses—which the profound

philosophy of Eastern Occultism deliberately condemns at starting as, in its nature, illusory effects, transitory *secondary* consequences of the real underlying fact. And in acting thus, does Occult Philosophy make an arbitrary choice between rival methods, as a chemist might select one or other of two different methods of analysis? Not at all. Real philosophy cannot make any choice arbitrarily: there is but one eternal verity and, in pursuit of that, thought is forced to travel along one road....

Of course, it must be remembered that the unreal knowledge, proceeding from the observation of illusory, because transitory and secondary effects, hangs together satisfactorily as regards the short chain it is able to construct. This it is which leads so many, in many respects powerful, minds, to be blindly contented with it. Some of the laws of matter can be detected (if not understood) by mere observation of matter. But it is obvious that the something out of which matter proceeded, the something into which it will return, cannot be observed by material senses. In what other way can observation be extended beyond the range of material senses? Only if it can be so extended, is any knowledge attainable by Man which has to do with eternal verities and primal causes, which is real as distinguished from the transitory and the unreal. Promptly, in ignorance of the methods by which observation can be extended beyond the range of the senses, the physicist declares—concerning the hypothetical eternal verities you can only dream and indulge in illusory conjecture—all mere brain-spun fancy. Thus the world at large, not content with hugging illusions and calling them realities, spurns the reality and denounces it as illusion.

Elsewhere, H.P.B. gave the rationale of the extension of observation beyond the range of the material senses:

Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, however differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. To achieve this, there are two methods. On the physical plane we may use our mental polariscope; and, analysing the properties of each ray, choose the purest. On the plane of spirituality, to reach the Sun of Truth we must work in dead earnest for the development of

our higher nature. We know that by paralysing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deadening the voice of the purely physiological mind—that mind which depends upon, and is inseparable from, its medium or *vehicle*, the organic brain—the animal in us may make room for the spiritual; and once aroused from its latent state, the highest spiritual senses and perceptions grow in us in proportion, and develop *pari passu* with the "divine man." ("Truth in Modern Life," *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 17*)

In so far as science accommodates itself to nature, and encourages all of us to do likewise, instead of relying upon authority or copying blindly our forebears, it deserves our gratitude. But in so far as its own prejudice and preconceptions blind it to the recognition of some facts, and colour its interpretation of others, it is a mirror of erring human nature. There are obvious examples of this: The contemporaries of the great scientist Sir William Crookes refused to give serious consideration to his investigations into the phenomena of Spiritualism; many scientists of today do not give serious attention to the investigations into extra-sensory perception and other paranormal phenomena; and so on.

There are, moreover, countless unrecorded facts in the humdrum affairs of any human life which to the uncoloured spiritual perception are conclusive evidence of the real world of primal causes.

HUMAN failings fall within two categories. There are failings of insight and failings of will. Because of the first, we do not see what is good; because of the second, we do not do the good we see. Hypocrisy proper belongs to the latter category; most of what passess for hypocrisy, to the former.

—C. E. M. JOAD

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Science is trying to understand *how* the Universe came into existence, but *why* it came to be at all borders on the realm of philosophy, and science has little to say in the matter. However, even though cosmology today cannot explain all the mysteries of the Universe, recent discoveries in this field have important philosophical implications.

In *New Scientist* for 14 September 1996, David Darling ponders the origin of the Universe:

It's the simple questions that usually tax science the most. For instance, why should there be something instead of nothing? The Universe is so outrageously enormous and elaborate. Why did it—or God, if you prefer—go to all the bother?...

Science has started delving into the minutiae of genesis. No one bats an eyelid these days when cosmologists talk about what conditions might have been like around one ten million trillionth of a second after the moment of creation. And once we have got the tricky business of linking gravitation with quantum mechanics sorted out, then maybe we can push things right back to the very first instant of all....

What is a big deal—the biggest deal of all—is how you get something out of nothing....First there is nothing, then there is something. And the cosmologists try to bridge the two with a quantum flutter, a tremor of uncertainty that sparks it all off. Then they are away and before you know it, they have pulled a hundred billion galaxies out of their quantum hats....

