

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
July-October 1991

SUPPLEMENT

IMPORTANT

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Ozyan on which *The Secret Doctrine* is based point to the truth that at their very birth men on earth were asked to look up to Divine Wisdom and Divine Instructors. The old-world teaching about the seven Dhyanis and Rishis, the Seven Ameshaspentas, the Seven Archangels, etc., which is an allegorical abstraction to the world of today, takes a different significance when we reflect upon these words of the Stanzas. The Seven Lights are the source of the Primeval Instructors, who learnt from Their Fathers.

The Hindu doctrine of the early incarnations of Vishnu is regarded by modern wiseacres as a myth; but it becomes rational and factual when the exposition of *The Secret Doctrine* is calmly and dispassionately considered. The teachings of Theosophy about Man, the Universe, and the indissoluble links which bind the two, reveal the striking truth about the universal nature of Man and the individualistic nature of the Cosmos. *Uttama Purusha*, or Adam Kadmon, or the Heavenly Man, no more remain allegories or abstractions, but become Living Words of Power.

What is an *Avatara*? What are human *Avataras*—Parasurama, Rama, Krishna and Buddha, *i.e.*, the sixth to ninth incarnations of Vishnu? Is there a rational explanation of the why, and especially the how, of this Brahmanical doctrine? In Theosophy there is such an explanation.

Similarly, the learned Hindu of today, even of the Pandit class, is not able to expound for the modern mind the length and figures of the four *Yugas* and the many *Kalpas*. The Law of Cycles symbolized by the "*Chakra*," the "Wheel," is also a metaphor or a myth!

Again, the old-world instruction about the Chain of Teachers, *Guruparampara*, takes a new meaning in the light of the above-quoted words. The key to the understanding of the above doctrines and others is enshrined in the real meaning of the Chain of Teachers, *Guruparampara*. A Body of Knowledge exists in the custody of the Fraternity of Sages; that Knowledge is infallible; cyclic proclamations of portions of this Knowledge, by one or more of these Sages, occur—all this is stressed in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky. It is a key teaching. That Enlightened Sages well versed in the Ancient Wisdom labour in love for elevating the human mind and human morals is reiterated and emphasized in Theosophy.

Let us understand this highly important teaching which has the power to transmute our minds. We have our teachers in the mundane world—our mother and nurse, our first teachers in the primary school then in the secondary, then in the high school, then in the college then in our employment, in the society, and so on. We have a long line of teachers, but we are not taught to develop gratitude and love and reverence for them. So much the worse for modern civilization.

In the Occult World, we have the Primeval Star under whose protection and guidance we always are; then the giver of the Light of

Manas; then the Great Guru affianced to the Inner Ego; then the Torch-Bearer of Truth in this darkened world, and finally the person designated as the "little guru" by W. Q. Judge.

The mundane chain affecting the personal man is a shadow; the links in the golden chain of the Occult World speak a mighty truth whose metaphysical and moral significance every earnest student should calmly reflect upon.

The cyclic and periodic efforts of the Sages raise the question: What shall present-day humanity do when darkness reigns all around and the Light of a Divine Incarnation is absent?

First, each *Avatara* always leaves behind the token of his message: out of Krishna's teachings the *Gita* arose; Buddha left His sublime preachings; Christ lives in the Sermon on the Mount. The Light of Divinity shines in Their doctrines. But the language of the ancient teachings and records is not easily explained or quickly understood. So, not haphazardly but under the Law of Cycles, the fresh appearance of a Divine Sage takes place.

Something more: Those Sages living in the infinitudes of space, and especially Those who live close to the atmosphere of humanity, ideate for our good, and the beneficence of Their ceaseless contemplation can be osmosed by earnest and devoted minds bent on living the Higher Life.

One of the prime missions of the U.L.T. is to keep alive in this cycle the truth about the Masters and Their Message, about the Fraternity of Sages, about Their daily labour to benefit humanity. This Work of the Mahatmas we should continue to stress: first, by a careful and faithful study of the Message; secondly, by the application of this teaching to every phase of our changing existence; thirdly, by promulgating this great idea for the public at large. *It is Masters' hoary Wisdom and not modern men's changing knowledge which we need to study, apply and promulgate.*

THE doctrine that enters only into the ear is like the repast one takes in a dream.

—CHINESE PROVERB

IN THE LAND OF SLEEP

THE law of correspondence and analogy, Theosophy says, enables the finite human mind to sense infinite realities. This law also clarifies our understanding of the invisible. From the known to the unknown, is the ordinary method of scientific research; but, while modern science will not see the invisible and will not touch the intangible, Theosophy, using this ancient method, proceeds to understand and explain the invisible with the help of the visible and the intangibles with the help of the tangible.

The phenomena of sleep and dreams are universal experiences. Though modern knowledge knows more about them than it did a few decades ago, it has still a long way to go before it comes to the position of the old-world Asiatic psychology, which is more profound and brings knowledge on subjects which are as yet matters of mere speculation to Western psychologists. Modern knowledge will find no satisfactory answers till it condescends to learn from ancient science, from the psychology of Patanjali, from the psycho-philosophy of the Upanishads. To do that, modern science will have to resort to the law of correspondence and analogy.

In the modern world, sleep and dreams are studied mostly as physiological processes. Their psychological aspects are not seriously considered save by a perceptive few. Consciousness, psyche, soul, are regarded as products of material processes. Consciousness and mental processes are considered as resultants from the physiological structure, *i.e.*, the human body.

In Theosophy and in Asiatic psychology, consciousness and soul are not considered as products of matter. Consciousness is fundamental, is a principle in itself. Human soul is not the child of human brain; that human soul is primary, the fundamental basis of the brain which is but the thinking apparatus. Human soul is the thinker, and bodily brain is the instrument of thought which the thinker uses. Thus, in Theosophy the proposition is reversed: body and brain do not produce the soul, but soul fashions the brain and moulds the body for its own use. Just as the writer needs a pen, so the human soul needs a brain.

In the study of sleep and dreams, that is the very first concept we must clearly grasp. There are two factors to be considered: body and its brain, and the human soul. The soul is the builder of its tabernacle

the body, and of one of its most important organs, the brain.

Theosophy teaches that the dead body, the sleeping body, the waking body, as phenomena, can be well understood by an effort to apply the old teaching about the human soul as the builder of the body. A body is awake because of the soul. A body is asleep because of the soul. A body lives and dies because of the soul. In the relationship of soul to body lies the clue to the understanding of these states. The states and moods of the body are best understood by a consideration of the states and moods of the human consciousness. The birth and the death of the body, the waking and the sleeping of the body, are caused by the soul. That is the general principle. When this fundamental fact is grasped, the study of sleep and dreams will become less difficult and will yield practical knowledge.

If we take the next step and examine our own waking state, we shall be able to understand by analogy our sleeping state. Human soul, *i.e.*, self-conscious intelligence, does not function in and through a sleeping body; the body is asleep because the activity of the soul in and through that body has stopped. Human consciousness or soul does not stop functioning; it merely stops functioning *in and through* the body. As the *Bhagavad-Gita* puts it: "I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be." This is not only true in reference to death; it is equally true in reference to sleep. We, the human souls, do not cease to function because our bodies sleep; we only cease functioning in reference to the body. The main cause of sleep is the change of polarity of the body caused by the soul. In the waking state of the body, the soul working in and through it gives it its positive character. When the soul withdraws itself, the body loses that positive character; the prevailing polarity is negative. When once again the soul inhales itself into the body, the negative polarity of the body is transformed into positive polarity.

Thus, what causes sleep and waking is the human consciousness. That consciousness changes from the objective state to the subjective, and alternately makes the body positive or negative.

