

# **The Theosophical Movement**

**A Magazine Devoted to the Living of the Higher Life**

**Vol. 72—No. 2**

---

**December 2001**

- **The New Year—What will it bring us?**
- **Right Resolves**
- **Karmic Processes and Arjuna's Predicament**
- **The Inner Retreat**
- **The Eternal Pilgrims**
- **The Way and the Wayfarer**
- **In the Light of Theosophy**

---

**THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.**

**40 New Marine Lines,**

**Mumbai 400 020,**

**India**

# The New Year—What will it bring us?

According to our theosophical tenets, every man or woman is endowed, more or less, with a magnetic potentiality, which when helped by a sincere and especially by an intense and indomitable *will*—is the most effective of magic levers placed by Nature in human hands—for woe as for weal. Let us then, Theosophists, use that will to send a sincere greeting and wish of good luck for the New Year to every living creature under the sun—enemies and relentless traducers included. Let us try and feel especially kindly and forgiving to our foes and persecutors, honest or dishonest, lest some of us should send unconsciously an "evil eye" greeting instead of a blessing.

H. P. Blavatsky

Before our next issue is out, not only Christendom but the entire world will have made merry over Christmas, which but symbolizes the ancient Festival of the Winter Solstice—a fact forgotten by most people; and then the New Year will be ushered in.

The spirit of fraternity which prevails during this season makes people wish each other prosperity and happiness. Such wishes are more often than not mere formalities, being backed up neither by the power of thought nor by the energy of will, and do not generally come true. As nothing in life is secured without working for it, happiness and prosperity will not drop from the heavens at our mere wish, sincere though it be.

If our wishes for the happiness of our friends and kin are not to go in vain, we must acquire some knowledge about what happiness is and how it can be acquired. People say "Good morning," "Thank you," "Happy New Year to you!" generally by mere force of habit. The picture of happiness in the mind of any one person is different from that in the minds of others. When one says to his friend, "Happy New Year to you!" he conceives happiness for his friend in terms of the image of happiness in his own mind. Without some philosophic reflection it is not possible for us to define what we imply by our good wishes for others.

We all agree that in wishing others happiness we do not wish them suffering; that would be unnatural. And yet we are told that suffering is oftentimes a stepping-stone to happiness—a fact corroborated by philosophers and intuitive poets—and that it is wise to

welcome each rebuff

That turns earth's smoothness rough,

Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!

Be our joys three-parts pain!

Strive, and hold cheap the strain;

Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

The relationship between joy and sorrow, happiness and misery, needs therefore to be looked into if we want to send out only those wishes that will be of real benefit to our friends. A solitary hour of pain and anguish is sometimes more rewarding than years of pleasure and seeming prosperity.

As rigid Justice rules the world, what place is there for wishes—even for prayerful wishes—which our hearts may stream forth for the benefit of others? Prayers uttered in sounds and words and even silent prayers do produce results of a sort, but are we sure that they are the results we actually desired and were looking for? Miracles are not possible in a cosmos where every effect is the result of a cause, and one who wishes or prays must know the right way to produce the very results he wants. No hocus-pocus is possible in the laboratory of Nature any more than in that of the chemist. If the latter desires to produce water he can do so by combining hydrogen and oxygen in the right proportion. How, then, to acquire the knowledge which would enable us to wish or to pray effectively and to create peace and goodwill and happiness for others?

The fogs of misery have descended on our civilized humanity time and again. People in political power are gambling with the lives of millions of human beings. Again and again the "brink of war" situation has arisen in the world. Dark days are upon us and men's minds and hearts are unsettled. Men of discernment, however, are learning the lessons of war.

Even if bloodshed be stopped, the problem of human suffering will persist, as it has been demanding solution these many years. And if happiness, order, peace and goodwill are desired, men and women themselves will have to seek and to secure them, inasmuch as happiness comes from within our own consciousness; order in our environment is created by the orderly mind within us; peace belongs to our hidden heart, and if it is not there it cannot be obtained anywhere else; goodwill is a feeling of the Soul which has to stream forth towards all, but if it does not well up in the Soul within, it cannot stream forth to others who are without.

What will the coming year bring to us? What we ourselves have desired. And as hours lengthen into days, weeks and months, our desire of today will fulfil itself tomorrow, or next week, or in the weeks and months to come. But have we always desired wisely? Do we desire wisely at this very hour? For example, people desire money, but what will they do when money flows into their coffers? If they do not know what money can do, or what they can do with money, they are sure to drive out happiness and to invite to their hearts pain and anguish. We do not get only what we deserve; we get what we desire. We reap as we sow and we deserve as we desire. How to deserve happiness? How to desire it?

It is futile to pursue happiness, for in our real nature we *are* it. We miss it because we look for it outside of ourselves. It is an inherent quality of the soul—a quality which the soul loses as it loses the true perception of its own nature. It is an inner harmony or contentment of the soul. We in our folly mistake cause for effect, and effect for cause, and try to attain happiness by hankering after what has not fallen to our lot under Karma and by attempting to change the

circumstances in which we find ourselves, thinking that the changed circumstances will bring happiness. But our environment is only the outer manifestation of our inner state. Therefore let us begin by setting to work on ourselves, trying to adopt the right mental attitude and purifying our natures, and happiness will spring up spontaneously from within us in the progress of time, for there is a spring of happiness in our deeper nature.

Let us learn to desire righteously and soon the joy of life will be ours.

---

In our small way we should imitate the Great Brotherhood in its constant efforts to help Humanity. They know the cycles, and, using that knowledge, can see when the impulse of a new cycle is beginning. Taking advantage of this prescience, new ideas are projected among men and all good reforms are fostered. Why should we, merely because we are ignorant of the cycles, do nothing to help these great benefactors of the races? They offer to all men the truths of the Wisdom-Religion, making no selections but leaving results to the law. Is it for us to assume in our theosophical work that we, poor, weak, ignorant tyros, are able to select from the mass of our fellows the one or the many who may be fit to receive theosophy? Such a position of judge is vain, ridiculous, and untheosophic. Our plain duty is to present the truths of theosophy to all men, leaving it to them to accept or reject.

—W. Q. Judge

---

## Right Resolves

One of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism is about the Noble Eightfold Path, and the second of the steps is named *Samma-Sankappa*. The Sanskrit equivalent is *Sankalpa*, and the best English rendering is the term Resolve. Resolve follows perception. The first step of right perception corresponds to the child-stage; the second step of right resolve corresponds to the stage of the youth, who has seen enough and whose time for resolutions has come. It is very unwise to take a vow or to make a resolve without sight or perception; more unwise still to persuade others to resolve to do this or that, if they have not seen or understood.

What is resolve? There are several factors. In making a resolve, there is sight or perception about the object of our resolution. There is visualization or imagination; not speculation and fancy but the power to image forth the forms desired by the heart. Then there is the factor of will—will felt within (*Ichchha-shakti*) and the creative will (*Kriya-shakti*). Buddhist Psychology deals with these numerous threads that weave the pattern of a true resolve. But enough for us to know and note that will, thought and feeling are involved in the process of making a resolution or of taking a vow.

