

# **The Theosophical Movement**

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# The Heart's Mind

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As he thinketh in his heart, so is he.

—Proverbs, XXIII. 7

Theosophy is the message of the heart and is sometimes called the Heart Doctrine; but it also satisfies the intellect, advocating as it does study and search. We are told in the First Item of The Secret Doctrine that the facts constituting the system of thought we know today as Theosophy were collected and collated by countless generations of Sages and Seers, and no one's experience or vision was accepted until it was checked, tested and verified by the visions and experiences of other great Seers and Adepts, so that this body of wisdom is the result of collective evidence and is not based on anyone's independent experience or authority.

And so Theosophy is the balanced combination of the heart and the head. Sometimes, however, the heart message is sadly neglected, and as a result, particularly today, we find civilization oscillating between two great fires, the fire of the heart and the fire of the lower passional nature. The fire of the heart was originally lit by the great Sages, Saviours and Teachers of humanity, and time and again there have been attempts to rekindle that fire. But, because of man's ignorance and evil ways, his passions and tyrannies, the dying embers of that fire emit today but a fitful glow.

Both the heart and the head play important roles in the constitution of man. Modern psychology gives us a wealth of details pertaining to the interaction between the two, but it is yet far from any real explanation, or even recognition, of the ability of the heart to think. Mind and heart constitute the fundamental motivating powers of man, his two principal organs for functioning as a self-conscious human being. So naturally the understanding of man's mental and heart power is of paramount importance.

What is the mind? It is that by which one thinks and reasons, but it is much more than that. Reasoning from premises to conclusions is the intellectual aspect of the mind and a very necessary aspect. But the power to reason is just one small aspect of the mind. It has another vaster function, and little is known in reference to this. It is the ability of the mind to reflect. Reflect what? Whence originate our ideas? Could ideas exist apart from the thinking mind? That is something that needs to be pondered upon.

From an evolutionary viewpoint, life has never had any beginning and therefore can have no end; and so we cannot say when ideas first originated. But we can say that we as thinking beings on this earth originated about 18,000,000 years ago. And so for us there was a beginning in the human thinking process, but the ideas had been thought by millions of beings millions and billions of years before. Where were those ideas when the beings disappeared? They were impressed, implanted, photographed, if you like, on a substance which Theosophy

calls astral for want of a better word. Nothing is ever lost and every impression, thought, feeling is indelibly implanted. Therefore, the mind of every human being has the power to reflect on many of its impressions under many conditions.

The mind of man has five faculties—thought, will, feeling, imagination and memory. When the mind, which is in itself something of a sensitive plate or mirror, reflects ideas, there come to the assistance of that mind some of these faculties. To see a reflection requires a form—imagination; seeing is imagining, imagining is seeing. Also, as the result of that reflection, a feeling can be stimulated, a certain kind of feeling.

There are many kinds of feeling, because man is both animal and godlike; there is animal feeling and there is divine feeling, lower and higher feeling, impure and pure feeling. The senses contribute to partial knowledge of life, but limited as they are by matter, they generally bring us feelings which are physical sensations. The animal world also experiences these.

Then another step can be taken by the mind—the use of the faculty to reason about those feelings. We have human emotions, feelings such as love, courage, fearlessness, feelings of loyalty, of honour, of patriotism. They are feelings which are superior to the animal feelings, for they have been thought about, reasoned about. When we approach this particular area of the mind, that of human feelings and emotions, we have come into a realm which may be classified under the general head "psychic." This is where the intellect and the feelings, the mind and the heart, begin to merge. The term "psychic" is used to express the whole gamut of man's powers of mind, from the highest spiritual to the lowest physical.

To turn from the mind to the heart. The illumination of the heart, the power of the heart to think, would be useless except for the fact that there is something to illumine. Of what use would light be if there was no life, no world, nothing to be lit up? The heart is the centre of the spiritual man, the Real Man. It is sometimes spoken of as the king of the body. There is a spot in the heart which is the first to live in the foetus and the last to die. The Deity, the only Deity we can know anything about, lives in the heart, the spiritual heart.

Now, we shall find that in the higher realms of being, heart and mind are one entity. In the psychic realm, desire and intellect are the two ruling principles; but on the plane of the spiritual man, these merge and become one. Many a problem, such as that of good and evil, has arisen because of the separation of heart and mind. On the animal or even the purely human plane of existence, heart and mind do not act as one, but as two separate and generally antagonistic forces, and this is where the trouble begins. This is the source of all selfishness and separateness.

Our ability to receive and give off impressions is generally attributed to material or sensuous causes. But the actual causal processes originate in Spirit, which is the Real Man and of whom little or nothing is known. Therefore, there has been no real basis for ethics other than sentiment, religious dogmas and beliefs, and that which cannot be explained by these means is termed "miraculous." Theosophy postulates that law prevails everywhere in the universe, and

that true knowledge cannot be acquired except on the basis of effort and by the use not only of the mind but of faculties that in most people are practically dormant for lack of use.

To return to our mental faculties, we can take an illustration to understand how they function. Supposing a person enters a wood with a little child. The child strays and a rattlesnake is not far off. The first intimation of this to the adult is the sound of the rattle, which is impressed upon him through the sense of hearing. As a result of that sensation, and through association of ideas, a fear arises, and that is memory, for that person in the past has passed through a similar experience. We have, therefore, the interaction of sensation and feeling. Another faculty of the mind is quickly brought to bear upon the situation, namely, reason; and because of reason, memory and sensation, the whole picture is focused in the mind of the adult. In spite of that, and to save the life of the child, the adult attacks the rattlesnake, risks his own life, and out of that experience arises a feeling—we call it courage. We know that an animal would have reacted in the same manner up to a certain point, would have recoiled with fear and aversion, would have shown courage to save its young; but in that experience what other faculties would be absent? Reason and a certain type of imagination, because animals have a lower form of imagination and thought. There is also the faculty of will. When that quick effort was made which resulted in the saving of the child's life, there was the employment of the faculty of will. That will is a heart thought, because until will is free of lower desire it is not the spiritual will. The heart is the seat of all potential life, energy, thought and will. Let us remember that.

We could give example after example to show how feelings arise. We could see how the feeling of hate would arise in a person, the reverse of the higher feeling of courage; but let us just say briefly that all negative feelings are an admixture, an alloy, of animal sensations. It is only in the realm of the lower man, through his sense-nature and animal proclivities, that there arise the opposites—such as light and darkness, like and dislike, hate and love—and this is because of the fact that we are so preoccupied with our mind processes that we have fallen away from the source of the heart, we have lost the ability to reason, to imagine, to will and to remember in conjunction with qualities which are entirely of the heart. Recognition of this and the ability to sort out, from among the heap of rubbish which constitutes our lower feelings, the nuggets of gold that lie in the heart, has an important bearing upon the subject of ethics.