Next, what makes it necessary for the soul to withdraw and cause a change in polarity? The human soul lives and works in the body, *i.e.*, it receives via the senses and the brain hundreds of thousands of messages. The body, the nerves, the brain, become surcharged with

messages. The body has received so many messages that if the soul compelled it to continue to receive more, the senses would be impaired, the brain would break down and death would result. Therefore sleep is the device of Nature, which the soul uses not only for the safety of the body, but also for its own task of digestion and assimilation of the messages it has received during the waking state of the body. So the process of sleep has a dual purpose: the body, through the rest of sleep, recuperates; the soul, through assimilation in sleep, also recuperates. The human soul uses the body for receiving knowledge of the great universe without. Having received that knowledge, it requires time to digest and assimilate it. That time is also utilized by the body for rest and refreshment.

And now arises the question: What is the nature of the soul's digestion and assimilation?

Continuing to apply the law of correspondence and analogy, we can know the state of the human soul when the body is asleep by a careful examination and analysis of the state of that soul in waking consciousness. A person's dream state represents as a projection, as a picture-gallery, his or her waking state. In *The Voice of the Silence*, the whole psychology and philosophy of our subject is contained in the passage where the three states, *Jagrat*, *Swapna* and *Sushupti*, are compared to three Halls—of Ignorance, of Learning, of Wisdom.

The waking consciousness depicts a person's ignorance—what he does not know. He may not know this; a fool does not know he is a fool; an angry person, a jealous person, a greedy person, does not know what an exhibition of himself he is making. All the same he is painting his own portrait. All of us reveal our ignorance through speech and act, manifest our limitation of knowledge, every day of our waking life.

As he lives and suffers, as he labours and gathers experience, the person learns that under every flower on earth there is a serpent coiled. He goes after wealth, and finds that there is a serpent of worry, care, anxiety—the worry of investment, the care to collect interest, the anxiety lest he lose the wealth. He seeks fame, only to find that there is another serpent—the serpent of envy and jealousy. He seeks power over the minds and hearts of others—once again to find that there is a serpent of ingratitude and insult. He seeks love of his fellows by giving love—to find a serpent of subtle selfishness. And so on—the

things of the world are verily wombs of pain.

Next, having been stung by many serpents, he reaches the Hall of Wisdom. In waking consciousness, he seeks for peace, for contentment, and finds them in a spot where the serpents of feelings, of attachments and aversions, are absent. And in that spot he finds the Dragon of Wisdom, the Protector who guides and guards the seeker of wisdom.

This may all seem like mere allegory and poetry, but *The Voice of the Silence* is a wonderful little book and in its poetry gems of truth are to be found. Let us understand them.

In our waking human consciousness, we live in ignorance most of the time; or we live by the power of our own desires, seeking those things and beings we like, and avoiding those we fear and dislike. In the struggle for existence between our ignorance and our sense-knowledge, we assemble around us a hundred feelings of attachment-aversion—*raga-dvesha*. Most men and women live hour by hour, day after day, fifty-two weeks in the year, enmeshed in their feelings. Liking and loving, fearing and hating, people show themselves as bundles of personal emotions. Some seek the meaning and purpose of life, but mostly people live in their feelings. Fortunately, they have some very good feelings and aspirations as well—of nobility, self-sacrifice, etc.

Such is the state of waking consciousness of the ordinary person. When his body changes its polarity and goes to sleep, he is in an introspective, subjective condition. What food for digestion and assimilation does that person have? The soul, the thinker, is enveloped by a thick coat of smoke of his own personal feelings. He dreams of securing or having secured what he loves; he dreams of vanquishing or having vanquished what he dislikes. He is a complete prisoner of his feelings. To take an analogy: think of a person in a fit of anger—he forgets himself; he stutters; he cannot speak; he is a prisoner of his anger. Similar is the condition of ordinary men and women during sleep. Their interests and duties, the compelling forces of their daily tasks, of waking consciousness, being absent, they are completely caught up in personal feelings.

But, as stated above, very often people have unselfish desires and aspirations. These too are with the human soul in the *Swapna* or dream state. With their help, especially with the aid of the longing for peace that each one seeks, that soul is able to stop the commotion of

the feelings and falls into the deeper state of *Sushupti*, dreamless slumber—a state of repose in which thoughts of worldly matters cease and feelings of personal likes and dislikes have no place. But ordinary men and women do not truly profit by this repose; for most, it is a blank repose. For the student of the higher science and philosophy, for the creative artist, this state of dreamless sleep or *Sushupti* is something more than passive repose: there is ideation, there is creative meditation, there is high contemplation. It is necessary indeed that men and women should devote some part of their daily life to high and noble themes, for thus they enrich their condition of *Sushupti*.

Next, if the difference between the person who lives in the realm of restricted feelings, bad and good, and the one who thinks, who meditates, who creates, is wide, the gulf between the ordinary intellectual philosopher and the man of applied philosophy, *i.e.*, a Theosophist, is greater still. The student of Theosophy, who hour by hour strives to purify himself, who day by day, through meditation and worship, assimilates the fruits of his reading and study, who week after week, through service of his fellow-souls, lets the light of the Spirit shine forth from every gate of his body—such a student touches something more vital, something tremendously real, in his *Sushupti*, when his body is in the dreamless state. In that world of *Sushupti*, called the Hall of Wisdom, he receives the shower of blessings and knowledge which the Great Gurus let fall. Their rain falls on all, but only those who believe in Their existence, study Their philosophy and serve Their Cause, are able to absorb and retain the knowledge and the blessing.

What a person feels and thinks during the waking state, that he also experiences during the hours when the body is asleep. In nightmares and confused dreams, or in symbolic visions and prophetic hearings, each one of us but gets what he has laboured for in waking consciousness. Take care of what you feel and say here and now during the day; take care of what you think and do hour by hour, and your *Swapna* and *Susuhpti* conditions will faithfully reflect your efforts.

Even one who is not a Theosophist can have in his life some high noble and unselfish aspiration; can formulate to himself some ideal to model his life on; can build for his daily labour and life some philosophy which brings to him both peace of mind and knowledge

of the heart. And as he perseveres to so live and to realize his ideal, he will find his dreams helpful; he will have dreamless sleep as far as the body is concerned; but, if his brain is pure, his soul's activity in *Sushupti* will impress itself on him. And he will, ultimately, come to the true universal religion—the Wisdom-Religion or Theosophy.

To the student of Theosophy, the lesson is this: No use your learning the great spiritual truths unless you practise them. To learn and refuse to practise is to make of your sleep hours veritable nightmares! Free yourselves from personal loves and likes; break the fetters of religious and social dogmatisms; come out from among the sectarian, and be ye separate—not to enjoy your own grandeur and glory, but humbly to serve Orphan Humanity, the Cause of the Great Masters. By your study and meditation, by your *tapas* and *puja*, by your active service of souls, unfold within yourselves that organ which is concealed in the chamber of the Heart, and then only, and not till then, in your *Sushupti*, in the Hall of Wisdom, you will not only receive the blessings of the Great Ones, but also learn to know Them and learn from Them. All your questions will find their answers, and, on waking, your life will be enriched. So, step by step, the door of the Hall of Wisdom in your own Heart will open and you will feel the peace of *Sushupti* and its power and glory in your waking consciousness.

May the Mighty Dreamers of Dreams, those who create by thought and will, protect and energize us all when the body reposes! May our souls freed from our bodies retire to the world of Living Gurus, because in the waking condition we have tried to be *pure* and *wise* and *unselfish*, and above all *compassionate*!

THE definite harmony or disharmony of man's external nature is seen by the observant to depend wholly on the character of the keynote struck for the *outer* by *inner* man. It is the spiritual Ego or SELF that serves as the fundamental base, determining the tone of the whole life of man—that most capricious, uncertain and variable of all instruments, and which more than any other needs constant tuning; it is its voice alone, which like the sub-bass of an organ underlies the melody of his whole life—whether its tones are sweet or harsh, harmonious or wild, *legato* or *pizzicato*.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE MYTH OF PROMETHEUS

ALL ancient traditions and religious legends depict the gods as being averse to man becoming "as one of us" and acquiring knowledge of good and evil; and we see these gods punishing him for his desire to know. In the Greek myth, Prometheus is shown as stealing from Heaven the divine fire (intelligence and consciousness) and bringing it down on earth, thus endowing men with reason and mind. For this he was chained by the order of Zeus to a rock in the Caucasian Mountains where an eagle daily devoured his entrails, which grew again in the night.