Resolves and vows are an inner process of our own hearts and minds. Right resolves, *i.e.*, resolves that are right for us at our own stage of evolution, may not be right for others. We must therefore fully recognize that the power of a vow, of any vow, lies *within* our own mind and heart.

The Buddha said that right perception of the sad and sorrowful condition of the world brings us the knowledge that each man and woman, each child and adult, suffers by and under law:

Evil is done by self alone; by self alone is evil left undone; by self alone is one purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself. No man can purify another. (The Dhammapada, Verse 165)

We must note several factors here. We suffer because of the evil we do. We alone can leave untouched any evil. We alone can purify ourselves. In this verse, cause and effect as also good and evil are encompassed. And the verse bears on our topic. A person resolves to get away from evil, from weakness, from vice, because through it he has suffered or has been suffering. Here is an important idea. We learn from the existence of suffering in a dual manner. (1) Because we ourselves suffer, we resolve to get away from the root-cause of that suffering. (2) Or we see the result of a vice or an evil in the suffering of others; and tracing that vice or evil to its root-cause, we resolve not to indulge in it.

In the life of the Buddha there is this stupendous lesson. As a young and happy prince he did not experience any suffering in his own life, but he saw the suffering of others. He saw pain, decay, death; and being wise he applied the result of his own Right Perception, *Samma-ditthi*, and resolved to trace not the superficial but *the real cause of misery*. In this incident of the Buddha's life we can learn two lessons: he resolved after he saw; secondly, he made use of the experience of others to learn from. That is the reason why when he attained enlightenment he began to teach. For, if it were not possible for human beings to learn from others' life-experiences, what good could even a Buddha do living and loving and labouring for humanity? It is a wrong philosophy that insists that each man and woman must pass through *all* experiences. By precept and by the example of others too we can learn—provided we are wise.

That brings us to the next point. On what topics shall we make resolves? Using what criterion shall we resolve to do this and not do that? Here is a practical question. Is it not our common experience with so many people that they resolve and break that resolve to make a new one? Our resolves are for something evil we want to eschew, or for something good we want to do. But our ignorance of psychology is so enormous, our knowledge of human consciousness so limited, that failure follows failure. There are evils for which men and women assume there is no remedy; on the other hand, there are heights of good so sublime that they say it is impossible to climb them. What does the Dhammapada teach? Is there a seed, a root of all resolves? Can we find that form of resolve which made would protect us against all evil and help us in the direction of everything good? Is there a resolve which made and retained would show permanence? Consider these verses:

Conquest of self is indeed better than the conquest of others. Neither a deva (god) nor a gandharva (celestial musician), neither Brahma nor Mara could turn into defeat the victory of one who always practises self-control. (verses 104-105)

This verse teaches that one can rise not only superior to Mara and evil, but also transcend the light of a deva, the music of a gandharva, the power of Brahma. This can be done by ever controlling oneself, and through every control obtaining a conquest. There are two fundamental lessons of this verse: (1) Do not make many and sundry resolves, for exhaustion and defeat can set in. Do not try to say, "I resolve to kill out this weakness; I resolve to evolve that virtue." Go to the root-source of all weaknesses and all virtues. Self-conquest, *i.e.*, conquest of the lower self, is required. But who conquers that vile and vicious lower self? The real man, the immortal Self within each one of us. Raise the lower with the help of the higher, we have been told; let the lower and the higher labour conjointly. Next, the powers and virtues of the higher need to be unfolded. The Buddha, when he sat for supreme attainment, overcame temptations and evil by the aid of his own inner perception and knowledge. But he also unfolded great and marvellous powers; *siddhis*, jewels of perfection, were developed. We have to follow his example, even at our comparatively low stage of evolution. With the aid of the higher we must raise the lower, and at the same time we must attend to the unfoldment of the latent powers of the latent Buddha within us. Two verses give us the picture of the work we have to do. To make the right resolve, the one right resolve and not numerous changing resolves, consider this:

Like a thoroughbred horse, touched by a whip, let a man be ardent and active. By faith and virtue, energy and mind, by discernment of the Law, endowed with knowledge, good behaviour, concentrated, he will strike off the great sorrow of earthly existence and attain perfection both in knowledge and in behaviour, without forgetfulness and therefore without failure. (Verse 144)

The two factors must once again be noted: the cure of the great sorrow, the womb of all diseases; and, secondly, the attainment of perfection in knowledge and in behaviour. There is no failure, because there is no forgetfulness. Here in this verse all the elements of right resolve are given. We cure ourselves of pain and disease with the aid of faith (*Shraddha*), harmony (*Shila*), energy (*Virya*), calmness of mind, and some understanding of *Dhamma*, Law. These five are like a whip that makes the human horse active and lively. Whip yourself up in the action of self-control, says the Buddha. Next, he says, attain perfection not only in knowledge but in behaviour. Learning without practice will not do, any more than practice without learning. Knowledge and action, wisdom and deed, both must show perfection.

When this dual task is accomplished, what does a person look like? What is the portrait of one who has succeeded in this twofold task, if not wholly at least partially? We get that in Verse 49, which describes a real Muni's, a true Sage's life:

The bee gathers honey without injuring the scent or the colour of the flower. So should a silent one (Muni) live his life.

We must see the world without injuring the world, without robbing the world. The bee gets from the flowers what it requires, but injures not the beauty of the flowers; so we must live in our resolutions, learning from the world without despoiling the world. That is the objective, that is the goal, that the ideal.

So let us resolve in such a manner that we are freed from every misery, and we attain harmlessness in thought and behaviour, yet gaining from the world what it has to offer. This is the real purpose of incarnation. Why have we come here if this is all illusion? Behind *maya* the Real is there. Behind the *maya* of colour and fragrance of the flower there is the reality of honey, but we must possess the power of the bee. How many of us are not like the worm that destroys the heart of the rose?

What right resolves we should make becomes clear from these verses.

People make sundry resolutions; like butterflies they go from bush to bush, like monkeys they jump from tree to tree. Our philosophy teaches that there is one great source of pain and misery; also there is one great source of joy and bliss, *Ananda*. The great thirst for sense-life and bodily existence is mentioned by the Buddha in several places as the one cause of disease and pain. To cut down one tree of our weakness will not do; the whole forest has to be destroyed.

Cut down the whole forest of desire, not single trees; danger lurks in that forest.  
Having cut down trees and uprooted the weeds of desire you are free, O Bhikkhus.  
(Verse 283)

In Verses 334-338, the Enlightened One details for us the dual work that we have been considering. We have a whole host of weaknesses and vices. We err and we blunder and even sin; and how much time it would take if we were to resolve to kill out one weakness now, another defect at another time! Go to the root, says the Buddha. Desire naught, save one thing—Enlightenment. It is said in Buddhist tradition that many incarnations prior to becoming the Buddha, he made the Great Resolve, took the Great Vow of attaining Buddhahood. Let us then make, here and now, a resolve to purify the lower man, educate the higher. We shall attain harmlessness on the one hand and the power of serving the human race on the other.