How could we eradicate the lower, bad feelings? By educating the mind and purifying desire. The mind is magnetic, is electrical, and in that sense is electrically and magnetically connected with all life and becomes a focus, by attraction or repulsion, for all the correlates which we have just mentioned. When they begin to engulf that aspect of man which we speak of as the desire nature, tides of sensation sweep over and around us, but in the very midst of those sensations, a feeling or emotion can arise like the intoning of a deep bell, and bring back from the distant shores waves of compassion, of altruism, of selflessness, cleansing, purifying.

Wherever we find, therefore, such feelings as remorse for wrong actions committed, the prickings of conscience, better resolves and altruistic urges, we can be sure that these originate from the mind of the heart, and impress themselves upon man's lower nature. Many explanations have been put forth, many terms and words have been used to account for these experiences, but they are not fully understood. There are people whose lives and characters

have been completed transformed as the result of an experience. Why should that happen to that person and not to someone else? And what is it that actually takes place? Theosophy would say it is all the working of Karma, which is a word meaning the Law of Retribution, the Law of cause and effect, or Ethical Causation. We reap what we have sown not only in the past of this life, but also in the other lives, for we have lived in other bodies, we have had other minds and other hearts and other faculties, and we come back into this life with the accumulated experience of all these. Even without the knowledge of this, we sometimes act under the impulse of an urge; we have rung the bell of the heart and something happens, something breaks through—when we are sufficiently freed from the dominance of the lower senses and desires—something beyond the ken of the individual's brain-mind.

Therefore, sometimes, may be under great duress and stress, the stream of the heart's afflatus pours like a fountain upon that being and he becomes another person, able to accomplish what previously would have been considered a miracle, and is no longer held fast by that which constituted his erstwhile normal, everyday life. The power of the heart to think! The person no longer thinks as he did previously. He feels as if he has risen from one plane to another, has passed from a condition of mortality to a condition of immortality, where his power is illimitable, illumined by the light of the heart. Some people speak of having heard a voice, and if they are too strongly embedded in religious beliefs, they call it the voice of God.

Theosophists would say the same thing, but their "God" would not be a Being or form with limits, the "voice" would not be a cry, but a song. Poets, creative thinkers, sages, prophets, have all related such experiences, generally in language which is symbolical, for it is impossible to put into words the full extent of the language of the heart. It is not so much a thought, an idea, as a feeling, and if we are honest and sincere we shall have to admit that, if we have ever touched greatness within ourselves, perhaps recognized by no one else, then the ideas or thoughts which arose within us followed a feeling and did not precede that feeling; and Theosophy would say that that feeling was the thought of the spiritual man, the Soul. Those who make these ideas realities to their conscious minds are the enfranchised beings, the Mahatmas, the Adepts. We have not made any channels through which that idea can come to our brain-mind other than recognizing it as an ideal, a feeling.

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## **Monotheism or Polytheism?**

No subject in the entire range of philosophic thought has provoked as much discussion, both sublime and ridiculous, as the subject of God. Religion has always claimed the privilege of possessing knowledge of Deity. But, while some of the lines of philosophic thought have been helpful in clearing human speculation and conjecture, theology in the East as in the West has only made confusion worse confounded. We must distinguish at the outset between theology and philosophy. One is sectarian, the other is universal. Theologians make poor philosophers because they are partial to their own religious creed, and instead of seeking truth, are only

eager to prove a dogma already asserted. Take Christian theology, or Islamic theology, or Hindu theology, and one will not only not see daylight in the befogged atmosphere; one is also likely to become a partisan, a dogmatic asserter, and to develop into a fanatic.

So in the study of our subject we shall avoid theology and go to philosophy. The religious confusion prevalent everywhere today may be traced to the blunder of the theologian and the priest. When the priest abandoned the way of the philosopher and followed the theologian, his knowledge became belief. In the olden days, priests were philosophers; and more, occultists or yogis, who knew the truths and facts about God, Spirit, Atman. Universality was the keynote of the teachings of the ancient world. Take India, for example: philosophers studied fundamental problems from different points of view; therefore the six schools of Indian philosophy are called Darshamas. That was in the days of old.

In our study we must reject dogma and belief and seek the truth. It does not mean that we should reject religion; it means that we must *study* religion. We must demand from religion what we demand from science—reasonable arguments that convince the mind without revolting the heart; we must also demand from religion what we demand from applied science. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," as the adage goes; and if the teachings of religion, any religion, are true, they must prove their usefulness.

It is in that spirit of vigorous search and inquiry, to satisfy our reason, to gain practical knowledge as to how to live and how to labor and to love, that we must go to the study of our subject.

Is there one God or are there many gods? That is a general question we have to consider in the spirit of philosophic inquiry. Generally speaking people do not wait to inquire what monotheism and polytheism actually mean. If they did, they would first have to define the word "theism." Words have become tombs instead of what they should be—shrines; words are now graves of dead ideas, while they ought to be living temples conveying the truth of the ideas they contain. Theologians quarrel over *mono* (one) and *poly* (many) gods; philosophers see the interrelationship because of the word Theos (god). One God or many gods? But what is God?

Theologians and priests of all religions confuse the mind and bring to birth sectarians. The Christian goes to church to pray, but he is rarely able to define to whom or to what he prays; let him examine the foundations of his church, the soul of his church-ceremonials, and he cannot escape belief in a personal god. The ordinary Christian does not directly believe in an old, bearded person beyond the sky, but indirectly, in a thousand ways, the influence of that nefarious idea works its evil.

Similarly, the ordinary Hindu holds to his own caste or subcaste god. Worshippers of Shiva are pitted against worshippers of Vishnu; nay more, one kind of Vishnu-worshipper abhors another type of Vishnu-worshipper. Wrong polytheism among Hindus, wrong monotheism among Christians, is all too common. Religious customs and habits have their meaning, their influence, good or bad, and it is not our place as students of Theosophy to ridicule or to attack the faith of any person. But what Theosophy does require and does say is this: seek the meaning of

religious customs and teachings, and discriminate between grain and chaff, between the light and the shadows that are cast.

So let us examine these two concepts, monotheism and polytheism, away from the atmosphere of religious theologies. Let us study them by the help of modern science, to begin with. Science is said to be godless; it is, but in two senses only. It is godless because it rejects the degrading god—carnal, anthropomorphic, a god separate and distinct from his universe, who creates the souls of men and plunges them here on earth to suffer. Science is godless in another sense; it says, "From knowledge so far acquired we do not see any reason to posit any force or power independent of matter, and all that can be said is that we do not yet know the final basis of that which we call Matter." That, too, Theosophy understands and accepts; but Theosophical philosophy goes further. The Occultist, the real Yogi, is the scientist *par excellence*, and he says, "Observation and experimentation carried on for millennia by my predecessors teach the truth about the One Reality and its myriad powers and aspects. They have solved the problem of the One in the many, and the many in the One."