According to *The Secret Doctrine*, the legend had its origin in ancient India. Prometheus is the Hellenic type of the Agnishwattas or Kumaras—those who, incarnating as the Egos of the forthcoming crops of mankind, endowed them with the fire of Manas, thus making them latent gods instead of the animals they would otherwise have remained. Exoteric allegories depict them as "rebels," "Asuras," "fighting and opposing gods," etc. Yet it is they alone who could complete man and make of him a self-conscious, almost a divine being. They are the independent and free Intelligences, shown in every Theogony as fighting for that independence and freedom, and hence—in the ordinary sense—"rebellious to the divine passive law." Hence the "rebels" are our saviours, for "it is owing to this rebellion of intellectual life against the morbid inactivity of pure spirit, that we are what we are—self-conscious, thinking men, with the capabilities and attributes of Gods in us, for good as much as for evil."

This perhaps explains the meaning of many seemingly incomprehensible allegories and myths, among them the Greek allegory of Prometheus. Still another version of it is the rebellion of the proud Lucifer, who was hurled down to the bottomless pit, or simply on to our Earth, to live as a man and suffer the martyrdom of self-conscious existence. Prometheus steals the divine fire so as to enable man to proceed consciously on the path of spiritual evolution, and thus makes it possible for him to "take the kingdom of heaven by violence." Zeus pronounces a curse against Prometheus for this act of his, for the gift of the Titan to humanity was capable of being misused.

Though fired by Thought and discerning good from evil—a conscious and hence a responsible entity—man yet remains a slave to the

passions of his earthly aspect. The eternal vulture of the ever unsatisfied desire, of doubt and despair created by full consciousness, is gnawing at his heart. The curse of life is great, yet who would exchange all the tortures and evils of conscious, responsible life for the unconscious perfection of a passive animal-like existence!

In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 245), H.P.B. quotes as follows from an article in *The Theosophist* which draws a parallel between Prometheus and Satan or Lucifer:

Satan, or Lucifer, represents the *active*, or, as M. Jules Baissac calls it, the "Centrifugal Energy of the Universe" in a cosmic sense. He is Fire, Light, Life, Struggle, Effort, Thought, Consciousness, Progress, Civilization, Liberty, Independence. At the same time he is pain, which is the Re-action of the *pleasure* of action, and *death*—which is the revolution of *life*—Satan, burning in his own hell, produced by the fury of his own momentum—the expansive disintegration of the nebulae which is to concentrate into new worlds. And fitly is he again and again baffled by the eternal *Inertia* of the *passive* energy of the Kosmos—the inexorable "I AM"—the flint from which the sparks are beaten out....

The myth of Prometheus is far older than the Greeks and belongs to the dawn of human consciousness. The crucified Titan is the personified symbol of the collective Logos, the "Host," and of the "Lords of Wisdom" or the Heavenly Man, who incarnated in a portion of humanity, "preferring free-will to passive slavery, intellectual self-conscious pain and even torture—'while myriad time shall flow'—to inane, imbecile, instinctual beatitude." Though such an incarnation was premature and not in the programme of nature, the Heavenly Host, "Prometheus," still sacrificed himself to benefit thereby at least one portion of humanity. But while saving man from mental darkness, they inflicted upon him the tortures of the self-consciousness of his responsibility—the result of his free will—besides every ill man is heir to. This torture Prometheus accepted for himself, becoming henceforward blended with the tabernacle prepared for him.

Spiritual evolution being incapable of keeping pace with the physical, the gift thus became the chief cause of Evil.

Many are the keys that can be used for the understanding of ancient myths and legends, each yielding its own meaning. What is

perhaps most important for us is the psychological key. What is enacted on a cosmic scale is re-enacted within each human being. Man's lower, personal nature (represented by Zeus or the "lower Host") has bound the higher egoic nature (represented by the divine Titan, Prometheus) to the rock of material life by a hundred cords of desire, to suffer constant pain and anguish. The vulture of the lower passions is daily gnawing at it, and though itself without blemish, the higher has to bear the burden of responsibility for the misdeeds of the lower nature. This is the martyrdom of self-conscious existence. While the personal nature is guided by selfishness and egotism, the god within is moved by altruism and suffers in silence, biding its time, for its day of freedom *will* come when the animal will be tamed. Says *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 422) :

This drama of the struggle of Prometheus with the Olympic tyrant and despot, sensual Zeus, one sees enacted daily within our actual mankind: the lower passions chain the higher aspirations to the rock of matter, to generate in many a case the vulture of sorrow, pain, and repentance....The modern Prometheus ["he who sees before him"] has now become *Epi-metheus*, "he who sees only after the event"; because the universal philanthropy of the former has long ago degenerated into selfishness and self-adoration. Man will rebecome the *free* Titan of old, but not before cyclic evolution has re-established the broken harmony between the two natures—the terrestrial and the divine; after which he becomes impermeable to the lower titanic forces, invulnerable in his personality, and immortal in his individuality, which cannot happen before every animal element is eliminated from his nature.

THE things that destroy us are injustice, insolence and foolish thoughts; and the things that save us are justice, self-command and true thought.

—RUSKIN

THE MYSTIC POWER OF VIRTUE

VIRTUE is very much out of fashion nowadays. Society is extremely inventive in its attempts to condone immorality and in fabricating elaborate "philosophical" arguments to prove that the gratification of sexual desire is "normal" and is even beneficial to the physical and mental health of the individual. Even the advent of a disease such as AIDS has failed to stem the rise of this merciless tyrant. We must try to look at the whole subject in its true light and not be afraid to face up to facts. We should not be prudish, though, and should try to offer intelligent reasons why the control of sexual desire is essential. To give out vague metaphysical teaching, or to be too dogmatic, will certainly ruin our "case." The Mahachohan, in his famous letter of over a hundred years ago, had this to say on the subject:

That the world is in such a bad condition, morally, is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies—those of civilized races less than any other—has ever possessed the TRUTH. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles, right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism, are as impossible to them now as they were 1880 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they ever were; but to these problems there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will show their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first to confess that *ours* must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives truth and nothing but the TRUTH.

These words are as accurate now as when they were first written; in fact the moral state of society may very well have deteriorated, despite the current talk about "freedom."

It is evident, from reading and meditating on spiritual teachings, that there is a definite mystical power which is brought into play by the living of a chaste life. The saying of Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," is an indication of this. Here we are discussing, not any psychic powers, but the truly divine powers latent in man. The existence of these higher faculties is hardly known to the worldly person, as his sensuality precludes him from true understanding of his own nature. We are all very much children of our age and need

to escape from the clutches of the myriad images that feed us erroneous information and bid us believe that destructive forces are indeed constructive.

Modern society, especially in the so-called "advanced" countries, takes a very strange view of chastity and virginity. These virtues are made to seem like vices, and the trendy young man or woman is ashamed to admit of his or her continence. Enlightened civilizations of the past attached great importance to chastity and the one who possessed such a decorous state of mind was held in high esteem. The unicorn, according to ancient belief, could be tamed only by the touch of a virgin. Also in ancient civilizations there were certain holy functions that could be carried out only by those who were chaste in body, speech and mind. In fact such beliefs probably survive to this day in certain parts of the earth. The fact that virtue is held in such low esteem nowadays, particularly in countries calling themselves "Christian," is indicative of a humanity that has enthroned material gain and pleasure as its guiding light.

Students of Theosophy are familiar with the countless warnings throughout the teachings of H.P.B. and of the Masters regarding the disastrous consequences of immorality. These admonitions are given, not in a spirit of "holier than thou" superiority, but out of loving-kindness by those who know the suffering that can be evoked by a mind that allows its purity to be tainted by the countless images that we are bombarded with constantly. Of course it is easy to condemn ourselves, but much harder to look upon the whole scenario with eyes of compassion.