As a result of such a resolution, each of us will encounter two mighty foes. One foe is within our own blood—our attachments and affections, our aversions and enmities; they are corrupting forces which pollute our mind. *Manas*, the thinker, gets polluted by *kama*, *tanha* and *trishna*. The second enemy is our own kith and kin; our own blood-ties, members of our own community, and our erstwhile friends—all resent and resist any attempt on our part to turn away from the life of the world and towards the Light of Spirit. Aptly did the Buddha teach not to be affected by the opinion of the world:

This is an old saying, O Atula; it is not of this day only. "They blame him who sits silent, they blame him who talks much, they blame him who speaks moderately in measured terms." There is not anyone in the world who is not blamed.

There never was, nor will be, nor is there now to be found anyone who stands wholly praised or utterly condemned. (Verses 227-228)

Praise and blame of the world is an excellent mirror in which we can steadily and calmly gaze. To use the mirror is an art in itself; and the man of right resolve learns that particular art. When the first foe of our own weaknesses arises, our friends and relations take advantage of the position. But we must learn from their criticism. That does not mean we should abandon our path and go back on our resolve. But we should become more vigilant and less showy, keeping our resolves to ourselves.

By five means—faith, harmony, energy, calm mind, and study of the *Dhamma*-doctrine—we shall win over the second enemy. Life impresses the soul as words impress the ears. Let us not merely speak by lips but by life. We shall not only vanquish our critics and opponents; we shall in time win them over one by one.

It is by a vow made in the silent sanctuary of our heart to destroy the heresy of separateness and to develop the wisdom of unity and compassion, that we attract to ourselves the beneficent Karma of real good company—company of the Great and Holy Ones. By right resolves, made and maintained, we gradually reach the Land of Wisdom Universal, the Land of Light which is Bliss and Love, *Parmarhasatya*.

---

The Buddha says, "To be attached to a certain view and to look down upon other views as inferior—this the wise men call a fetter."

—Sutta Nipata

---

## Karmic Processes and Arjuna's Predicament

The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

—Proverbs, XVIII, 15

Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path.

—The Voice of the Silence



Karma is one of several Sanskrit terms that are practically untranslatable in English. It means action in one aspect but is much more than action. It is movement seen as effect, but it is also the cause which produced that effect. So, wherever there is motion, there the work of Karma is seen—intelligent yet inscrutable, as extensive as time, as vast as space. Karma is in the gyration of atoms and in the throb of all life. It is in the so-called inert stone as it is in the interstellar spaces and the stars. It is in impalpable things like emotions and dreams. It is in thoughts and feelings and in the hearts of men. In the thrill of doubt is action. The calm contemplation of the tranquil mind is also action. Karma is seen working in all these because each can be seen as an effect and also as a cause that will in time produce its own effects. The tree is the effect that has the seed as its cause, the gardener being merely the helping agent. The new-born baby is the effect which has the Soul as its cause, the parents being merely the helping agents. Both these causes—the seed in the one case, the Soul in the other—are themselves effects from previous causes. Each mundane cause is, therefore, always an effect from a preceding cause. This chain of cause-effect-cause is endless and in kingdoms below the human moves according to fixed laws and schedules of time. In the human kingdom, it takes count of moral values and ethical perceptions and can be known in all its aspects only by him who rises above the planes on which Karma operates.

The effect side of Karma is always past recall. The child cannot rebecome the embryo nor can the tree become again the seed. Action that has thus produced its fruits represents destiny—something that has become fixed and on which, therefore, we may neither waste our tears nor expend our energies to effect a change. But these very effects, once they are manifest, become in turn causes, and it is in this causal aspect that they can be moulded and guided to produce desired results. "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined" is a truism on all planes of being and action. The bending of any cause towards a predetermined effect is possible only through the power of the human will. Good and noble causes have found their culmination in sordid effects through the agency of the perverted human will, just as poor and even bad causes have been transmuted to good ends through the will of a wise and devoted person. Discipleship consists in the effort to take up any effect, however bad or irksome, and make it the basis for such action as would give it a turn towards spirituality. Were this not possible, the sinner would always remain a sinner and the profligate a profligate.

Do any books exist that teach us this divine art? Can the ordinary person have a guide by which he can raise the tone of his actions from the mundane to the sublime? All devotional books help: the Dhammapada as the Sermon on the Mount, The Voice of the Silence as the Sufi treatises. Yet, perhaps nowhere else has the knowledge been given in such a precise manner as in the Bhagavad-Gita. In this poem of eighteen chapters are enshrined the great instructions which are to serve humanity during the swift and turbulent cycle of the *Kaliyuga*. In it is depicted action in all its aspects. The action behind which the Supreme is hidden is there; so also is the action of the great Guru who from age to age strikes the keynote of the great Knowledge. Here is action shown in all its vast ramifications from that of the Supreme Brahma to that of the man Arjuna who from the depths of despondent action rises to heights of faith and devotion and knowledge. But ere we study the Gita, it were well to understand that it does not view Karma from the exclusive viewpoints of *Sankhya* or *Bhakti* or *Gnyan*, but blends them all so that any action on any plane is seen as a moment in the life of the ALL.

The first impact of Wisdom on the mundane life produces no peace, brings no solace. The light of the Great Knowledge is too searching to miss the cobwebs of life. The result is a malaise that is difficult to describe. It is a queer feeling of belonging nowhere. The earth-earthy is about to be fought, but the spiritual has yet to be gained. Placed in the middle of these opposing forces, the disciple feels lost and helpless. His greatest trial comes when Wisdom destroys all previous norms with an iconoclastic hand, brushes aside the results of correct but cold reasoning and shows that the pity that is misplaced is the pity that misguides. Human knowledge is shown to be no knowledge; human values, no values. In such a condition where the mind loses all evaluation of action, a great and stupefying despair envelops the person and makes him bereft of all action. This is the *Vishad Yoga* of the first chapter of the Gita; but it still is "Yoga." Why is it that even when Arjuna throws away his bow and arrows his despair is viewed and characterized thus? We, too, despair when our efforts are crowded out by the misdeeds of an inchoate world. We, too, abandon fights because cold reason casts the shadow of doubt over us and makes us wonder whether the results would be worth the pain and the anguish of a total war. But nobody has characterized our anguish as *Vishad Yoga*. Nobody, ourselves included, has seen more to it than a defeat or at best a retreat to saner positions.