There is a very real problem in explaining how the Universe got started in the first place. You cannot fudge this by appealing to quantum mechanics. Either there is nothing to begin with, in which case there is no quantum vacuum, no pre-geometric dust, no time in which anything can happen, no physical laws that can effect a change from nothingness into somethingness; or there is something, in which case that needs explaining....

I suspect that mainstream science may go on for a few more years before it bumps so hard against these problems that it is forced to recognize that something is wrong. And then? Let me guess: if you cannot get something from nothing then that must

mean there has always been something.

The Secret Doctrine calls the infinite number of Universes "Sons of Necessity"—all links in the great Cosmic chain, each Universe "standing in the relation of an effect as regards its predecessor, and being a cause as regards its successor" (I, 43). The central axiom of science today is that the Universe must have been formed by natural laws which are still not sufficiently known, but which *can* be known. A rent in the veil was made with the discovery of ties between the study of the infinitely vast—the Universe—and the infinitely small—"elementary" particles.

There certainly is a purpose in the Universe, and to understand how and why it came into existence, science needs must enter the domain of metaphysics.

Occultism does not deny the certainty of the mechanical origin of the Universe; it only claims the absolute necessity of mechanicians of some sort behind those Elements (or *within*)—a dogma with us. It is not the fortuitous assistance of the atoms of Lucretius, who himself knew better, that built the Kosmos and all in it. Nature herself contradicts such a theory. (*S.D.*, I, 594)

The desire for a sentient life shows itself in everything, from an atom to a sun, and is a reflection of the Divine Thought propelled into objective existence, into a law that the Universe should exist. According to esoteric teaching, the real cause of that supposed desire, and of all existence, remains for ever hidden, and its first emanations are the most complete abstractions mind can conceive. These abstractions must of necessity be postulated as the cause of the material Universe which presents itself to the senses and intellect; and they underlie the secondary and subordinate powers of Nature, which, anthropomorphized, have been worshipped as God and gods by the common herd of every age. It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause; the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank. This is virtually the condition to which the mind must come at last when we try to trace back the chain of causes and effects, but both science and religion jump to this condition of blankness much more quickly than is necessary; for they ignore

the metaphysical abstractions which are the only conceivable cause of physical concretions. These abstractions become more and more concrete as they approach our plane of existence, until finally they phenomenalize in the form of the material Universe, by a process of conversion of metaphysics into physics, analogous to that by which steam can be condensed into water, and the water frozen into ice. (*Ibid.*, I, 44-45)

According to U.S. scientists whose work was reported this January in the British journal *Nature*, primitive life could exist on the recently discovered planets outside our solar system or their moons. Darren Williams, James Kasting and Richard Wade of the University of Pennsylvania say that the right conditions could prevail in the planetary systems of two stars, one in the constellation of the Great Bear and the other in the Swan.

Though scientists had for long suspected that life existed on planets outside our solar system, the first *confirmed* discovery of one such planet was announced in October 1995, and was followed by a number of others. In a commentary accompanying the *Nature* article, planetologist Christopher Chyba says that our ignorance even of our own solar system is such that to our knowledge the Earth is still the only inhabited world. He notes that while planets outside our solar system have been found, instruments cannot detect bodies smaller than Jupiter on which life might be possible.

The Roman Catholic Church has made of the Virgin Mary a regular goddess. But who *was* Mary? "In all ages and among all peoples, the Myth-Messiah is born of a Virgin-Mother," wrote H.P.B. In India, there is the legend of Krishna and Devaki, of Gautama the Buddha and his mother Maya. There are similar stories in other traditions, so the idea of the "virgin birth" did not originate with Jesus and Mary, but belongs to hoary antiquity.

Life magazine (December 1996) has a special feature on "The Mystery of Mary." Robert Sullivan writes:

The "idea" of Mary, so sparsely drawn and therefore so open to interpretation, has roller-coasted through 2,000 years of Christian history, alternately elevated and demoted by the Catholic hierarchy, shunned and praised by the Protestant. But if her official standing has been in constant flux, her public image has been on a two-millennium rise. Mary belongs not to the priests but to the people. No matter what has been decreed in a given era, the popular passion for her has remained resolute. Her disciples—*her* congregation, *her* soldiers—have adamantly refused to let Mary recede.

Why? What do they so vitally require from this most famous of mother figures? How has she, once an unknown, grown to be such an immense personality? Why are two billion Hail Marys said daily?...