In *The Secret Doctrine* we are informed that obsession with sexuality is a result of the misuse of the sex act going way back to Atlantean times. The present mode of reproduction is only one in a natural progression. The First Race were Self-born; the Second, Sweat-born. The Third Race were Egg-born, at first sexless, then androgynous, and finally of separate sexes. We have progressed to our present Fifth-Race method with the addition of a "curse" which was set in motion by the lustful advances of the Third Race, continued consciously by the Fourth-Race Atlanteans. H.P.B. writes:

Nor was the curse of KARMA called down upon them for seeking *natural* union, as all the mindless animal-world does in its proper seasons; but, for abusing the creative power, for desecrating

the divine gift, and wasting the life-essence for no purpose except bestial personal gratification. (*S.D.*, II, 410)

A perusal of the section in *The Secret Doctrine* entitled "The Curse from a Philosophical Point of View" (II, 409) is recommended to the earnest student, as is the pamphlet "Living the Higher Life." (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 34*)

We must be aware of these facts before we can begin to form any clear picture of the moral state of the society we live in. The doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, which are absent from the concepts of the majority in the West, are our only saviours from the fatalistic viewpoint that has swept across the world over the last few centuries. It is obvious that we have, as a whole, lost our appreciation of moral beauty. There are vistas of profound loveliness that are withheld from the eyes of mortal man, as a result of his preoccupation with a mere physical reproductive act, and his obsession with ecstasy that is merely sensual and can only bind him to the earth and blind him to the true wonders that lie behind the veil that the mind of man has created. *The Voice of the Silence* is a poetical work that emphasizes the absolutely essential practice of morality as the gateway to higher states of consciousness. All the world's truly great spiritual works also attempt to drive the point home, but this does not prevent fallible man from distorting the truth to suit his own ends.

We need to take a more transcendental look at the whole matter and try to see things from the point of view of the Higher Self. We can do this by meditation and by constantly turning our minds towards spiritual matters. We should dwell on pure and elevating thoughts and try to avoid people and places that might incite in us impure thoughts. Obviously this is not at all easy in this day and age and many failures will occur. We should regard the struggle towards purity as a matter of life and death, and, as it says in *The Voice of the Silence*, "If thou hast tried and failed, O dauntless fighter, yet lose not courage: fight on, and to the charge return again and yet again."

We should always be aware of the suffering that goes on all around us, which is caused by our ignorance of Spiritual Truth. Millions starve, while others live lives of luxury, squandering money on material goods that they do not need. In the realm of morality, we meet with the same thing. Humanity is willing to sacrifice its soul in order to experience ephemeral pleasures that feed the bestial nature

and fuel the fires of anger, jealousy and revenge. The world that we live in has issued forth from the mind of mankind and all its nature-destroying proclivities are a direct result of its loss of moral sight. A civilization without ethics will soon crumble and give way to demoralizing influences. A society that lavishes praise on ideals that are obscene and degrading has certainly become blind. It is good that a few remain clear-sighted and can point the way towards the light. Without them we would certainly be lost. So there is always hope and the possibility of extricating oneself from our mind-made morass. The pressures put on those who have consciously chosen, or subconsciously feel the need, to preserve their chastity are enormous.

If it is well past the time that Theosophy should enter the arena of life, it is also long overdue that we should realize that the protection and preservation of innocence is our most sacred task. The stemming of the tide of suffering, guilt and depression that sweeps through the heart of mankind because of its oblivion of the terrible consequences of the continued tolerance and practice of immorality, should always be uppermost in our minds. Universal Brotherhood and morality go hand in hand; it is impossible to imagine one without the other. If we constantly laugh in the face of Karma, outwardly, we are powerless to stop the effects of our actions in the long run. Those intellectual classes of today, who loudly proclaim that we should live for the moment and indulge ourselves to the full, are indeed morally ruining those they ought to protect and guide. In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 203), H.P.B. says:

It is reserved for the heroic souls, the Saviours of our Race and Nation, to find out the cause of this unequal pressure of retributive Karma, and by a supreme effort to re-adjust the balance of power, and save the people from a moral engulfment a thousand times more disastrous and more permanently evil than the like physical catastrophe, in which you seem to see the only possible outlet for this accumulated misery.

Almost all discussion nowadays concerns the plight of the world physically. We are constantly reminded of the destruction of forests and the decimation of wildlife in general. We are also informed of the wretched state of the inhabitants of underdeveloped countries. In many countries, we are confronted with the problems of homelessness and drug abuse. In fact, the world's problems are many-headed—like

the mythical Hydra. However, like the Hydra, the heads are constantly reanimated after supposedly being cut off. Humankind has not yet realized the great truth expressed in the above quotation from *The Key to Theosophy*. This "moral engulfment" is taking place right under our noses.

Perhaps, in time, people may come to realize this. As in the case of most other disasters, it might be almost too late. It is worth considering what H.P.B. writes, that the moral problem is "a thousand times more disastrous and more permanently evil than the like physical catastrophe." This means that it will be a thousand times more difficult to put things right. If we can measure this against the terrible problems human beings have brought upon themselves by their abuse of nature, then perhaps we may begin to see the magnitude of the task that lies ahead.

A clue to the solution of this problem is given in the first chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "From the influence of impiety the females of a family grow vicious; and from women that are become vicious are born the spurious caste called Varna Sankar." There are definite signs of such a development in many parts of the world and many of us are witness to such a process. Women's rights are essential, but when the woman abandons her femininity to try to copy slavishly the actions of man, and thereby develops within herself unnatural traits, then the whole framework of society is shaken. It is only right that woman should strive to restore a balance that was broken by the dominance of man, but she should do it by developing in herself the gentler feminine qualities. The idea that such qualities will make her inferior to the male is surely "an abomination inspired by Mara" and will help to bring about the condition mentioned in the extract from the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

The clue lies in the word "impiety." The dictionary gives one of the meanings of this word as "irreverence toward God," and this can be said to mean a total lack of devotion to the Higher Self. A humanity that has lost its belief in divinity will surely flounder and disintegrate, morally. Study and meditation on higher things is its only salvation—so long as the study and meditation lead to practice.

To conclude this article, we quote from H.P.B.'s article "Diagnoses and Palliatives," reprinted from *Lucifer* for July 1890 in our July 1965 issue:

For morality to exist between men and women in their daily life, *they must make perfect chastity their law*. In progressing towards this end, man subdues himself. When he has arrived at the last degree of subjection we shall have moral marriages. But if a man as in our society advances only towards physical love, even though he surrounds it with deception and with the shallow formality of marriage, *he obtains nothing but licensed vice*.

THE initiate should never tell another person even the degree to which he belongs, and this for imperious reasons that depend on inviolable laws of religion and of nature. The initiate should take the greatest pains to conceal his own powers and should live with the greatest simplicity. One single idea of ostentation, one single public act of thaumaturgy would be an abuse of power that would ruin its possessor for ever. He ought to submit to the vicissitudes of human life; and on no account should he ever, in order to avoid some inconvenience, employ a power which is only real so long as it is disinterested. He is the bearer of peace and wisdom; people feel better when they are near him; and yet he is but a very ordinary man, at least to all appearance. People see influences change, they see obstacles give way of themselves, they see good produced and evil got rid of, and all this seems to happen quite naturally and without any indication that the initiate has had any part in bringing it about; none know what dangers continually surround him, and what risks he runs at every moment of being devoured by the monsters whom he releases from their chains. He is always standing in the midst of terrestrial passions like Daniel in the lions' den; but on the other hand, how deep are the interior joys that fill his heart! At times he feels himself too weak to support them. The woes of the world cause more suffering to him than to others, for he suffers with all who are in sorrow. He is far from being impassible like Mejnour of Lytton's famous romance, but he rather resembles Ulysses—bound to the mast of his ship, he listens to the song of Syrens and is moved by their beauty, but he cannot throw himself into the water and swim towards them, for he is the captive of his science.