In chemistry, in physics, in biology, modern knowledge has gone far enough to assert that the universe has as its foundation a single homogeneous something—call it matter, call it substance, call it form, or call it life. The physicist and the chemist are searching for that homogeneous substance. They are pursuing that which the old Indian scientific philosophers called *Mulaprakriti*, root of Matter, or *Pradhana*, primordial undifferentiated Substance. The modern scientist may be called a *Svabhavika*, belonging to that Buddhist school of thought which taught that nothing else exists in the universe save and except *Svabhavat*. So modern science is distinctly monotheistic—pursuing the One Substance-Principle, the One material basis, *Upadhi*. If the chemist and the physicist are seeking that One in the shape of Substance, the biologist is seeking that One under the name of Life. The biologist also says that all forms of life, organic, inorganic, human or sub-human, are but transformations, permutations and combinations of the One Life, and what that is, admit the biologists, they do not know. So the biologist is also a monotheist.

Turn to the other aspect: Chemistry and physics teach that while it is true that the basis of the manifested universe is a homogeneity, the evolutionary process brings into existence forms of matter, with differing intelligences. Chemists classify the contents of the universe in one way, physicists in another way, biologists in a third way, and so on; but all agree that substance, force, life, divides, and sub-divides itself—the one becomes the many. If one studies ancient science as explained in Theosophy, one finds that the range of the area examined is vaster: Science of Yoga or Occultism covers the visible and the invisible, material and energetic and spiritual universe, while modern science confines itself to the visible and the material, looking upon everything else as resulting from that visible and material.

How did ancient science or Theosophy explain the problem of God or Deity? It of course rejects any personal god outside of the universe, but it teaches God as an infinite and invisible Presence. Theosophy calls upon us not to believe or to accept blindly, but to study and meditate with a view to learning the truth. The Yogis, the true Occultists, learned of this infinite and invisible Presence by scientific experimentation. The difference between the Yogi and the

modern scientist is that the former develops his instruments of observation and experimentation *within* himself and thus acquires knowledge by experience, which knowledge is verifiable by repetition of the same experience.

Theosophy teaches both monotheism and polytheism combined. Three propositions simply put are advanced in Theosophy: (1) There is One Life, omnipresent, eternal, boundless, omnipotent. (2) There is One Law inherent in that One Life, which is the Law of Progression, of Becoming. (3) There are myriads of forms of life resulting from the interplay of the One Life and the One Law. Life ever is, therefore it is named Be-ness. Law is ever at work, therefore it is named Becoming. Forms of life resulting from these two are many, millions upon millions, and they are named Beings. Be-ness, Becoming, Being—in these three words Theosophy offers its teaching about God or Deity.

Each one of us is a being; but moment by moment, through the hours and the months and the years, we change, we are always and ever *becoming* something different from what we have been or are. But within us, even in the process of becoming, is a Presence—call it Soul, call it Spirit, call it Self, call it Atman, call it by any name you please, but it is a Presence. For, it is by that Presence of the deepest Self in us that we are able to cognize, to appreciate and serve the Great Presence in the universe.

We forget the One Presence in enjoying its multifarious expressions. We forget that we understand the universe because we have a mind. What use is the universe of discourse and reason, of wonderful pattern and harmony, to an insane person? So also if we do not get at the spiritual aspect of the universe it is because we do not look to the Soul within, the Divine Presence in the Heart. He alone is a monotheist who sees that the Light of the Heart is the Light of the Universe; all others are polytheists—admirers and worshippers of many secondary lights; they are not wrong in their view and their action, save that they forget the source of the One Light.

The function of religion in the old days was to teach the technique of seeing that One Light and the many lights and their interrelationship; the One Soul and many souls and their kinship which we call Brotherhood, not ordinary brotherhood, but Universal Brotherhood. That holy and important function of religion is now absent and abandoned. True benefactors of humanity have always attempted to bring about religious harmony and soul-attunement among people.

God is the One Life and the One Law, and its knowledge can be obtained if we purify our senses, control our mind and use the Light of the Soul in the Heart. The infinite and invisible Presence is like abstract Light behind the suns and the stars, behind the light of the eyes, behind the light of the mind. As the Mundaka Upanishad puts it: "Within the deepest sheath of the heart is the Light of lights, which only the Knowers of Atma perceive." The human heart contains the Divine Light which is at the Heart of the Universe; so each human being is a god, immortal as Light, ever growing, ever becoming by the power of the Law of that Light; and controlling that Law, he becomes more than the Law. The Enlightened Ones, the Buddhas, are Great Lights, are like the Sun, in whom is focused the Light of the Universe. With confidence but with humility let us live, day by day, the Religion of Light, seeking knowledge and discarding

belief, practicing purity and serving our fellow beings, till we too become enlightened, we too show forth the splendor of True Religion.

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Some say that freedom from death results from action; and others that death exists not. Hear me explain this, O King! have no misgivings about it.

Both truths, O Kshatriya, have been current from the beginning. The wise maintain what is called delusion to be death. I verily call heedlessness death; and likewise I call freedom from heedlessness immortality. Through heedlessness verily were the demons vanquished; and through freedom from it the gods attained to the Brahman. Heedlessness develops in men as desire, and afterwards as wrath, and in the shape of delusion. And then travelling in devious paths, through egoism, one does not attain to union with the Self. Those who are deluded by it, and who remain under its influence, depart from this world and then again fall down into generation. Then the senses gather round them. And then they undergo death after death. And the embodied self, in consequence of not understanding union with the real entity, proceeds on all hands with attachments to enjoyments. That, verily, is the great source of delusion to the senses: for, by contact with unreal entities, his migrations are rendered inevitable; because, having his inner self contaminated by contact with unreal entities, he devotes himself to objects of sense on all sides, pondering on them only. That pondering first confuses him, and soon afterwards desire and wrath attack him. These lead children to death. But sensible men cross beyond death by their good sense. He who, pondering on the Self, destroys the fugitive objects of sense, not even thinking of them through contempt for them, and who, being possessed of knowledge, destroys desires in this way, becomes, as it were, the death of Death itself, and swallows it up.

—Sanatsujatiya

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## The Divine Response

Reliance and pressure upon our inner nature, in moments of darkness, are sure to be answered by the voice of Krishna, the inner guide.

We must stand interiorly in a faithful attitude. We must have an abiding faith that nothing may shake.

Devotion and aspiration will, and do, help to bring about a proper attitude of mind, and to raise the student to a higher plane, and also they secure for the student help which is unseen by him, for devotion and aspiration put the student into a condition in which aid can be given to him, though he may as yet be unconscious of it.

—W. Q. Judge

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

—The Epistle of James, V, 16

...our *Ego*, which lives and thinks and feels independently of us in our mortal casket, does more than believe. It *knows* that there exists a God in nature, for the sole and invincible Artificer of all lives in us as we live in Him. No dogmatic faith or exact science is able to uproot that intuitional feeling inherent in man, when he has once fully realized it in himself.

—Isis Unveiled, I, 36

True worship or prayer is like an effulgent energy of yearning, sustained by and supporting the aspirant's strivings toward an ideal end. For this purpose, there is an inborn connecting "bridge," an inner organ, spanning a special relationship with the divine part of ourselves and "for the absolute cultivation of the inner spiritual man" (W.Q.J.). What is the nature of the "bridge" and the "ideal" object toward which our heart is to be bent, after withdrawal from personal concerns and involvements?