The Mary of today started not with Christ's birth, nor with the Gospels, but with a 2nd century document called *The Book of James*. The text filled in details of Mary's birth, marriage, Annunciation....By the 5th century, however, Mary's perpetual virginity was part of who she was. The Council of Ephesus in 431 accorded her, against much opposition, the title Mother of God. This boosted Mary toward being, as historian Karen Armstrong puts it, "a major celebrity."

Which meant a figure worth shaping. The Bible offers no other human so useful in this way: extremely significant in the Christ story, yet so inscrutable that she can be known—and used—in various ways through subtle amendment. "Mary is continuously reinvented," says Armstrong. "In each age, people have changed their definition of her to fit their own circumstances." With each new incarnation, however, the old "inventions" do not slip away. They accrue, they pile up....

One of the intriguing aspects of the latest rise of Mary is this: The emotional need for her is so irresistible to a troubled world that people without an obvious link to the Virgin are being drawn to her.

The legend of Mary, as said, is certainly not post-Christian. "It is *essentially pagan in origin*," says H.P.B. "The pure ideal of mystic Nature" was in ancient times personified in the "World Virgins," the "Celestial Maidens," and later on by the "human

Virgin, Mary, the Mother of the Saviour, the *Salvator Mundi* now chosen by the Christian World." In her article "The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry," H.P.B. states:

Vanitas vanitatum! nothing is new under the sun. The *Litanies of the Virgin Mary* prove it in the sincerest way. Pope Gregory I introduces the *worship* of the Virgin Mary, and the Chalcedonian Council proclaims her the mother of God. But the author of the *Litanies* had not even the decency (or is it the brains?) to furnish her with any other than pagan adjectives and titles....Not a symbol, not a metaphor of this famous Litany but belonged to a crowd of goddesses; all Queens, Virgins, or Mothers; these three titles applying to Isis, Rhea, Cybele, Diana, Lucifera, Lucina, Luna, Tellus, Latona *triformis*, Proserpina, Hecate, Juno, Vesta, Ceres, Leucothea, Astarte, *celestial* Venus and Urania, *Alma Venus*, etc., etc., etc....

De Maleville, a great Hebrew scholar and translator of Rabbinical literature, observes that the Jews give to the moon all those names which, in the *Litanies*, are used to glorify the Virgin....Truly, and you have but to repeat the *Litany to the Virgin* of the R. Catholic Church, to find yourself repeating ancient incantations to *Adonaia* (Venus), the mother of Adonis, the Solar god of so many nations; to *Mylitta* (the Assyrian Venus), goddess of nature; to *Alilat*, whom the Arabs symbolized by the two lunar horns; to *Selene*, wife and sister of *Helion*, the Sun god of the Greeks; or to the *Magna Mater...honestissima, purissima, castissima*, the Universal Mother of all Beings—because SHE IS MOTHER NATURE. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, April 1974)

When temperatures drop and food becomes scarce, many small mammals go into hibernation to survive the winter. This dormant state that seems so close to death is one of the strangest adventures of the animal world. Now researchers in California claim that they have located part of the timing mechanism that tells animals when to sleep and when to wake up. It lies, they say, within the hypothalamus, a region of the brain that controls sleep, sex and body

temperature.

By maintaining their temperature at only a degree or so above that of the air outside, hibernating mammals such as dormice can dramatically reduce the energy they expend. During hibernation they remain in a death-like sleep for days at a time. Just as most animals have a body clock that induces a daily rhythm of activity, hibernating mammals seem to have one set on an annual cycle.

Irving Zucker of the University of California at Berkeley and colleagues from Stanford University noted that a small part of the hypothalamus called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) is unusually active during hibernation compared to the rest of the brain. "One of the ideas we have is that the SCN inhibits hibernation for part of the year, when animals need to be building up their fat stores," says Zucker. (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 93, p. 9864)

H.P.B. calls hibernation one of the "great physiological and psychological secrets of nature." The modern theory of a body clock that guides hibernating animals seems to be a generalized variant of "instinct," which cannot be accounted for satisfactorily on materialistic lines. For, what is instinct?