—ELIPHAS LEVI

THE NOETIC WAY

PRESENT-DAY concepts of morality differ widely from the strict code of conduct laid down in the various religious scriptures which man still pretends to venerate. Further, applied morality, as seen in Legislatures and Courts, Embassies and Chambers of Commerce, to say nothing of individual practice, seems to be drifting to levels lower than those accepted a century ago.

In some countries, for instance, people are denied rights in the name of expediency. In others, harsh sentences are passed in the name of justice. Embassies can be used for intrigue to undermine a country's stability and call it diplomacy. Dubious businesses which lure the weak to gambling, drunkenness and worse are tolerated in the name of commerce.

Outside of metaphysics, the world of today has largely lost the values of morality and substituted a code of convenience and convention that has one application for the rich and another for the poor; one for one's own clique or country and another for the opposite camp. In many countries, the Courts, which are supposed to guard jealously the moral values, have become Courts of Law rather than Courts of Justice. True morality is at a discount while a tinsel show of rectitude is accepted as the hallmark of respectability. What, then, are morals, and what bearing have they on the life of man and of the age?

Whatever the code of morals subscribed to, it cannot be applied to all and sundry indiscriminately. You cannot hold the infant, the youth and the adult to the same requirements. The unfolding consciousness of the child must pass through numerous experiences ere it matures into that fuller knowledge of right and wrong which is the responsibility of the elders. The moral worth of an individual can, therefore, be evaluated only in terms of the understanding of morality which he has acquired. Morality may thus be applicable in varying degrees from the infant and the savage to the man of mature understanding and one who has amassed knowledge.

But, as we study human behaviour, we are forced to concede a still more fundamental classification, one not in degree but in kind. It would be inequitable and futile to expect of a Caesar the strict morality that is the responsibility of the Wise.

Each state of human consciousness, then, must have a set of rules

which govern human behaviour in that state. If we consider the powers and potentialities of the "man" himself, we find that he can act in any of seven distinct states of consciousness. It is not necessary here to go into these states and the rules of morality which govern each. This, because in man at present the full Divine Trinity does not act on this plane; its acting agent here is Manas or the incarnated human soul.

In each man, therefore, we have two possible sources of "memory" and two bases of consciousness. The one pertains to the Higher Manas—the immortal entity in mortal man; the other to Kama-Manas or that which we call the "lower mind" of man. We thus have the possibility of experiencing the impact of two different forces arising from these two distinct aspects of our being. That which originates in the Higher Mind is called Noetic. The other, which has its root in the personality, is called Psychic.

It is on the Noetic as opposed to the psychic force that the progress of a student in Occultism depends. Once he experiences the Noetic, the student must enlarge his ideas of morality. He comes under the sway of a wider morality.

In all his actions man affects the lives within and around him. Whether the psychic force or the Noetic operates, that force finds expression on the outer plane through one or another aspect of his complex make-up. Thus, man's metaphysical thought-energy translates itself on the physical plane through the lives of which his body is built and which make up its cell, molecules and atoms. Each cell is capable of responding to both a psychic and a spiritual influence though certain organs are specially the vehicles of one or the other.

It therefore depends on each of us to which influence we respond. If the Noetic force is allowed expression, the cerebral and cardiac centres respond and the man for the time being is exalted. If, on the other hand, the psychic is the motivating factor, man's nobler portion is not touched at all and the memory of the act is stored in the passional organs of the body and in the lower psychic aspects of his being.

So where the higher force is not drawn upon, the spiritual nature does not find expression and the act correlates itself to man's perishable and lower aspects. The particular bodily cells involved get only a psychic impress and store up the memory of the act.

But that is not all. The overfeeding of the emotional and psychic aspects of man impoverishes his better nature and, though he may sincerely desire to be good, the elements of his own nature may then impel him to go wrong, seemingly against his will. His is, indeed, a sorry plight whose passional organs hold extensive memories of an undesirable kind. A sight, a sound, a gesture, the slightest electro-vital spark originating from his animal desires may start a series of psychic images and sounds which sweep over him like a flood and render him blind and deaf to vibrations from the higher regions. Caught thus in a series of memory pictures, he may remain cut off from the Noetic and therefore forget his good resolutions.

Were the possibility of reform in doubt, there would be no hope for such a man. That a path does exist which leads us on is evident, however, in the successful struggles of the great men of all ages. The promptings of the Noetic can be heard in exquisite lyric poetry, glimpsed in the great epics, as also found in the writings of men like Boehme and Mesmer or in the more recondite works and labours of a Paracelsus or a St. Germain.

The Higher Ego, from which the Noetic force flows, cannot act directly on the body because, though it is unconditionally omniscient on its own plane, that omniscience cannot filter through to the physical one unless a channel is provided for it by Kama-Manas. Only an Adept is capable of paralysing at will the memory and the instinctual, independent action of all the material organs and cells in his physical body, but the man who has attained extreme purity and holiness in a prior life may also experience pure Noetic visions. They come occasionally too in cases of extreme physical weakness and exhaustion.

Patanjali's *Aphorisms* hint how the lower may be subdued and trained for the newer outlook, the larger morality. All ancient scriptures gave, to help the neophyte, the preliminary injunction: "Cease from evil: do good." This eschewing of all evil causes is a discriminative process. If assiduously applied, it will give the lives of our body a new impress. And yet, one must remember, knowledge even of good and evil is not ours from the start. The application of moral rules has always been an arduous process in which falls are many while the recompense generally remains far off.

Therefore, from ancient times, all Teachers have given to their

chelas the talisman of duty. Any duty, however humble, performed with skill and without longing or regret, strengthens the neophyte. It is the first transmuting force made available to him, one which he can manipulate with safety. He is asked to go out into the world to test its efficacy. For him, now, his duty is his stern morality. That which takes him away from that duty becomes, *for him*, immoral. The duty, which is not his but another's, that action which, however bountiful of results, is divorced from his duty is, for him, dangerous.

Yet, because he is asked to wield an instrument which is not fascinatingly new, the neophyte rarely tries to measure its strength. He has little, if any, enthusiasm for the old talisman of duty and may remain listless, letting precious years slip by which he could have profitably used for practice in the art of handling and impressing aright the lives of his body by a higher type of thought.

But truly duty is no mere mechanical or dull discipline. When applied to attaining the Noetic way, it becomes the first obeisance of the chela to the Lord within. It also provides him in time with those mystic weapons which he must acquire for the fight against his lower self.

Devotion to duty, moreover, will lead the disciple in time to a conscious contact with the supersensuous worlds, to the ecstasy of inward vision that opens the bars to knowledge. Contact with the Teacher, to whose bidding the disciple must dedicate his life, opens up yet further layers of consciousness, yet further rules of morality.

Yet, all rules applicable at any stage may be resolved into observance of three basic Rules of Conduct. These are : Punctuality in Time, Accuracy in Space, Purity in Causation. All expressions of consciousness must be within the ambit of these three. Yet the application of morality is not hedged in by limitations. The rules of grammar do not hamper literary creation nor do they cramp the writer's genius. So too with morality. For morality is not an imposition from without. It is the characteristic of the Soul in action, the natural expression of the God manifesting through the earthly tabernacle of man.

THEY have Rights who dare maintain them.

—LOWELL

FREEDOM OR DETERMINISM?

ACCORDING to the 17-century philosopher Locke, willing is one power, and liberty another. So Locke said, "The question is not proper whether the *will* be free, but whether a *man* be free." But the basic question, "Is the will free?", remains. Is there a real antithesis between free will and determinism?