To understand the situation better, let us recapitulate briefly Arjuna's reasoning and its validity, for quite a few valuable lessons are wrapped up in the arguments that press upon him to give up the fight. When Arjuna from his point of vantage surveys the armies, he finds (what he must surely have known before) that war means the slaughter of tutors, kindred and friends. He sees evil omens and wonders what joy would be left to him after the killing of his kinsmen. How could he be happy after having murdered his own race? He envisages that this sinful slaughter would make vice and impiety overwhelm his race. He sees that this war can only lead to a confusion of castes and a fall from virtue in both the family and the tribe. His reasoning ends in the anguished cry: "Woe is me! What a great crime are we prepared to commit!" There is no faulty logic in Arjuna's reasoning. After the great war, vice and impiety did penetrate deep into the family and the tribe, the castes did become confounded, and the Brahmin no longer remained the Brahmin of the Eighteenth Discourse nor the Kshatriya a Kshatriya. Where, then, lay the error which it required seventeen chapters to rectify?

The First Chapter shows by inference how reason under certain limitations hinders the perception and how with the taint of emotions on it this same reason actually justifies that which the intuitive and spiritual mind must ultimately reject. This Chapter further shows that nobility of sentiments, pity for the deluded, the fear of committing sin, the love for one's kith and kin, all become obstacles if they lead the disciple away from the spiritual path. To the worldly person, such a teaching might seem objectionable. To him, the human reasoning is the highest human power. To say that there are limits beyond which earthly reasoning dare not trespass is to utter sheer nonsense. To tell the ordinary God-fearing person that the emotions of pity and love which Arjuna showed in the First Chapter are misguided, is to commit blasphemy. Many an enthusiast has skimmed over this First Chapter, rejecting its great lesson yet fondly hoping that he would nevertheless get his knowledge from the Chapters that follow. Few there be who are willing to lay reasoning aside and to trust their intuition to accept the lessons of this great *Vishad Yoga*. Disregard of this Chapter keeps dormant the intuitive faculties without which the study of the Gita becomes barren of results.

Since Arjuna is the prototype of all disciples, his dilemma and his dejection require study. The psychology of the bewildered disciple is of the same pattern today as it was during the Mahabharata period. The previous chapters of the Epic show that Arjuna had acquired great prowess in war. Further, he was sufficiently advanced in spiritual knowledge as is seen from the fact that he chose Krishna in preference to a vast army. It was reason that made Arjuna decide that war was inevitable. Human reason had pondered that question. Human reason had answered that question. Now, when the flying of arrows has already commenced, Arjuna suddenly desires to take stock of his position, not as a Pandava fighting the Kauravas, but as a neutral.

In this process he finds that the reasons that had led him as a Pandava to declare war are not cogent enough and do not satisfy him as a man who tries to see the situation from a non-partisan angle. Earlier, Duryodhana had surveyed the two armies as a Kuru and a partisan. He had assessed the individual merits of the chief warriors and the strength of the opposing armies. Arjuna breaks away from this traditional approach because the genius of Krishna has been filtering through. He assesses not the fighting strength, nor the chances of success. He never feared defeat and does not consider it. He reviews both the opposing forces and respects them both. He concedes justice to be on his side, but he refuses to fight injustice and vice because of pity for the unjust and the vicious.

In such a state of mind, his past experience of previous wars can be of no avail. At no time had he taken up the position that he chose to take at Kurukshetra, which is also *Dharmakshetra*, the field of duty. The result is a confusion and a turbulence that shakes him up. To him it is no longer the Pandus against the Kurus. It is no longer the glorious fight for justice and the righting of long-remembered wrongs. It is now only Arjuna and his dread of wrong actions—a pitiful Arjuna, lone and forlorn, with all else forming a mere background of thought. It is this background that suddenly shifts and moves and swirls round him. It enters him. And the forces of love, pity, horror and self-righteousness, cunningly brought together, make him blind to all else but the unassailable earthly logic, the seemingly foolproof reasoning. All his previous steps seem wrong and the present appears as one vast evil omen. He loses the memory of all that made him noble; and, worse still, he loses faith in himself. He is doubtful whether any available help can resolve the great tangle. He casts away his bow and arrows and sinks down in the chariot, isolated within the almost impenetrable capsule of his sorrow.

All true scriptures are written in a cipher which is capable of seven interpretations, each yielding a distinct and separate instruction on as many planes of action. The Gita, therefore, is capable of interpretation in seven distinct manners. One such interpretation makes of Arjuna the aspiring Soul of man. Thus, each reader is invited to consider himself an Arjuna under the guidance of his Higher Self—Krishna. Similarly, Bhishma, Drona, Bhima, Duryodhana and the other generals represent one or another of the forces that now attract and now repel the individual as he shifts his consciousness to the earthy or the spiritual.

The despondency depicted in the First Chapter arises because we have vowed to fight the unjust Kaurava forces within us. This resolve is generally taken in the first enthusiastic moments that follow upon the desire to ally oneself with the forces existing in the Light side of Nature.

However, even as we take up our stations for the fight, we find that we have assumed the duty of killing past reanimation that which we have for long nurtured and which now we have theoretically at least abjured as opposed to our way of life. This position sets up a tremendous tension within and around the individual. The body rebels at the new selection of foods; the dreams torture us by images of past enjoyments that still have left a strong taste in our sensual nature; the mind resents any curbs by way of discipline or penance and seeks to assert its own freedom; the reasoning nature marshals all its logic to show that intuition is but a mirage and a refuge of misguided scholars.

So much for the inner battle-front. On the outer field of *Dharmakshetra* (the field of duty) difficulties suddenly increase a thousandfold. The student becomes a target of ridicule for erstwhile friends. Relatives turn their backs upon him, characterizing him as an unhealthy influence for their children. Mockery and open hostility, ostracism and contempt, follow him with maddening pertinacity. The self-pity of Arjuna—trivial as it seems when read as words upon a page—assumes alarming proportions in actual life.

Even as we read the Gita in this fashion, which brings it closer to life, we see a little more clearly the action of Karma as it moves the disciple into despondency and also out of it as soon as the lesson of the initial shock is learnt. In fact, if we look a little deeply and ponder our own life, we shall find how Krishna, the Higher Self within us, has led our chariot in the midst of strange circumstances and stranger company. What Karma has brought us to those circumstances and that company? What good points are wrapped up in the package of troubles that Karma brings us? These are questions that each individual has to accustom himself to ask at every turn. Until they are answered at least in broad outline, we do not, or rather cannot, move to the instructions of the Second Chapter.

---

Century after century, year after year, all is changing; everything is progressing in this world; one thing only changeth not—human nature. Man accumulates knowledge, invents religions and philosophies, but himself remains still the same. In this ceaseless chase after wealth and honours and the will-o'-the-wisps of novelty, enjoyment and ambition, he is ever moved by one chief motor—vain selfishness....Whereon is spent the enormous wealthy accumulated through private enterprise by the more enlightened through the ruin of the less intelligent? Is it to relieve human suffering in every form, that riches are so greedily pursued? Not at all. For now, just as 1,900 year ago, while the beggar Lazarus is glad to feed on the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, no means are neglected by Dives to hedge himself off from the poor. The minority that gives and takes care that its left hand remains ignorant of what its right hand bestows, is quite insignificant when compared with the enormous majority who are lavish in their charity—only because they are eager to see their names heralded by the press to the world.