Instinct is the universal endowment of nature by the Spirit of the Deity itself.... Instinct, as a divine spark, lurks in the unconscious nerve-centre of the ascidian mollusk, and manifests itself at the first stage of action of its nervous system as what the physiologist terms the reflex action. It exists in the lowest classes of the acephalous animals as well as in those that have distinct heads; it grows and develops according to the law of the double evolution, physically and spiritually; and entering upon its conscious stage of development and progress in the cephalous species already endowed with a sensorium and symmetrically-arranged ganglia, this reflex action, whether men of science term it *automatic*, as in the lowest species, or *instinctive*, as in the more complex organisms which act under the guidance of the sensorium and the stimulus originating in distinct sensation, is still one and the same thing. It is the *divine instinct* in its ceaseless progress of development. This instinct of the animals, which act from the moment of their birth each

in the confines prescribed to them by nature, and which know how, save in accident proceeding from a higher instinct than their own, to take care of themselves unerringly—this instinct may, for the sake of exact definition, be termed automatic; but it must have either within the animal which possesses it or *without*, something's or someone's *intelligence* to guide it. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 425)

Medical laboratories can now test human cells for anomalous genes. An instance of the hazards of such tests is provided in *New Scientist* (14 September 1996). People who are told that they are genetically prone to a disease may abandon all attempts to fend off the illness, believing it is unstoppable. A preliminary study designed to assess how people react to such news showed that a feeling of hopelessness is the key result; most become fatalistic about their prospects.

"We found that people who undergo a genetic test rather than some other form of clinical investigation are more likely to feel that their condition is unpreventable," says Theresa Marteau, director of the psychology and genetics group at Guy's Hospital, London. This applied even if they were given the same diagnosis. "It means that people might put less effort into preventing disease," she says.

It would appear from the study that people have strong views about what genetics tells them regarding themselves. The fatalistic attitude it breeds deadens the *will* to get well, which plays an important role in healing.

Buddhist development leader, Sulak Sivaraksha, has recently linked with several alternative thinkers and educators in Thailand to establish the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM). The aim is to encourage a spiritually-based holistic and ecological alternative to mainstream education. Sulak Sivaraksha was one of the recipients of the 1995 Right Livelihood Awards. In his acceptance speech before the Swedish Parliament, he spoke of SEM as an alternative to "prevailing educational trends which concentrate on

the head rather than the heart, and reward cleverness without regard to ethics." He spoke of the new movement's aims:

...to develop friendship, in the Buddhist sense, among students and teachers; to learn from each other and from the environment; to develop meditation practice and artistic creativity; to understand and respect indigenous cultures; to plant seeds of peace within ourselves and our world; to develop beauty, goodness and critical self-awareness. This, in turn, will lead us to care less for ourselves and more for others; to combine understanding and compassion; to work for social justice and ecological balance; and to develop right livelihood as part of our Buddhist practice. (*World Goodwill Newsletter*, 1996, No. 3)

SEM is only the latest in a series of organizations and networks which Sulak Sivaraksha has established and which he continues to lead and inspire. He has started numerous social welfare and development organizations. In 1988 he also established the Santi Prachar Dhamma Institute "to promote democratic ideals and practice through non-violent means." In addition, he has recently begun an international inter-faith network on "Alternatives to Consumerism." There are plans to promote sustainable alternatives to the Western consumer model, drawing on the spiritual values of the world's religions and of indigenous peoples.

MIND no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that it is the creator and governor of matter.

—SIR JAMES JEANS

Statement about ownership and other particulars about the magazine
"THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT" to be published in the first issue
every year after the last day of February

FORM IV
(See Rule 8)

1. Place of Publication : Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
2. Periodicity of Publication : Monthly, 17th of the month
3. Printer's Name : Gopal G. Thakur
Whether citizen of India : Yes
Address : Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
4. Publisher's Name : Gopal G. Thakur
Whether citizen of India : Yes
Address : Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
5. Editor's Name : M. Dastur
Whether citizen of India : Yes
Address : Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
6. Names and addresses of individuals
who own the magazine and partners
or shareholders holding more than
one per cent of the total capital: Theosophy Co. (India) Private Ltd
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
(A Charitable Company)

I, Gopal G. Thakur, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true
to the best of my knowledge and belief.

17th March 1997

(Sd.) GOPAL G. THAKUR
Publisher