The claim that science knows the "well-ascertained laws of nature," as Dr. W. B. Carpenter, F.R.S., imagined in his day, is still being put forward. This mixing up of "scientific hypotheses" with "laws of nature" is responsible for giving false leads to people who put into practice many injurious applications of these supposedly proven "scientific laws," more especially when they are applied in the psychological and medical fields. To confuse these is erroneous. People assume, for instance, that if there are any psychological laws, they compel us to act as we do.

But the psychologist who believes that human action takes place according to laws does not believe that our actions are all forced on us in this way; he believes only that they are predictable. This point, however, is not made clear to the public, and therefore people are rightly apprehensive about the findings of modern psychology.

In 1843, John Stuart Mill wrote in his *Logic*:

Correctly conceived, the doctrine called Philosophic Necessity is simply this: that given the motives which are present to an individual's mind, and given likewise the character and disposition of the individual, the manner in which he will act may be unerringly inferred; that if we know the person thoroughly, and know all the inducements which are acting upon him, we could foretell his conduct with as much certainty as we can predict any physical event.

Mill's supposition is a purely theoretical one. Is there ever a case where *all* the factors are known? Is there not always an "x" quantity, the power of which may prevail over all the known quantities? To put the matter in moral terms, as stated by a Master:

As the lost jewel may be recovered from the very depths of the tank's mud, so can the most abandoned snatch himself from the mire of sin, if only the precious Gem of Gems, the sparkling germ of the Atma, is developed. Each of us must do *that* for himself,

each *can* if he but will and persevere.

The "x" quantity in each is the root of our being in which the true will resides; in denying its very existence, the behaviourist denies to himself his own inherent power of self-redemption.

Theosophy recognizes the law of causation as one of its fundamental axioms. There can be no effects without causes, and further, there can be no actions without an actor to perform them or feel their effects. The so-called problem of free will is easily solvable once the duality of man is recognized, the spirit remaining unaffected and always free and the personal man being bound by action to rebirth and to the reaping of effects and creation of new causes. Through pain and sorrow he learns to work with the great law of harmony and, surrendering his lower will and desire to the behests of the higher, achieves union with that higher. The law of causation carries all beings forward. The beings in the lower kingdoms perform acts instinctively, impelled in consonance with the law; man is learning to act self-consciously with the law and in doing so is checked by Karma until the needed lessons are all learnt and he has become an Adept and a co-worker with Nature in her cyclic task. From the tiniest atom to the mightiest Dhyan Chohan, all are under law; the cycles of action and reaction must run their rounds, but each one's position in them is determined by himself or herself.

Theosophy also speaks of the Laws of Nature, but these are the great universal laws governing both Spirit and Matter; one should also be careful not to consider them as apart from the beings who constitute that Nature. Says Robert Crosbie:

The Laws of nature are but the interrelations and interdependence of all the beings concerned in this stream of evolution....The one inclusive law is the law of action and reaction—a law not outside of, but *inherent* in the nature of every being.

Similarly when we speak of the laws of cycles, they do not represent some arbitrary fixed period set for the accomplishment of certain developments of nature, but are the creation of the beings themselves. Human beings perceive the rhythmic rise and fall and give to it the name of cycle. Beings create the cycle by giving it its initial impulse, and beings give the recurrent impulses that carry evolution forward. "The ideas we entertain of the Supreme, of Law,

of Nature, and of our own Being govern the actions we perform."

When we speak of the plan in the mind of the cosmos, what is that mind but the sum total of all the intelligences that make up the universe from the highest to the lowest?

Theosophy points out the danger of using the word "God," owing to the popular misunderstanding and the personalized concepts that the word conveys. God at once becomes the responsible agent whose will alone prevails and the individual becomes a puppet.

"Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil," said the Elohim of the Bible, so we are all gods in virtue of our power of choice to do right or wrong. There are also those who, having accepted the justice of Karma, yet unconsciously to themselves transfer all their previous notions of a ruling Providence to the somewhat sterner decrees of Karmic law. They have only substituted the word "Karma" for the word "God." To avoid this we should ever bear in mind the following passage from *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 305):

Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plans and creates causes, and Karmic law adjusts the effects; which adjustment is not an act, but universal harmony, tending ever to resume its original position, like a bough, which, bent down too forcibly, rebounds with corresponding vigour. If it happen to dislocate the arm that tried to bend it out of its natural position, shall we say that it is the bough which broke our arm, or that our own folly has brought us to grief?

It is preoccupation with possession, more than anything else, that prevents men from living freely and nobly.

—BERTRAND RUSSELL

CYCLES AND CYCLIC LAW

[We reprint here another of Mr. Judge's addresses at the Theosophical Congress, held at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago World's Fair, in September 1893.]

THIS is our last meeting; it is the last impulse of the Cycle which we began when we opened our sessions at this Parliament. All the other bodies which have met in this building have been also starting cycles just as we have been. Now, a great many people know what the word "cycle" means, and a great many do not. There are no doubt in Chicago many men who think that a cycle is a machine to be ridden; but the word that I am dealing with is not that. I am dealing with a word which means a return, a ring. It is a very old term, used in the far past. In our civilization it is applied to a doctrine which is not very well understood, but which is accepted by a great many scientific men, a great many religious men, and by a great many thinking men. The theory is, as held by the ancient Egyptians, that there is a cycle, a law of cycles which governs humanity, governs the earth, governs all that is in the universe. You may have heard Brother Chakravarti say the Hindus are still teaching that there is a great cycle which begins when the Unknown breathes forth the whole universe, and ends when it is turned in again into itself. That is the great cycle.

In the Egyptian monuments, papyri, and other records, the cycles are spoken of. They held, and the ancient Chinese also held, that a great cycle governs the earth, called the sidereal cycle because it related to the stars. The work was so large that it had to be measured by the stars, and that cycle is 25,800 and odd years long. They claim to have measured this enormous cycle. The Egyptians gave evidence they had measured it also and had measured many others, so that in these ancient records, looking at the question of cycles, we have a hint that man has been living on the earth, has been civilized and uncivilized for more years than we have been taught to believe. The ancient Theosophists have always held that civilization with humanity went around the earth in cycles, in rings, returning again and again upon itself, but that at each turn of the cycle, on the point of return it was higher than before. This law of cycles is held in Theosophical doctrine to be the most important of all, because it is at the bottom of all. It is a part of the law of that unknown being who is the

universe, that there shall be a periodical coming from and a periodical returning again upon itself.

Now, that the law of cycles does prevail in the world must be very evident if you will reflect for a few moments. The first cycle I would draw your attention to is the daily cycle, when the sun rises in the morning and sets at night, returning again next morning, you following the sun, rising in the morning and at night going to sleep again, at night almost appearing dead, but the next morning awaking to life once more. That is the first cycle. You can see at once that there are therefore in a man's life just as many cycles of that kind as there are days in his life. The next is the monthly cycle, when the moon, changing every 28 days, marks the month. We have months running to more days, but that is only for convenience, to avoid change in the year. The moon gives the month and marks the monthly cycle.

The next is the yearly cycle. The great luminary, the great mover of all, returns again to a point from whence he started. The next great cycle to which I would draw your attention, now we have come^o to the sun—it is held by science and is provable I think by other arguments—the next cycle is that the sun, while stationary to us, is in fact moving through space in an enormous orbit which we cannot measure. As he moves he draws the earth and the planets as they wheel about him. We may say, then, this is another great cycle. It appears reasonable that, as the sun is moving through that great cycle, he must draw the earth into spaces and places and points in space where the earth has never been before, and that it must happen that the earth shall come now and then into some place where the conditions are different and that it may be changed in a moment, as it were, for to the eye of the soul a thousand years are but a moment, when everything will be different. That is one aspect of cyclic doctrine, that the sun is drawing the earth in a great orbit of his own and is causing the earth to be changed in its nature by reason of the new atomic spaces into which it is taken.