## The Inner Retreat

Who is there, whether he dwells in crowded tenement or spacious mansion, who does not sometimes feel the urgent need of seeking sanctuary in an inviolable spot, a retreat secure against dissension and argument, against the pressure of demands from others upon his time and energy, and also against the conflict in himself between his aspirations and his less worthy thoughts and desires, not necessarily evil in their nature but centred in "the personal, the transitory, the evanescent and the perishable"?

Countless followers of the Enlightened One down the centuries have sought their refuge in the ideal exemplified and taught by Gautama Buddha and in the Order he established for his earnest followers, but in what Sangha or its equivalent in other faiths have there been perfect harmony and peace? What class of ordinary mortals like ourselves can claim with truth to have transcended woe and risen beyond the reach of pain while still in earthly bodies?

Theosophy proclaims the availability to everyone of a secure retreat, ever at hand and readily accessible whenever needed, if we but turn our consciousness within, silence the mental and emotional pressures and conflicts and listen in the sanctified solitude of our own heart for the promptings of the still, small voice in which the spiritual consciousness in us speaks to the human consciousness.

Mr. Judge has written of that place of peace within in letters to his friends and students and has done so in words that not only encourage but inspire, not only averring its existence but also showing how to reach it and to point the way to it to others.

"Calmness," he has written, "is the one thing necessary for the spirit to be heard." And again:

The great struggle must be to open up my outer self, that my higher being may shine through, for I know that in my heart the God sits patient, and that his pure rays are merely veiled from me by the many strivings and illusions that I bring on outwardly....

The work upon which all disciples are employed is that of rendering the body more porous, more fluidic, more responsive to all spiritual influences which arise in the inner centre, in the soul which is an undivided part of the great Soul of all, and less receptive of the outward material influences which are generated by the unthinking world and by those qualities which are in nature.

It is no light task to which he calls us:

We have, each one of us, to make ourselves a centre of light; a picture gallery from which shall be projected on the astral light such scenes, such influences, such thoughts, as may influence many for good, shall thus arouse a new current, and then finally result in drawing back the great and the good from other spheres from beyond the earth.

And yet it is, he tells us, to be achieved by means that strike us as so easy as to be applicable by the simplest earnest mind, the humblest heart:

By gentleness, detachment, strict attention to duty, and retiring now and then to the quiet place bring up good currents and keep back the evil ones....A steady mind and heart stands still and quiet until the muddy stream rolls clear.

The great Stoic philosopher, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, described the inner retreat in the Fourth Book of his Meditations, though he ascribed it to "nothing else than the good ordering of the mind." He wrote:

Men seek retreat for themselves, houses in the country, sea-shores, and mountains; and thou, too, art wont to desire such things very much. But this is altogether a mark of the most common sort of men, for it is in thy power whenever shalt choose to retire into thyself. For nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity....

One other witness to the existence of "the quiet place" who testifies to the possibility of reaching it and gaining strength and courage from it when hard pressed is Miss I.A.R. Wylie, a novelist and writer of short stories. She writes of the "safe place" within herself which she had found in moments of difficulty and from which she had gained a real peace and a sense of integration. Friends with whom she had talked had also had the experience of finding their way to that inner refuge. Interestingly she wrote that they had not been sure how they had first reached it, but all had agreed that it was accessible only when they stood on the "firm ground of moral integrity." It had been closed to them whenever they wavered from an absolute code of decency and honour. Miss Wylie affirmed her own conviction that the "citadel" was within all men and women of good will, and that the individual quest of it was "the most urgent, significant quest of our lives." And, having found the way to it, she added,

we can march out of our invulnerable selves, all banners flying, to take risks, seize opportunity with strong hands, meet change with willing adaptability. We shall be often hurt. We cannot escape sorrow and pain and disappointment. But like death itself they will have lost their sting.

Miss Wylie did well to recognize that, winning our way to the "quiet place" and experiencing its calm and strength, we must go forth to do our duty in the world. The vision on the mountain top which that experience of the secure retreat within resembles, has to be brought down to the

valley where our Karma has placed us; the strength and courage that it gave must be applied in the duties of every day.

Action is demanded of the sincere Theosophist, not mere intention and thought. Madame Blavatsky declared in *The Key to Theosophy* that

no Theosophist has a right to this name, unless he is thoroughly imbued with the correctness of Carlyle's truism: "The end of man is an *action* and not a *thought*, though it were the noblest" —and unless he sets and models his daily life upon this truth.

---

## The Eternal Pilgrims

At the dawn of every fresh manifestation, the Unknown Essence, which forms the One Reality, having completed its appointed period of rest, begins to activate itself once more, the One breaking up into myriads of Divine Sparks, each of which undertakes its long obligatory pilgrimage through the Cycle of Incarnation, garnering all possible experience in all the departments of Nature, ascending slowly and gradually "through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, up to the holiest archangel (Dhyani-Buddha)." These Eternal Pilgrims are called Monads. They are units of Atma-Buddhi which have acquired their own individuality by passing "through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara" until they came to the stage of self-consciousness and attained the stature and dignity of Manhood. Life in the lower Kingdoms of Nature is ever tending upwards towards the human stage, and therefore it is said that "every atom in the Universe has the potentiality of self-consciousness in it."

But let us consider at the outset some of the simplest definitions pertaining to this term MONAD, as that will perhaps help us in coming to a better understanding of this somewhat unfamiliar and intricate, though none the less important, metaphysical subject:

MONAD (Gr.). The Unity, the *one*; but in Occultism it often means the unified triad, Atma-Buddhi-Manas, or the duad, Atma-Buddhi, that immortal part of man which reincarnates in the lower kingdoms, and gradually progresses through them to Man and then to the final goal—Nirvana. (*The Theosophical Glossary*)

The "Monad" is the combination of the last two "principles in man, the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup>, and properly speaking, the term "human monad" applies only to the dual soul (Atma-Buddhi). (*S.D.*, I, 178)

"Once attracted into the sphere of terrestrial activity, the Monadic Essence, passing through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, becomes man" (Esot. Catechism). (I, 619)

"God, Monad, and Atom are the correspondences of Spirit, Mind and Body in man." (*Ibid.*)

"The Monads (*Jivas*) are the Souls of the Atoms, both are the fabric in which the Chohans (*Dhyanis, gods*) clothe themselves when a form is needed." (*Ibid.*)

In our study of this subject we should first of all understand the distinction between the *Monadic Essence* which permeates all the lower kingdoms in Nature and which breaks up into individual *Monads* only in the human kingdom where self-consciousness first comes into play, endowing each individual human soul with its own free will and choice along with its accompanying moral responsibility. Therefore we say that animals have no individual souls, as we know human souls to be, and that their activity is the result of the degree of intelligence acquired by the Monadic Essence that is animating those particular forms of life. In other words:

The ocean (of matter) does not divide into its potential and constituent drops until the sweep of the life-impulse reaches the evolutionary stage of man-birth. The tendency towards segregation into individual Monads is gradual, and in the higher animals comes almost to the point....The "Monadic Essence" begins to imperceptibly differentiate towards individual consciousness in the Vegetable Kingdom. (I, 178-179)

So in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms the progressive evolution of the Monadic Essence goes on from stage to stage until it comes to the human kingdom where the intelligence is unfolded sufficiently to enable it to be differentiated into individual *self-conscious* Monads with the help of the process of the "lighting up of Manas." So it is only when the human stage is reached that *Atma-Buddhi*, the Divine Spark, which has passed by means of natural impulse through all the lower kingdoms of Nature, becomes conjoined with Manas, appears on the scene as a Human Ego and undertakes its further "pilgrimage" as *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*, a self-conscious Individuality, through a long series of reincarnations in one human personality after another on this earth.