Lord Krishna has a definite answer and an invitation to his devotees: "There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master—Ishwara....Take sanctuary with him alone, O son of Bharata, with all thy soul." (Bhagavad-Gita, XVIII, 61, 62)

The "bridge" stands for a two-way traffic between the personal man, the incarnated *Manas*, and its parent, the real Man or the Higher *Manas* inclined toward and illumined by *Buddhi*.

Worship, then, is an act of bridging, a process of gradual building up of an intimate familiarity, and later an exclusive friendship, with the Higher Ego, the Dweller (*Dehi*) within, who is knowable alone to the heart consciousness of man.

Soon the habitual turning for communion becomes the soul's hunger, and the answering response from the Divine is unailing although not always felt or recognized. Even as a preparatory state, this relationship, this organization of the clear "channel" of silent communication, the *Antahkarana*, is required for mutual exchange and fellowship. As the reciprocal intimacy grows over the years or even lives, it becomes the potent means for the soul's nourishment and for true progress and self-fulfilment. Frequent remembrance and habitual turning inward is the means of self-opening to the divine influx. The more the *Antahkarana* clears up and the more the channel widens through constant outpouring, the greater is the receptivity for the blessings of guidance, protection and above all the renewal of spirit.

Worship, then, is no longer a personal or egoistic ritual set apart for an occasion, but a steadfast turning within in response to a spontaneous hunger in the soul for closeness and excellence. Surely, one will not have to wait too long for the "grace" of the Master—Ishwara.

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. (Psalm XL, 1)

The question is, are we really there to hear the knock, to open the inner door and receive the Christ or Krishna when He knocks at the door of our heart? Many aspirants in their early stages fail to respond adequately when the quickening of the hunger within is not fully recognized. It is true, Krishna too calls out to us, but the noises of our inner market-place drown the music of his melodious flute. Too often we may pass by without recognizing Him!

Sometimes "providential" help goes unnoticed or unacknowledged. And the whispering guidance, registered on the inner planes of our being, is seldom identified as such. But the help is there and we must trust that the "invisible escort" is always behind every sincere aspirant (R. Crosbie). Faith and trust are the prime condition of the spiritual endeavour. It is an attitude of certainty: "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust." (Psalm XVIII, 2)

This is true dependence on the Divine, where the role of the "Lord" is of a Friend who is a sure guide, our "Charioteer" through the maze and trials of life. Each time one registers an experience of what may be called "divine intervention," a timely help, a saving grace, one ought to acknowledge it with deepest gratitude. This itself is a "prayer."

Robert Crosbie in his letters repeatedly dwells on this subject: "The devotee is given what is needed for his own development." "No one who strives to tread the path is left unhelped." Now and then he reminds his co-workers of a biblical statement: "All things work together for good for him who loves the Lord" (or Law).

Few devotees really know their true inner need. They may ignorantly seek for a particular favour and later discover their mistaken preference. It is said, "With prayers all things are possible." But the price has to be paid. Oscar Wilde humorously said: When the gods wish to punish us they answer our prayers! The legend of the "Midas touch," a boon of turning whatever he touched into gold that King Midas of Phrygia obtained from Dionysus, shows how some "boons" become counterproductive!

There is a *Law* under which prayers may be answered and desires fulfilled. It is ultimately the power of Faith that is triumphant. Mr. Judge in his Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita (ch VII, p. 139) states: "In whatever way the devotee chooses to worship with faith it is the Supreme which, though ignored, brings about the results of faith. For, faith strengthens the will and focuses the image or mental formation which gets objectivised in time, like a developed photograph. This is simply the working of natural law on the mental plane and there is nothing miraculous about it.

There may be many forms of worship, but according to the motive, the end in view and the means employed, three types can be recognized. We must distinguish between conventional prayers and true worship of the Divine. Meditation, aspiration and silent utterance of sacred texts are the devotional lifting up of the heart toward the longed-for Ideal. This is not the same as reciting formulas and praying or imploring for a favour. The former acts are the soul's

offerings supported by enlightened faith. The latter is an ordinary human longing with a covetous eye for a reward.

There is a third form of rare worship known as an "invocation." It is a deliberate act of calling on a presence or a superior being. Or it takes the form of outpouring, an affirmation or an overture when performed by a true occultist or a devotee. As a formulated incantation or "magic" ritual, it becomes a means to awaken and summon invisible potencies when the "magic" formula (*mantra*) is employed *with knowledge*. But for others, liturgical rituals often pass off as "worship"; nevertheless, since they evoke lower powers they delude and contaminate the inner body. On the other hand, the higher form of invocation, as a means of worship, performed with knowledge and devotion, wakens up one's own higher consciousness and affirms one's faith in the Presence. This may or may not be accompanied by a mystical rite. All depends on the spiritual stature and purity of the devotee, the solemnity of the purpose and also the means employed under guidance and with knowledge. In one sense all "prayers" are a form of invocation, since they conjure up and summon "something" higher or lower (invoke, *in + vocare* = to call on).

If the worship is whole-hearted and deep "in spirit and in truth" (John, IV, 24), it will put the consciousness *en rapport* with the superior intelligences of the higher planes. On the other hand, mechanical or habitual prayers may weaken concentration, create dependence and work out on the lower planes. These are governed by the laws of affinity and the law of resonance in the invisible nature. Depending on the key struck by the votary, a resonant vibration is set up from nature's sounding board. Not a single thought, feeling, prayer, aspiration or mental formation remains traceless but ever comes again for weal or woe. This is another danger with the carelessly struck chords of nature.

A true seeker does not petition but ceaselessly aspire and prayerfully *strives to be worthy*, and leaves the results to the divine wisdom and mercy of the Law. If one keenly desires to instal a sacred "shrine," one must build the temple and keep it suitable for the sanctuary. This building of the "temple" is spoken of in many mystical writings. It means that the aspirant has to be steadfast in his self-reliant striving under the inspiration of his higher nature. Soon, a reciprocal relationship with the shrine within is built up. The Soul is now more open and receptive, even if the "answer" is not always favourable to the personal man. The formation of intimacy or nearness across the welcoming "bridge" is in itself a great reward for his sincerity and fervour. The steadily growing familiarity with one's hidden part must create the right condition for the unseen help to be received and an occasional glimpse of the true light.

The process of building the bridge linking Lower *Manas* with its divine parent, Higher *Manas*, may take one life or many lives, depending upon the line of life's meditation one follows. This involves looking within. When our *Manas* is turned inwards, it conjoins with *Buddhi*. In a perfected man, this union between *Buddhi* and *Manas* is permanent. Then it is that the "spiritual eye" is active. Once the connection between Lower and Higher *Manas* is established, there is no need of the bridge—Antaskarana.

Before thou standest on the threshold of the Path; before thou crossest the foremost Gate, thou hast to merge the two into the One and sacrifice the personal to Self impersonal, and thus destroy the "path" between the two—Antaskarana.

(The Voice of the Silence, pp. 54-55)

Then only can we have conscious existence in Spirit while in a body.