We also hold that the earth is governed by cyclic law throughout the century as in a moment. The beings upon it are never in the same state. So nations, races, civilizations, communities are all governed in the same way and moved by the same law. This law of cycles is the law of reincarnation that we were speaking of today: that is, that a man comes into the world and lives a day, his life is as a day; he dies

out of it and goes to sleep, elsewhere waking; then he sleeps there to wake again the next day; after a period of rest, he again enters life; that is his cycle. We hold in Theosophical philosophy it has been proven by the Adepts by experiment that men in general awake from this period of rest after 1,500 years. So we point in history to an historical cycle of 1,500 years, after which old ideas return. And if you will go back in the history of the world you will find civilization repeating itself every 1,500 years, more or less like what it was before. That is to say, go back 1,500 years from now and you will find coming out here now the Theosophists, the philosophers, the various thinkers, the inventors of 1,500 years ago. And going further back still, we hold that those ancient Egyptians who made such enormous pyramids and who had a civilization we cannot understand, at that dim period when they burst on the horizon of humanity to fall again, have had their cycle of rest and are reincarnating again even in America. So we think, some of us, that the American people of the new generation are a reincarnation of the ancient Egyptians, who are coming back and bringing forth in this civilization all the wonderful ideas which the Egyptians held. And that is one reason why this country is destined to be a great one, because the ancients are coming back, they are here, and you are very foolish if you refuse to consider yourselves so great. We are willing you should consider yourselves so great, and not think you are born mean, miserable creatures.

The next cycle I would draw your attention to is that of civilizations. We know that civilizations have been here, and they are gone. There is no bridge between many of these. If heredity, as some people claim, explains everything, how is it not explained why the Egyptians left no string to connect them with the present? There is nothing left of them but the Copts, who are poor miserable slaves. The Egyptians, as a material race, are wiped out, and it is so because it is according to the law of cycles and according to the law of nature that the physical embodiment of the Egyptians had to be wiped out. But their souls could not go out of existence, and so we find their civilization and other civilizations disappearing, civilizations such as the ancient civilization of Babylon, and all those old civilizations in that part of the East which were just as strange and wonderful as any other. And this civilization of ours has come up instead of going down, but it is simply repeating the experience of the past on a higher level. It is

better in potentiality than that which has been before. Under the cyclic law it will rise higher and higher, and when its time comes it will die out like the rest.

Also religions have their cycles. The Christian religion has had its cycle. It began in the first year of the Christian era and was a very different thing then from what it is now. If you examine the records of Christianity itself you will see that the early fathers and teachers taught differently in the beginning from that which the priests of today are teaching now. Similarly you will find that Brahminism has had its cycle. Every religion rises and falls with the progress of human thoughts, because cyclic law governs every man, and thus every religion which man has.

So it is also with diseases. Is it not true that fevers are governed by a law of recurrence in time; some have three days, some four days, nine days, fifteen days, three years and so on? No physician can say why it is so; they only know that it is a fact. So in every direction the law of cycles is found to govern. It is all according to the great inherent law of the periodical ebb and flow, the Great Day and Night of Nature. The tides in Ocean rise and fall; similarly in the great Ocean of Nature there is a constant ebb and flow, a mightier tide which carries all with it. The only thing that remains unshaken, immovable, never turning is the Spirit itself. That, as St. James said—and he doubtless was himself a wise Theosophist—is without variableness and hath no shadow of turning.

Now, this great law of periodical return pertains also to every individual man in his daily life and thought. Every idea that you have, every thought, affects your brain and mind by its impression. That begins the cycle. It may seem to leave your mind, apparently it goes out, but it returns again under the same cyclic law in some form either better or worse, and wakes up once more the old impression. Even the very feelings that you have of sorrow or gladness will return in time, more or less according to your disposition, but inevitably in their cycle. This is a law it would do good for everyone to remember, especially those who have variations of joy and sorrow, of exaltation and depression. If when depressed you would recollect the law and act upon it by voluntarily creating another cycle of exaltation, on its returning again with the companion cycle of lower feeling it would in no long time destroy the depressing cycle and raise you to higher

places of happiness and peace. It applies again in matters of study where we use the intellectual organs only. When a person begins the study of a difficult subject or one more grave than usual, there is a difficulty in keeping the mind upon it; the mind wanders; it is disturbed by other and older ideas and impressions. But by persistency a new cycle is established, which, being kept rolling, at last obtains the mastery.

We hold further—and I can only go over this briefly—that in evolution itself, considered as a vast inclusive whole, there are cycles, and that unless there were these turnings and returnings no evolution would be possible, for evolution is but another word for cyclic law. Reincarnation, or re-embodiment over and over again, is an expression of this great law and a necessary part of evolution.

Evolution means a coming forth from something. From out of what does the evolving universe come? It comes out from what we call the unknown, and we call it "unknown" simply because we do not know what it is. The unknown does not mean the non-existent; it simply means that which we do not perceive in its essence or fullness. It goes forth again and again, always higher and better; but while it is rolling around at its lower arc it seems to those down there that it is lower than ever, but it is bound to come up again. And that is the answer we give to those who ask, what of all those civilizations that have disappeared, what of all the years that I have forgotten? What have I been in other lives, I have forgotten them? We simply say, you are going through your cycle. Some day all these years and experiences will return to your recollection as so much gained. And all the nations of the earth should know this law, remember it, and act upon it, knowing that they will come back and that others also will come back. Thus they should leave behind something that will raise the cycle higher and higher, thus they should ever work toward the perfection which mankind as a whole is striving in fact to procure for itself.

—W. Q. JUDGE

EVERY noble work is at first impossible.

—CARLYLE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

During the past year, millions the world over have been killed or rendered homeless by floods, earthquakes, storms, hurricanes and other natural disasters. The 1990 edition of Whitaker's Almanack says that natural disasters seem to occur more frequently now than they did in the past, and explains why the United Nations General Assembly has declared the 1990s an International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

In response, the Royal Geographical Society and the Developing Areas Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers held a two-day conference on May 3 and 4, where international geographers and representatives from non-government organizations discussed how different human responses to natural disasters can reduce the toll of death and suffering in developing countries. (*Geographical Magazine*, May 1991)

According to Dr. Ann Varley of University College London's Geography Department, enquiries into disasters tend to focus on physical causes at the expense of the social factors which can make communities more vulnerable. There is lack of understanding, she said, to explain why poor people suffer most in sudden-onset disasters, such as floods, hurricanes, landslides and volcanic eruptions. "It is easy to see that poor people are those most likely to starve in a famine; it is far less easy to see how poverty is linked to losses resulting from the apparently indiscriminate destructiveness of a flash flood or an earthquake," Dr. Varley said.

Of still greater importance is the tracing of the true cause of natural disasters. Nature does not function haphazardly. There is a design and purpose in all natural events, even the seemingly catastrophic. It is man who disturbs the harmony of nature, of which he is a part. Nature but readjusts the broken equilibrium, and in the process man experiences suffering. Earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, droughts, epidemics, are all nature's reactions to the evil-doings of man.

There is a connection, close and direct, between the moral and the natural order. H.P.B. gives hints, both in *Isis Unveiled* and in *The Secret Doctrine*, of the reciprocal relation between man and nature. "It is absolutely false," she says, "and but an additional demonstration of the great conceit of our age, to assert (as men of science do) that all

the great geological changes and terrible convulsions have been produced by *ordinary and known physical forces*" (S.D., I, 640). The ancients accepted it as an axiomatic fact that any cataclysm of nature is the physical sign of an upheaval in the moral, psychic and mental planes of being. Physical catastrophes may have immediate physical causes, "but these have been brought on by the disturbance created through the dynamic power of human thought."

Although belief in reincarnation is age-old in India, it was only in the 1960s, with the arrival of Dr. Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia, U.S.A., that reincarnation phenomena started being investigated scientifically. An active researcher in the field today is Dr. Satwant Pasricha, associate professor of Clinical Psychology at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bangalore, who in the course of a 17-year investigation has examined nearly 300 claims of reincarnation. Her recently published book, *Claims of Reincarnation: An Empirical Study of Cases in India*, has attracted widespread attention, both from the public and from the scientific community. BBC of London, which is doing a film on reincarnation, is interviewing Dr. Pasricha among others, and is filming several claimed cases of reincarnation that have been studied by her.