The Secret Doctrine explains to us that "there exists in Nature a triple evolutionary scheme...inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point...the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual, and the physical evolutions....Each is represented in the constitution of man, the Microcosm of the great Macrocosm; and it is the union of these three streams in him which makes him the complex being he now is." (I, 181)

On the other hand, in another place in the same book, H.P.B., in referring again to Monadic evolution and deploring the difficulty encountered in having to expound great metaphysical verities in any of the Western languages where there is such paucity of suitable philosophical terms, says:



The same difficulty of language is met with in describing the "stages" through which the Monad passes. Metaphysically speaking, it is of course an absurdity to talk of the "development" of a Monad, or to say that *it* becomes "Man."...It stands to reason that a Monad cannot either progress or develop, or even be affected by the changes of states it passes through. *It is not of this world or plane*, and may be compared only to an indestructible star of divine light and fire, thrown down on to our Earth as a plank of salvation for the personalities in which it indwells. It is for the latter to cling to it; and thus partaking of its divine nature, obtain immortality. (I, 174-75 fn.)

So this is indeed a highly metaphysical subject and to grasp and comprehend it a good deal of study and reflection is needed. But students of Theosophy cannot afford to neglect metaphysics, knowing what H.P.B. has said about it: "*Outside of metaphysics no occult philosophy, no esotericism is possible.*" And we may just as well note here what she has said about occult philosophy and esotericism:

The exact extent, depth, breadth, and length of the mysteries of Nature are to be found only in Eastern esoteric sciences. So vast and so profound are these that hardly a few, a very few of the highest Initiates—*those whose very existence is known but to a small number of Adepts—are capable of assimilating the knowledge. Yet it is all there, and one by one facts and processes in Nature's workshops are permitted to find their way into the exact Sciences, while mysterious help is given to rare individuals in unravelling its arcana....*

*From the very beginning of Aeons...the Mysteries of Nature (at any rate, those which it is lawful for our races to know), were recorded...in geometrical figures and symbols. The keys thereto passed from one generation of "wise men" to the other....*

*Whatever ignorance, pride or fanaticism may suggest to the contrary, Esoteric Cosmology can be shown inseparably connected with both philosophy and modern science. (I, 611-13)*

But this is somewhat a digression, and we shall now revert to the subject under consideration.

Monads may be roughly divided into three great classes: (1) the first class is made up of the most developed ones, the Lunar Gods or Pitris, who are able to pass in the very first Round through the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms and come up to the human *form* on Globe A in that first Round; (2) the second class consists of all those who are able to attain to the human stage by the middle of the fourth Round when "the 'Door' into the human kingdom closes"; (3) the third class is that of the laggards, so to speak, who, because of Karmic impediments, "find themselves so far behind that they will reach the human stage only at the close of the seventh and last Round. They will, therefore, not be men of this chain, but will form the humanity of a future Manvantara."

The above, however, is only a rough classification which refers only to three important stages or grades attained by the Monads at different periods in the progressive development of their intelligence. But if we go deeper into the subject, we shall find that

...the Monads cycling round any septenary chain are divided into seven classes or hierarchies according to their respective stages of evolution, consciousness, and merit....The time-spaces between the appearances of these hierarchies on any one Globe are so adjusted that when Class 7, the last, appears on Globe A, Class 1, the first, has just passed on to Globe B, and so on, step by step, all round the chain. (I, 171)

This leads us into thinking that the seven classes of Monads referred to may be those relating respectively to the seven great departments in Nature made up of the three classes of the invisible elemental lives and the Mineral, Vegetable, Animal and Human Kingdoms.

There is one remarkable characteristic about this Monadic Essence in that every monad acts as a faithful reflector of the impresses made upon it by every other. In the words of H.A. Bjerregaard, whom H.P.B. quotes in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 630-31), "every monad is a living mirror of the Universe within its own sphere....In every monad, therefore, the adept may read everything, even the future. Every monad or *Elemental* is a looking-glass that can speak."

We may take note of one more point before we bring this rough sketch of a very vast and intricate subject to a close, and it is that when mankind first appeared on earth,

though all of one common origin, yet for reasons given their potentialities and mental capabilities, outward or physical forms, and future characteristics, were very different....Some superior, others inferior, *to suit the Karma* of the various reincarnating Monads which could not be all of the same degree of purity in their last births in other worlds. This accounts for the difference of races, the inferiority of the savage, and other human varieties. (II, 249)

---

We are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. To act against one another then is contrary to nature.

—Marcus Aurelius

---

## The Way and the Wayfarer

The Voice of the Silence tells us that though "the Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims." We can understand that a journey can be undertaken either on foot

or by one or another means of conveyance, but how can the goal of Divinity be reached by *many* means?

Let us ask ourselves: Who travels this Path? What are the vehicles that are used for this travelling? Are they outside of the one who travels, or are they within him? What exactly is this Path? It is necessary to ask ourselves these questions before we consider the many means to reach the goal.

It is the *I* in us who travels this Path—*I*, the Personal Ego, all that we know of as "myself." So it is our body, feelings, mind, the sum-total of our traits and tendencies that we call our character, that travels the Path. But what is the relationship between all these that we consider to be "myself" and the Path? Is the Path well marked? Are there obstacles on it? Is it on the physical plane, the astral plane, or the mind plane?

The trouble with us is that we do not prepare ourselves beforehand. If we have to undertake a physical journey, we try to learn all we can about the place we are going to, what we shall need and what luggage to take with us; but we start walking this spiritual Path without knowledge or understanding. If we are to travel up a mountain and start off without making proper provision for the weather up there, we might die of cold; but if we take the advice of those who have been there before and prepare our luggage, we shall be kept warm. There is much that we have been told regarding the inner Path; many hints have been given as to the correct procedure, the requirements of the journey, the preparations to be made. Why not pay attention to these and proceed in a well-planned manner instead of wearing all the warm clothes that we shall need towards the end of the journey right at the beginning when it is hot?