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## Grace of the Guru

The office of the Guru, the spiritual teacher and guide, held sacred and revered in the ancient Eastern tradition, has its basis in the immutable occult laws. These laws of the higher life govern the Guru-Disciple relationship which neither of them can violate in the least degree without harm coming to both. Unfortunately many misconceptions prevail concerning the office of the Guru. Of late, following an upsurge of interest in ancient Eastern Wisdom and practices all over the world, hundreds of thousands of people are seeking spiritual instruction, and to meet the demand many claiming to be teachers and guides—either self-proclaimed or so regarded by their followers—have appeared to instruct and guide the seekers. While some of them, well-meaning and sincere, proceeding on the basis of traditional exoteric religion, have in a way benefited the seekers, there are many others who, being themselves misguided, are leading their trusting followers in the wrong direction with questionable doctrines and practices which cannot but be detrimental to both in the long run. Such a state of affairs would not have arisen had there been a greater diffusion of knowledge concerning the laws of nature which govern the office of the great Teachers of humanity and their relation to the seekers of Truth. It was part of the mission of the Theosophical Movement to revive this age-old knowledge to meet the needs of the spiritual aspirants of modern times.

Who is a true Guru capable of leading aspirants to the Temple of Truth? What are his qualifications? Where can one find him and how may he be recognized?

The real Guru is always an Adept in Occult Science. A man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially the latter, and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection of the WILL; who has developed in himself both the power (*siddhi*) to control the forces of nature, and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of latent but now active powers of his being: this is the real Guru.

(Theosophical Articles by H.P.B., Vol. I, p. 308)

Such a Mahatma is a rare efflorescence of an age, the fruition of his own incessant self-sacrificing labour for the highest good of humanity with which he has completely identified himself. He has become an inseparable, immortal part of and a conscious co-worker with divine nature. Even as he is fulfilling his duties in the governance of the world, and himself progressing further into yet higher stages of universal life which is infinite, his heart is full of compassion for

the world of deluded mortals. The sole motive of the members of the Fraternity of such Adepts is to labour constantly for the enlightenment of their less progressed brethren even by subjecting themselves to the limitations, pains and sorrows of bodily life on earth. But the great Gurus, free as they are from the cycle of birth and death and living immortal as they do in Spirit, having merged their entire self with their Divine Self, the sixth and seventh principles, are yet subject to Cosmic and Karmic laws which they will not and cannot violate. Their work for humanity is governed by these laws.

It is often asked why the Mahatmas with their superhuman knowledge and powers do not openly appear among men, establish schools of instruction and dispel once and for all the darkness of the world by the light of their knowledge and wisdom. They cannot so act because humanity is governed by the laws of Karma and spiritual evolution to which the Masters of Wisdom are also subject and which even they cannot violate in the least. The basic law of human progress in the higher life is that man has to advance by his own efforts, by self-induced and self-devised ways and means. He is compelled to become the master of his own destiny, to take his evolution in his own hands, to exercise his free will and make moral choices between right and wrong, good and evil, according to his own deepest perceptions and highest light of understanding of the spiritual ideal which the Guru represents and embodies, and learn in the school of life the lessons the rigid justice of Karma brings him.

It is generally believed that the Guru by his grace can confer knowledge and powers on the disciple and give him spiritual birth. All that the Guru can do is to show to the seeker where the Truth lies, the path that leads to it and how to reach that path. Such instructions are found in abundance in the public teachings of the Masters, as in the Bhagavad-Gita, Dhammapada, etc. The Theosophical Movement, inspired by the Mahatmas, brought to the modern world rich instructions and new insights on questions that are of invaluable help to the aspirants. The would-be disciple has to put into practice the precepts and accomplish the inner purification and transformation by his own exertions before he can hope to see his guru face to face. Self-reliance and self-effort is the key.

There is a law of nature which insists that a man shall read these mysteries for himself. By no other method can he obtain them. A man who desires to live must eat his food himself: this is the simple law of nature—which applies also to the higher life. A man who would live and act in it cannot be fed like a babe with a spoon; he must eat for himself. (Light on the Path, p. 30)

Truth is everywhere, in everything, in everyone, for Absolute Truth is the source and the true Self of all beings. Hence the Teachers say that there is a natural melody in life, a fount of harmony in every human heart, though the mortal outer man may not perceive it. The whole discipline of spiritual development of a devotee consists in so purifying and spiritualizing his mortal envelope as to let the Light of his own Spirit shine through him. This can only be accomplished by his surrendering the personal self to the behests of his Divine Self within, and making the latter absolutely his Inner Ruler. The student has to conquer his selfishness, all the lower tendencies and emotions and passions by the aid of his Higher Self. It is only when the

lower mind is thoroughly purified of *Kama* and the motive wholly pure that it can faithfully reflect the Divine Ego within and merge with it.

Theosophical teachers say that this self-conquest and self-purification has to be achieved by the student unaided, at least partially, before the Guru can help him or approach him. It is not difficult to see the reasonableness of the proposition. The ruffled surface of the waters of a lake can so distort the image of the objects it reflects as to be unrecognizable. The fresh waters of the mountain stream cannot mingle with the muddy torrents of the monsoon storm and remain pure. So also a mind full of preconceptions and prejudices, passions and desires, is unfit for the reception of Divine Truth. Absolute harmony reigns in the spiritual realms which cannot be entered into by man if there is the slightest trace of discord or disharmony in him. Lower self—man of the world—actuated by selfish impulses is full of discord. Hence unless the student purifies his whole nature of all selfishness, surrenders entirely the impulse of asserting his personal rights, conquers the instinct of self-defence or self-preservation, and thoroughly purges his self of all vices and defects and becomes as pure as a child, the Guru cannot take him in his hands.

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew, XVIII, 3)

Of course, such a process of self-purification is not the work of a day or even years but extends over a series of lives. Hence it is said in the Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter VII): "Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving perhaps a single one knows me as I am."

The task of the student-aspirant, therefore, is to regenerate himself and furnish the requisite conditions by his own exertions. When the materials are ready the architect shall appear.

Even those who are accepted as disciples by the great Gurus are left entirely to their own devices most of the time after being shown the path they have to tread. The Guru cannot push or drag the student forward; he only adjusts the student in his progress. Whether the disciple succeeds or fails after his discipleship is accepted by the Master depends entirely on the disciple himself. Absolute unselfishness of motive and absolute devotion to the Master and Great Cause he serves—which is redemption and emancipation of all conditioned beings—are the *sine qua non* qualifications for successful discipleship.

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## Is Psychism Dangerous? II

In one of Mr. Judge's articles, "Spiritual Gifts and their Attainment," St. Paul is quoted as saying that spiritual gifts include wisdom, knowledge, healing, faith, the working of miracles, prophecy, the speaking of divers languages; but the greatest of gifts is charity or love. No doubt this shows that one has made some progress in one's inner life, but this should not be the goal, nor should

one begin with the aim of acquiring powers. It is not as if certain of these powers are not useful; they are. As H.P.B. points out, by using these powers an occultist can do the good he desires, often apparently without lifting a finger.