The *Sunday Review* supplement of *The Times of India* for August 4 recounts some of the case histories investigated by Dr. Pasricha. A typical case, the very first studied by her, is that of Manju Sharma. Born in Pasauli, in Mathura district, she started recalling, when she was only two years old, the events of an earlier life. She claimed she was then a girl called Krishna, of Chaumuha village (also in Mathura district), and that she had died by accidentally slipping into a well while trying to draw water. She recalled the names of her parents and brothers, the location of her house, and several events in that earlier life, and she demonstrated an unusual fear of wells. One day when a man from Chaumuha came to Pasauli on business, Manju recognized him, and later he was instrumental in bringing the two families together. The details Manju had given of her previous life were found to be correct and when taken to Chaumuha she was able to recognize her former friends. As often happens in such cases, as she grew older

she had no recollection of her past birth.

In another case, two-and-a-half-year-old Sunita Singh of Bewar Development Block, in Manipuri district of U.P., claimed she was murdered in her previous life when she was living in a neighbouring village and went by the name of Ram Dulari. She had prominent birthmarks on her right arm and the right side of her chest. Post-mortem reports examined by Dr. Pasricha revealed that Ram Dulari was indeed murdered with a bladed weapon, and the two linear birthmarks across Sunita's right upper chest corresponded closely to two of the wounds inflicted on the murdered woman.

Dr. Pasricha has no answer as to why some recall their past lives while others do not. Nor is she prepared to affirm, on the basis of the cases she has investigated, that reincarnation is a universal phenomenon. However, going scientifically, and after rejecting various hypotheses such as fantasy, fraud, genetic memory, cryptomnesia, paramnesia, possession, and ESP, she suggests that the claims are "best explained by reincarnation." She has reasons to believe, she says, that those who had had a violent death in the previous life, or those who had unfulfilled wishes, or those who had a desire to be reborn, were more likely than others to recall the events of that life in their next birth.

Some of the common features in all such cases, Dr. Pasricha found, were that the subjects were very young children, generally around the age of three; that they spoke of the events of their past life irrespective of the encouragement or discouragement they received from their parents, and that they stopped talking about it as they grew older. Almost all recalled the means of death, and if it was a violent death, showed fear of knives, blades, fire or bullets, depending on how they died.

In most of the cases investigated, the interval between two incarnations is very short. Quick rebirth, Theosophy says, does sometimes take place, but it is an exception rather than the rule. "Save in the case of young children, and of individuals whose lives were violently cut off by some accident, no Spiritual Entity can reincarnate before a period of many centuries has elapsed." (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 303)

Striking though some of the cases are, do any or all of them together constitute irrefragable proof of reincarnation? Many alternate theories have been offered to explain the cases. Researchers concentrate

so much on data and details concerning individual cases that they tend to overlook the broad implications of the doctrine of rebirth. The Theosophical view is that reincarnation is not susceptible of proof by phenomenal means. For the ultimate proof of reincarnation one must wait until one so purifies oneself that the soul's memories can be impressed upon the physical brain. Meantime the best arguments for reincarnation are those from analogy with other manifestations of the law of periodicity, coupled with its complete reasonableness. Reincarnation alone, with Karma, can explain the differences in capacity and state. We are the past of ourselves. If we would know the past, we have to look with insight upon the present, which is in unbroken continuity with that past, as the future will be with both.

How can education be made relevant to every child, and what criteria should be used to measure achievement levels? These were among the questions tackled by educationists from 56 countries who met in Estoril, Portugal, from May 20-24. The symposium, "Significant strategies to ensure the success of all, in the Basic School," was organized by UNESCO. (*Unesco Sources*, July/August 1991)

According to the participants, the provision of primary education for all children should not be the sole target. It is the *quality* of current education systems in many regions that leaves much to be desired, with primary education rarely meeting the specific needs of children in today's world. Even in industrialized countries an estimated 10 to 20 per cent of children leave primary school with unsatisfactory levels of basic skill achievement. "We need alternative approaches," Unesco Assistant Director-General for Education, Colin Power, told the seminar. "We also need to bring in new partners—parents, employers, non-governmental organizations—to build a grand alliance in support of basic education."

Education should be multi-dimensional, taking into account other aspects of the individual rather than concentrating only on conventional subjects such as reading, writing and arithmetic. Teachers' attitudes to pupils, the delegates said, also had to change as it had been proven that when a teacher believed a pupil could not learn, the chances of that pupil succeeding were minimal; if teachers had high expectations

of all pupils, better results would be achieved. The participants also agreed that current criteria for measuring success in school were discriminatory as they "condemned" those who failed examinations.

To this end, the educationists recommended that "attention be directed towards equipping teachers for their role in evaluating learning outcomes," and pointed out that "success in school can be achieved if evaluation can be effectively and continuously made during the teaching-learning process." A number of countries have begun working in this direction and are reaping good results.

Thus, education has to be tailored to suit the needs of children rather than the other way round, according to Colin Power. "The foundation for human development must evolve from the grassroots," he said, "the child, the family and the community being the focal points."

In the wake of some startling scientific discoveries, vegetarianism is gaining increasing acceptance in the West as a healthier way of life. In striking contrast, in India, where vegetarianism has had firm roots since millennia, even traditional vegetarians are taking to animal foods for various reasons. D. K. Dixit, writing in *Indian Express Weekend* for August 10, deplors that the younger generation especially considers the eating of meat as the "in" thing, a status symbol. Today, in this country, the proportion of vegetarians—those who abstain from fish, flesh and fowl—is a bare 28 per cent.

The myth that meat-eating makes one more vigorous has been demolished and scientists today believe that the structure of the human body lends itself more suitably to a balanced vegetarian diet. According to an authority, Dr. J. D. Craig, "The people of Europe who abstain from flesh are of the better and more intelligent class and in a number of notable athletic contests requiring endurance the vegetarian has invariably come off victorious." It has been reported also that the incidence of certain diseases is higher among meat consumers compared to the vegetarian population—a fact that H.P.B. noted as far back as 1889, in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 259). Referring to the variety of arguments which vegetarians in general put forward, she says:

Some of their arguments are very weak, and often based on

assumptions which are quite false. But, on the other hand, many of the things they say are quite true. For instance, we believe that much disease, and especially the great predisposition to disease which is becoming so marked a feature in our time, is very largely due to the eating of meat, and especially of tinned meats.

Theosophy speaks also of the coarsening effect of meat on the human body and the transfer to man of some of the physiological characteristics of the animal whose flesh is eaten—not to mention the ethical aspect of unnecessarily destroying life in higher forms. In that connection the sane and common-sense point of view presented by Theosophy is thus epitomized by H.P.B.:

Don't you grasp yet that we never impose any hard-and-fast obligations in this respect? Remember once for all that in all such questions we take a rational, and never a fanatical, view of things. If from illness or long habit a man cannot go without meat, why, by all means let him eat it. It is no crime; it will only retard his progress a little; for after all is said and done, the purely bodily actions and 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. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 259)

A study conducted at the B. M. Birla Science Centre, Hyderabad, has corroborated many of the principles of materials science mentioned in the Vedic text *Vimana Shastra*. Dr. B. G. Sidharth, the Centre's director, says that four of the materials described in the ancient text were deciphered, manufactured and tested in the laboratory. These materials, sound-proof and heat-resistant alloys, and heat-collecting glasses, were mentioned in the text as raw materials used in making instruments for aircraft and spacecraft. And we think these are modern inventions!

The materials tested at the Centre possess some properties unknown to modern science. The scientists are subjecting them to careful study with a view to adapting them for modern applications. For instance, the glasses which were found to have heat-collecting properties could have an important role to play in solar energy devices. (2001, August-September 1991)

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THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles through a truer realization of the SELF, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization and

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"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

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