First of all, let us think over the statement: "Thou wilt have to travel on alone. The Teacher can but point the way." Realizing this, we can understand why it is written that "for him who is on the threshold of divinity no law can be framed, no guide can exist." Does this frighten us when we understand its meaning as far as we can with our mind? Do we realize the heart-loneliness that goes with it? Do we know what it means to "be on our own" at this most crucial of all moments on the Path? If so, we shall understand what we have to be prepared for all along the way.

What is said in the Third Fundamental is vitally important to us at all stages—we progress by "self-induced and self-devised efforts." No fixed rules will help us because every unit of humanity is different from every other (except in essence) and therefore all difficulties will have to be met according to our character and capacity for achievement. If we are used to devising for ourselves our own particular ways and means at every step on the Path, we shall not feel lonely or frightened during the last stage of the journey. The achievement is the same; the vehicles or the means by which the achievement is gained differ according to past experiences.

We are told about the first step on this Path:

Thou hast to be prepared to answer Dharma, the stern law, whose voice will ask thee at thy first, at thy initial step:

"Hast thou complied with all the rules, O thou of lofty hopes?"

"Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind?..."

"Hast thou attuned thy being to Humanity's great pain, O candidate for light? (The Voice of the Silence, pp. 55 and 57)

How do we attune our heart and mind in this way? Have we made the initial preparation?

Before thou canst approach the foremost gate thou hast to learn to part thy body from thy mind, to dissipate the shadow, and to live in the eternal. For this, thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things in SELF. (The Voice of the Silence, pp. 53-54)

It is here that the foundational work is done and here that the different means and ways begin to show themselves. Each of us starts with an emotional character and a mental character in addition to all that he has learnt through and with his vehicles. In any given condition the effect on those going through the condition must vary. For instance, suppose one is watching an act of cruelty performed on an animal. The emotional person is affected in his emotional nature and probably either weeps helplessly or is moved to anger and gets ready to fight the offender. This emotionally overwrought person has to learn to control his impulses while taking proper action to relieve the sufferer and help the one who is inflicting the suffering. On the other hand, the callous person has to learn that "inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin."

All along the Path we have to go on examining ourselves, and only the traveller through life can know just what he needs to make himself ready to overcome the pitfalls on the way.

Seek it [the way] not by any one road. To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable....The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he grasps the whole individuality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use....(Light on the Path, p. 5)

Walking the Path means nothing but a change of character, the acquirement of greater powers and faculties, mental, physical and psychical, and the purification of the vehicles. What else can it mean but a change of attitude and of character? The key to a change of character and of outlook is within the mind.

We have to become "like the fix'd star in highest heaven," and it is this fixity of purpose and of soul-thought that we have to attain from the start. Therefore it is said that the Path is within us. We experience all things within ourselves, and send out the steady light that shines from the heart and shows the way to all. We are asked to "remain unselfish till the endless end." Remaining unselfish, shining for all except ourselves, we are truly enlightened and can safely choose our way.

It is to be noted that at the end the harmony that has been established between the Pilgrim and the whole of Nature makes the latter know of his triumph, and a "chant of love ariseth, both from the flaming Fire and flowing Water, and from sweet-smelling Earth and rushing Wind"—from all the elements, in fact.

We begin to understand that unselfishness, or rather selflessness, unites one to the ALL, that selfishness in any form or guise separates one from the ALL on very plane of consciousness, and we begin to see that journeying on the Path implies an alteration within ourselves. It seems as if there is to be developed an inner centre which will be firm and unruffled and able to withstand everything, even the great flow of the Ocean of Spirit at the very end.

Light on the Path says, "stand aside in the coming battle"; and, "Look for the warrior and let him fight in thee." Who is this warrior? He has to be looked upon and obeyed "as though he were thyself, and his spoken words were the utterance of thy secret desires." The whole of Light on the Path should be studied well. We must find the warrior in ourselves. Let us ask ourselves what secret desires we have and whether they are in harmony with the will of the inner warrior. Have we the desire to help all mankind, the great as well as the lowly? Have we the desire to lose ourselves in the ALL and to feel one with the criminal as well as with the saint? Have we the desire never to rest but to work always for the good of all beings? Only if these are our secret desires will the warrior be our eternal and sure guide, who will never forsake us. "Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age have left me naked to mine enemies"—that is the cry of all who serve the impermanent and perishable. All, all is impermanent and perishable save the Warrior within. His voice and our secret desires have to become one.

---

## In the Light of Theosophy

An exclusive faith in science, and its offspring and partner technology, appears to be the hallmark of modernity, says Wolfgang Smith, Ph. D., who has held faculty positions at MIT, UCLA and Oregon State University, U.S.A. What is lacking, he argues, is the "dimension of verticality"—meaning an inward dimension, "something spiritual." An avowed critic of contemporary scientific beliefs, he writes in *Modern Age* (Winter 2001):

The inner and the external, it turns out, are profoundly related. As Huston Smith points out: "A meaningful life is not finally possible in a meaningless world."

We stand in need of a new cosmology: of a cosmos incomparably more vast than the universe of contemporary physics. I am not of course referring to spatial dimension: the physical universe encompasses light years enough. I speak rather of things which cannot be measured or weighed, of things, in fact, which can only be spoken of in traditional terms: of an integral cosmos, namely, made up of distinct

ontological levels, which we may picture as so many horizontal planes or concentric spheres. I speak thus of a cosmic hierarchy, a universe with an added dimension: the dimension of verticality, which has to do with value and meaning, and ultimately, with first origins and last ends. It is the dimension that transforms the cosmos from a mere thing into a bona fide symbol: into a theophany, in fact; it is thus the dimension that nourishes the artist, the poet, and the mystic in us—the dimension, as I have said, which enables us to be fully human....

Since the Enlightenment, Western man has lived intellectually in a flattened cosmos, a truncated universe of mere particles, persuaded that science had so decreed; and now one knows that we have been deceived. It was scientism, it turns out, that perpetrated the fraud; and this we know today on the authority of science itself. What, then, must be the role of science in the restoration of culture? What else could it be than to break the scientific spell.

Nothing however can be accomplished without the recovery of authentic metaphysical wisdom. Philosophy must cease to be a sterile academic discipline, marginalized by science, and must reclaim its central position....One needs to realize once again that human reason is not per se enlightening—is not itself "the true Light, which lighteth every man." And so too one needs to realize that science as such is inherently incapable of self-interpretation....It falls to philosophy, therefore, to bring into view what science discloses enigmatically. In the final count, only a restored philosophy can provide intellectual access to the true world—and in so doing, can enable the restoration of culture.