We therefore need to see the psychic realm in a proper context. Mr. Judge gives an analogy: suppose a traveller is going from one city to another and on the way he has to cross many rivers, and if his boat goes out of order then he may have to swim. Then he may have to pass a mountain and may be required to have engineering knowledge to dig a tunnel, etc. But all this is only incidental to his object and that is to reach the destination. So also the psychic powers which develop in a person who desires to live the spiritual life are incidental.

The very first verse of *The Voice of the Silence* states: "These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower *IDDHI*" (Pali word for *Siddhi*). H.P.B. terms these powers as abnormal (and not super-normal). She differentiates between lower, psychic, mental energies on the one hand, and spiritual powers on the other hand. It is better to approach the psychic realm from above, *i.e.*, instead of going after these psychic powers, one must live the spiritual life, and psychic would come as a kind of by-product. We must be aware of these powers so that in the course of spiritual development, when we develop the powers, we are not enamoured of them; we would not hanker after more and more of these powers. We must grasp that all that is invisible and intangible is not spiritual. The physical, astral and spiritual realms are thus described: "This earth, O ignorant Disciple, is but the dismal entrance leading to the twilight that precedes the valley of true light."

Our physical existence is described as something dismal, *i.e.*, causing or showing gloom or misery. From this, one enters the twilight, *i.e.*, the psychic or astral region. In the twilight, which is semi-darkness, one is not able to see clearly. One grasps what is there, but not in its entirety. This astral region is like the dream state. Just as in the dream state we can influence our dreams, *e.g.*, if we want the tiger to go away it goes and if we want it to come forward and attack it will do so. So also whatever thoughts we have, exactly similar thoughts we attract from the astral light. The astral region is deceptive and illusionary. It is seemingly mysterious, elusive and fascinating. Mr. Judge compares it to the untrodden South American forest:

The astral plane, which is the same as that of our psychic senses, is as full of strange sights and sounds as an untrodden South American forest, and has to be well understood before the student can stay there long without danger. While we can overcome the dangers of a forest by the use of human inventions...we have no such aids when treading the astral labyrinth. We may be physically brave and say that no fear can enter into us, but no untrained or merely curious seeker is able to say just what effect will result to his outer senses from the attack or influence encountered by his psychical senses. (Vernal Blooms p. 79)

In her article "Occultism versus the Occult Arts," H.P.B. tells us that people confuse the occult arts with Occultism, or *Gupta Vidya*, or Esoteric knowledge. There is (1) *Yajna Vidya*, *i.e.*, knowledge of the occult powers awakened in Nature by performing religious rites and ceremonies; (2) *Maha-Vidya*, the magic of the Kabalists, or *Tantrika* worship; (3) *Guhya Vidya*,

which is the mystic power of sound, of chanted mantras, prayers and incantations; and (4) *Atma-Vidya or knowledge of the Soul, which leads us to know the true nature of Self. Atma-Vidya or Occultism differs from magic and the secret sciences as the glorious sun does from a rush-light, writes H.P.B.*

*Psyche*, in Greek, means emotional, intense, and not very wise part of our mind. The physical world is objective, but the astral is not, *e.g.*, in a negative film, a person's black hair appears white, and white face appears dark. Then by correlating with the actual person we interpret and arrive at the truth. If we encounter these difficulties at the physical level, it is impossible for anyone except a trained seer to see the astral images correctly.

The third Hall is the spiritual Hall. One who wants to live the higher life, to acquire wisdom, is walking the path of Occultism or Chelaship. To offer oneself as a chela is easy, but to become an Adept or Occultist is the most difficult task anyone can undertake. The resolve to live the higher life brings to the surface all the inner hidden vices. The Chela's life has been described as a psychic resolvent which eats away dross and leaves only pure gold behind. All the latent vices and hidden passions come to the surface. If there is the latent germ of greed, lust, money-seeking, false speaking, then that germ is sure to sprout. If one thinks one can suppress these passions and desires by a strong effort of *will*, it is like allowing fire to smoulder under a thin layer of ash; this will not work, it will burst into flames. It has to be extinguished beyond reanimation.

So H. P. Blavatsky advises that the ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts. Purify your moral nature before you enter realms where angels fear to tread. H.P.B. gives ample warning in the article "Chelas and Lay Chelas" and tells us what happened to some unprepared people, who attempted to walk the path of occultism and failed—one went insane, another shot himself, still another began to lead a corrupt and immoral life, etc. She says that most students are not ready for practical occultism, but they can study it theoretically and know about the problems involved.

The production of phenomena is not possible without the aid or disturbance of the elementals. Each phenomenon involves expenditure of great force and also brings about disturbance in the world of the elementals. These disturbed elementals enter the sphere of unprotected persons, especially those who are beginning to study occultism.

In all this, motive is important. "True Occultism or Theosophy is the Great Renunciation of SELF....Not for himself, but for the world, he lives." In one place Mr. Judge says that we are all magicians, in that we can use the power of imagination. "If I desire to influence your mind then I do not deal with your subconscious plane but firmly and kindly think of you and think of the subject I want you to think of. This must reach you. If I am selfish, there would be difficulty reaching you, but if it is brotherly, then it gets to your mind more easily." Elsewhere he says that if we think nothing can be done, then our subtle mind meets other minds and shouts into them: "Nothing can be done!" But if we sincerely and earnestly think *Theosophy*, and desire that others should be benefited by it, then to the minds we meet we cry "Theosophy," and "Help and hope for thee," and the result must be an awakening of interest.

As Light on the Path suggests, "That power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men." There must be total effacement of personality.

It is in and through the incidents of daily life, in work well done, in duties thoroughly performed, that we today can most readily make progress in the higher life—slow progress, it may be, but at any rate sure. These are stepping stones to better things. We advance most rapidly when we stop to help other wayfarers. We receive most when we sacrifice most. We attain to the largest measure of Divine love when we most unselfishly love the brethren. We become one with the Supreme most surely when we lose ourselves in work for Humanity. (Vernal Blooms, p. 33)

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## Freeing the Mind

Often we are unable to understand what the mind is. And, when we speak of controlling it, we do not understand who or what controls it, or what control means. We need to make these points clear to ourselves.

We get tied up in *words*. What are words? Simply sounds and letters, or characters which convey ideas, either abstract or concrete? These ideas we may understand or we may not understand. The word "cup," for instance, brings to us the memory of a concrete object that we know and use; "aspiration" brings to us a feeling of upliftment; words such as "Absolute" and "Consciousness" we find difficult to understand, for we have not experienced them.

How can we "experience" consciousness or mind or other abstract, spiritual concepts?

Let us think. When we see a person, are we not using the power of consciousness to perceive him through the medium of our eyes? Are we not "aware" of him? This awareness can be purely material; it can affect the emotions; or it can affect the will. Therefore our awareness or consciousness is of a threefold quality. H.P.B. says that "Mind is a name given to the sum of the states of Consciousness grouped under Thought, Will and Feeling."

So we are "experiencing" consciousness all our waking life. But so is an animal. It sees, it has feelings and will power; then how does our mind differ from the mind of an animal?

Do all people react in the same way to perceptions? Do all dogs react in the same way to perceptions? We can easily see that there is a far greater divergence of individual reaction in the human kingdom than in the animal. The animal reacts differently within the limits of instinct. Man reacts according to his materiality or intellectuality or spirituality. What makes the difference?

Man is a spiritual being and his mind is but a ray of his own spiritual individuality. It is this ray of mind with which each one is concerned in his daily life, for it gives him the feeling of personal

identity or "I-ness." It uses the senses and sense-organs to perceive the world in which he lives; it makes him aware of his emotional nature and of his ideas. Without it he would not be able to look forward to emotions that are pleasant, or backward to those that *were* pleasant. The same with unpleasant emotions. It is strange, is it not, that we seem to get as much "pleasure" in recalling unpleasant things and events as pleasant ones! Otherwise, why should we wallow in the memory of unpleasant things or happenings?

Here we have an example of *Kama* as an octopus grasping and controlling the mind and sullyng the otherwise pure faculty of awareness. For, what is mind? It is colourless *in itself*, being merely "awareness," and is coloured by the modifications it constantly undergoes by reason of the limiting thoughts or feelings or ideas on which it is dwelling. Some of this colouring is brought over from past lives, but some is acquired in the present life. Hence we are told first to free the mind from *Kama*. The Voice of the Silence tells us not to let the senses make a "playground" of the mind.

What frees the mind, what prevents the senses from making of it a playground?

We need to consider carefully what it means to free the mind from *Kama*, to take the mind away from *Kama*. It is in the grip of *Kama*. How can it get free but by coming out of that grip? Therefore the *mind has to free itself*. It has to cease to be aware of *Kama* (evil emotions, desires, volition, etc.), which it will do when it realizes that it can free itself from the limitations imposed by *Kama*. It has to become aware of itself and ask the question, "Who am I?"

Let us look at *Manas*. *Manas* is the "conscious principle of the Monad," we are told; and the Monad is a unified triad, *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*. Therefore it has three aspects: the will aspect (*Atma*), the feelings or compassion aspect (*Buddhi*), and the thought aspect (*Manas*). *Atma* and *Buddhi* are reflected in *Manas*, however dimly. *Manas Tajjasi* is *Manas* illuminated and activated by *Buddhi*. *Manas* flooded by *Atma* is *Will, Spiritual Will in action*.

Lower *Manas* is a ray of Higher *Manas* and is therefore also threefold. When clothed in the three lower principles it reflects these lower three—prana, feeling, and sense impressions. *Manas* gets deluded by the information the senses bring to it. When the senses make a playground of it, it is bewitched; when it gets so enmeshed that it knows of nothing but the lower principles, it manifests as the lower will in action, as obstinacy, brute force and selfishness. What is meant by the senses making a playground of the mind is that they "play," amuse themselves and strengthen their wishes by thinking about their reactions.

Hence the first stage of freeing the mind is to find out what mind is and what binds it. Once it realizes that it is bound, it can begin to free itself. A difficult task this, for passion will not let go of the mind, selfishness will not give up its plotting and planning to gain its desires. Lower *Manas* is that which gives the sense of "I-ness," of an entity, a being, to the personality. It is limited by its *skandhas*, but the *skandhas* are not it; it is modified by its thoughts and ideas, but it is not them; it is deluded by senses and sense-organs, but it is not these either. It is a ray of *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*. When it unites itself with its higher aspect, the Higher *Manas*, the two become one. This union is prevented because of the colouring given to it by the lower vehicles.

If we can tear ourselves from these until we become onlookers of them and then use them—that is to say, if that in us which is *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* can see itself as separate from them, then can it free itself.

While we think that *Kama* must let go of *Manas* we shall never succeed. But when we know that it is *Manas* that must refuse to obey *Kama*, we have a starting point. Then comes the next stage. The will aspect of *Manas* comes into play when we realize *why* we have to free the mind, *i.e.*, for the good of *all*. Then compassion and love take the place of feelings, and even the lower *Manasic* ray becomes *Tajjasi*—shining.

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Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.

—M. K. Gandhi

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## In the Light of Theosophy

The past gives us knowledge and experience, and the present gives us the power to change things; but, together, do the past and the present allow us to envision and shape the future? The future does not exist and cannot provide us direct knowledge of what will happen, points out World Future Society President Edward Cornish; but there is a "continuity of pattern" which makes the future a little more knowable (The Futurist, July-August 2001). The future, he explains, is an idea, not a physical reality. All of our information about the future comes from the past, but we can use this information to know some things about the future.

It is important to recognize very clearly [writes Cornish] that our ideas about the future cannot come from the future itself because the future, by definition, is not a physical reality. The future exists only in the ideas we have about it...

The most important ideas of all—for individuals as well as organizations—may be those that make up a vision of the long-term future. Visions are the invisible blueprints that we use in building our lives. We refer to them again and again as we shape our personal and collective destiny. Our visions give birth to our goals, energize our efforts, and guide our strategies. If the right visions could be placed in the heads of the world's poorest people, they might become the richest in a single generation....

Basing our ideas about the future on information from the past is possible because the future world emerges gradually from the world of the past and present and is continuous with it. This continuity gives us a basis for thinking about what will happen in the future.

Cornish mentions four types of continuity between the past and the future: continuity of existence, continuity of change, continuity of pattern, and continuity of causation. The continuity of causation, he says, is fundamental to our understanding of the world. "Without this bedrock continuity in the nature of reality—the continuity that gives us such things as the medium of time and cause-effect relationships—we should be totally lost if we tried to anticipate the future."

The past, the present and the future have been called "the ever-living trinity in one." The future lies in the present and both include the past. Says The Secret Doctrine (I, 43-44):

The three periods—the present, the past, and the Future—are in the esoteric philosophy a compound time; for the three are a composite number only in relation to the phenomenal plane, but in the realm of noumena have no abstract validity. As said in the Scriptures: "The past time is the present time, as also the Future, which, though it has not come into existence, still is," according to a precept in the Prasanga Madhyamika teaching, whose dogmas have been known ever since it broke away from the purely esoteric schools. Our ideas, in short, on duration and time are all derived from our sensations according to the laws of Association. Inextricably bound up with the relativity of human knowledge, they nevertheless can have no existence except in the experience of the individual ego, and perish when its evolutionary march dispels the Maya of phenomenal existence. What is time, for instance, but the panoramic succession of our states of consciousness? In the words of a Master, "I feel irritated at having to use these three clumsy words—Past, Present, and Future—miserable concepts of the objective phases of the subjective whole, they are about as ill-adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving.

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As regards the evolution of humanity on Earth, The Secret Doctrine postulates a polygenetic origin—"the simultaneous evolution of seven human groups on seven different portions of our globe" (II, 1). A contentious debate has been raging among anthropologists, one side believing that *Homo sapiens* descended from a single pair, or a single female "Eve," whose progeny spread around the globe, replacing more archaic species; and others taking the opposing view that humanity emerged in many places as people colonized the world and gradually evolved to their modern state.

Milford Wolpoff of the University of Michigan, U.S.A., is one of those scientists who support the latter view. In an interview with Discovery magazine (June 2001) he said:

I think the evidence, both anatomic and genetic, has been there a long time. It tells us that the Eve theory is wrong. For instance, various skeletal features show continuity of form, from ancient to modern, in several parts of the world. The Eve theory predicts abrupt change.

Some people have interpreted Wolpoff's theory to mean that certain races are more evolved than others. His response to this is:

I get deeply upset to think that I've ever contributed to racism, even if it is only by people misquoting me. What people are generally quoting is the idea that modern humans arose in one place and then went around interbreeding with everyone else, which opens itself up to a racist interpretation. What I've actually said is that modern features developed everywhere and spread everywhere because they were helpful....

There are no pure races. Our populations are thoroughly mixed, and we are related to everybody. The idea that one race could be better at something than another race makes no sense. If a trait is important, everyone has it.

The Secret Doctrine (II, 610) states categorically:

Mankind did not issue from one solitary couple. Nor was there ever a first man—whether Adam or Yima—but a first mankind. It may, or may not, be "mitigated polygenism." Once that both creation *ex nihilo*—an absurdity—and a superhuman Creator or creators—a fact—are made away with by science, polygenism presents no more difficulties or inconveniences (rather fewer from a scientific point of view) than monogenism does.

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The interconnectedness of all life is true at all levels, including the biological level. Our health depends on a healthy planet. In other words, improving human health is inextricably linked to ecological well-being—that is the message from a new movement—of doctors, scientists and activists. Kenny Ausubel writes in *Utne Reader* (May-June 2001) about the coming age of ecological medicine:

There is a new understanding of health and illness that has begun to move away from treating only the individual. Instead, good health lies in recognizing that each of us is part of a wider web of life. When the web is healthy, we are more likely to be healthy...

The first step toward a healthier future, I believe, lies in *ecological medicine*. Pioneered by a global movement of concerned scientists, doctors, and many others, ecological medicine is a loosely shared philosophy based on advancing public health by improving the environment. Its central idea is that industrial civilization has made a basic error in acting as if humans are *apart from* rather than *a part of* nature. Human and environmental health are inseparable. And in a biosphere that is rampantly toxic and woefully depleted, a mounting number of our health problems can only be understood as part of a larger pattern....

Ecological medicine suggests first doing no harm to the environment, then going further, creating a medical practice that itself minimizes harm. Like virtually all earlier healing traditions, it emphasizes *prevention*, strengthening the organism and the environment to avoid illness in the first place.

In addition to instructing healers first to do no harm. Hippocrates also instructed them to "revere the healing force of nature." By looking to the principles of ecological healing to restore the Earth and ourselves, we create not only the conditions for individual health, but also the basis for healthy societies.

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Are altruism, generosity, fair play, willingness to share, innate in us or acquired? To find out where our moral sense comes from and how we can shape it, a group of investigators questioned university students in cities all around the world, as also people belonging to some of the most remote, traditional societies on earth. The same question was asked to all: If you were given a bundle of cash equivalent to a week's earning on condition that you share the money with someone else you know, how much would you offer the other person? *New Scientist* (10 March 2001) reports:

The results reveal that people appear not to share a common sense of fairness. Instead, what people from industrialized societies consider fair is just one of a broad spectrum of perspectives. "The way people play these games relates consistently to the way they live their lives," says Herbert Gintis, an economist from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. To put it another way, our social environment shapes our sense of morality. As the anthropologists look deeper, they are beginning to understand what makes one society generous and another selfish. And that, in turn, raises the possibility that we can shape our societies to favour fair play....

The most co-operative society is also the most generous, while the least co-operative is the meanest. Could there be a pattern emerging? After all, a society's level of co-operation is central to the way it runs its economy. The researchers suspected that this and other economic variables might be the crucial factors that determined people's behaviour in the ultimatum game...

It might all sound rather academic, but the work has important practical implications. If our moral values are shaped by our lifestyle rather than by human nature, then we should be able to promote good social behaviour in the correct social context.

In brief, the results of the investigations seem to show that society, not the individual, is what counts. But what is society made up of if not individuals? In our age, self-centredness, acting for one's own benefit, rather than for others, is considered normal and natural, yet people go out of their way to help others, even strangers, and to share with them, much more often than is normally believed. There is an innate sense of fairness, reciprocity and sympathy in all; its roots lie in the basics of human nature. The capacity for empathy, for deriving pleasure from other people's pleasure and distress from their distress, is bred in each human being. Its opposite is "an *abnormal, unnatural* manifestation, at this period of our human evolution."

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A Reuters report from London should be an eye-opener for those who hanker after what are commonly looked upon as the "good things of life." Fast cars and designer labels may be the dream of many, but research released recently shows that craving material possessions can cause depression and anger. Australian academics found a positive correlation between materialism—or an "excessive concern" for material things—and negative psychological conditions.

Shaun Saunders, one of the authors of the report from the University of Newcastle, Australia, said that it came as no surprise to discover that money cannot buy you love. But what researchers are looking for is "scientific evidence" to support the truism. "While there is growing concern over the environmental effects of materialism and global consumerism, little attention has been paid to its psychological effects," he said. Saunders explained that one source of depression among dedicated consumers was the fact that what they acquired tended to lose its value quickly.

"If your self-worth is invested in what you own, as can be the case in our market-driven society, then these things may not hold their value very long," he said. In most cases materialism is based on people using possessions to define their place in society. "People want to compare themselves to others. In our society the criterion tends to be what you own."

"This is the 'keeping up with the Joneses' idea. It can be a very frustrating experience trying to stay ahead of others, which can be a precursor to anger expression." It also leads to conformity, based on the notion that the self in a market-based society is treated as a commodity whose value is determined externally.

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That animals have intelligence of their own kind has long been known, and now some behavioural scientists claim that they also have culture. Scientists define "culture" as behaviour, skills or knowledge—a way of life—that one shares with and acquires from others of one's species but that differs from the way of life practised by those of the same species living elsewhere. Just as immigrants adopt the accent and customs of the country that they move to, so animals copy the local customs when they join another group. This behaviour is neither acquired genetically nor compelled by the environment. By this yardstick, researchers are finding evidence of culture in chimpanzees and macaque monkeys, in killer whales, humpbacks and birds—throwing into doubt the centuries-long contention that humans are the only cultured creatures. "There is so much resistance to the idea of animal culture," says primatologist Frans de Waal, "that one cannot escape the impression that it is an idea whose time has come." Newsweek (May 21) reports:

Pooling data on how chimps dig for termites, gather ants, use leaves for seats and engage in other behaviours, researchers identified 39 traditions that qualify as cultural variations. The behaviours range from ways of greeting to ways of eating, tool use to courtship...."We had long thought that culture marks us as distinct," says chimp researcher Andrew Whiten of the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. "But

now we look across the animal kingdom and find whole suites of traditions that we must recognize as cultures." If culture is not uniquely human, then neither is it some deus ex machina that descended from on high. Culture, instead, evolved. What fosters it? Intelligence matters, of course—there had to be a first monkey to figure out potato washing. But just as crucial is having the young stay with their mother for years, giving them time to learn the group's ways.