The Secret Doctrine calls metaphysics "the informing soul and spirit" of physics and other sciences. The minority among scientists who enter the domain of metaphysics "are wise in their generation. For all their wonderful discoveries would go for nothing, and remain for ever headless bodies, unless they lift the veil of matter and strain their eyes to see beyond." (I, 610)

To make of Science and integral whole necessitates, indeed, the study of spiritual and psychic, as well as physical Nature. Otherwise it will ever be like the anatomy of man, discussed of old by the profane from the point of view of his shell-side and in ignorance of the interior work....Without metaphysics, as Mr. H. J. Slack says, real science is inadmissible. (I, 588)

---

Animal conservationists are now recognizing what Theosophists have been saying all along, that the anthropoid apes belong to an altogether different category than other animals. Yet the treatment meted out to them by humans is truly deplorable. Animal rights lawyer Steven Wise is among those who speak out especially for the chimpanzees. While conservationists seek to protect the chimps' habitats and improve their treatment in captivity, Wise promotes a more radical approach. In *Rattling the Cage*, he proposes that; chimpanzees be declared "legal

persons" and share some of the rights of humans, including freedom from all forms of bodily harm. Discover magazine (September 2001) reports Wise as stating:

Chimpanzees, our closest relatives, can solve problems, develop culture, even express self-consciousness, but they are struggling for survival—the wild population is 200,000 and dropping....

Today every human being who is born is a legal person under international and domestic law. But every nonhuman animal is a legal thing. There is a great legal wall that has been constructed over the centuries between the two. I think that that wall is arbitrary, unfair, and irrational.

What rights do chimps deserve? First, bodily integrity. You shouldn't use them in vivisection, you shouldn't eat them, and you shouldn't do anything to them that you won't do to a three-year-old human child. Secondly, bodily liberty. You should not be permitted to enslave them by putting them in steel and concrete cages....

Any nonhuman animal who is self-conscious should not be experimented on....If you can't justify doing a procedure on a human child, then you can't justify doing it on a chimp. If someone says, "If we torment and kill 10 chimpanzees, we'll find a cure for AIDS," should they be able to do that? No, they should not, any more than if someone says, "Hey, if we just torment and kill 10 human children, we will save millions of lives of people with AIDS."

Wise believes that "a strong legal case" can also be made for gorillas, orangutans, and other intelligent animals like dolphins and elephants.

---

Among the flying reptiles from Earth's distant past, pterosaurs are considered to be the largest and the oldest. "They were the first vertebrates to fly, and they did it long before birds and bats," says Kevin Padian, a paleontologist at the University of California, Berkeley. New discoveries of pterosaur remains, found in sedimentary rocks formed at the bottom of relatively shallow, calm waters, are intriguing present-day researchers.

When first discovered, the fossil was named Pterodactylus, combining the Greek words for wings and finger. A few decades later the term Pterosaur, or winged reptile, was coined to describe the growing list of similar fossils. Pterosaurs are sometimes popularly called "flying dinosaurs," but they are a distinct lineage. Richard Monastersky writes in National Geographic (May 2001):

Like their cousins the dinosaurs, pterosaurs stand out as one of evolution's great success stories. They first appeared during the Triassic period, 215 million years ago, and thrived for 150 million years before going extinct at the end of the Cretaceous period. Their endurance record is almost inconceivable compared with

the span of humans....Uncontested in the air, pterosaurs colonized all continents and evolved a vast array of shapes and sizes....

Until recently most paleontologists would not have put pterosaurs in the same league as birds in terms of flying ability. Because pterosaurs were reptiles, generations of scientists imagined that these creatures must have been cold-blooded, like modern snakes and lizards, making them awkward aerialists at best.

In the past three decades, however, a surge of fossil discoveries around the globe has prompted researchers to reexamine their views. The emerging picture of pterosaurs reveals that they were unlike any modern reptile....Scientists reason that many pterosaurs were gifted airborne predators, built to feed on the wing....

Even with the new discoveries, the rarity of fossils leaves major gaps in knowledge about pterosaurs. No one knows how they evolved flight. When they vanished, or exactly what they looked like. Debate swirls around these reptiles like the air currents they once rode.

As to the question of origins, which to paleontologists still remains open, The Secret Doctrine has this to say:

If spontaneous generation has changed its methods now, owing perhaps to accumulated material on hand, so as to almost escape detection, it was in full swing in the genesis of terrestrial life. Even the simple physical form and the evolution of species show how Nature proceeds. The scale-bound, gigantic sauria, the winged pterodactyl, the Megalosaurus, and the hundred-feet long Iguanodon of the later period, are the transformations of the earliest representatives of the animal kingdom found in the sediments of the primary epoch. There was a time when all those above enumerated "antediluvian" monsters appeared as filamentoid infusoria without shell or crust, with neither nerves, muscles, organs nor sex, and reproduced their kind by gemmation: as do microscopical animals also, the architects and builders of our mountain ranges, agreeably to the teachings of science. Why not man in this case? Why should he not have followed the same law in his growth, i.e., gradual condensation? (II, 151)

---

According to two neurobiologists of the French Institute of Health and Medical Research in Lyons, humans have an empathy instinct innate in them. Jean Decety and Pierre Ruby carried out tests on subjects, using a PET scanner, and the results, they say, suggest that we understand another's behaviour by imagining him or her carrying out an action and then mentally projecting ourselves into that situation. (Discover, September 2001)



"Evolution has shaped our minds not only to express emotion but also to empathize with others," Decety says. "But aggression is also part of human nature. We have to find a balance between our instincts and the way we express them."

---

In an interview with the editor of Life Positive, His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed his views on what is essential for happiness, which all crave. "Undoubtedly we need to be more compassionate," he said, not only to make our own lives happier but also to make our world a better place. The practice of compassion requires that we act with greater "awareness," he remarked, and to gain awareness we need wisdom. Wisdom and compassion go together:

I think that ignorance and afflictive emotions, called *klesh* in Sanskrit, give rise to unwanted circumstances. As far as ignorance is concerned, not just Buddhism, every religion recognizes it as the source of suffering....Now I see well-educated people who are so unhappy. It is because of too much desire, hatred, and jealousy. The antidote to weaken that is increasing the right kind of knowledge. I think, perhaps knowledge coupled with a warm heart brings wisdom.

Compassion, or *karuna*, stems from wisdom....Attachment awakens feelings of *klesh*. If there is less attachment and jealousy, we are able to focus within. I believe that whether a person follows any religion or not is unimportant, he must have a good heart, a warm heart. This is essential for a happy life. This is part of what I call "secular ethics."

Compassion is not being kind to your friend. That is attachment because it is based on expectation. *Karuna* is when you do something good without expectations, even without knowing the other person. It is in realizing that the other person is also just like me. That recognition is the basis on which you can develop *karuna*, not only towards those around you but also towards your enemy....

Compassion thus is the force of growth and development while anger is destruction.

The Dalai Lama called the Buddha "a great psychologist because he taught the science of the mind." The following seemingly simple yet profound verses from the Dhammapada bear this out:

Cling not to the pleasant, nor to the unpleasant. Not seeing the pleasant as to see the unpleasant—both are painful.

Therefore do not be attracted to anything, for loss of a loved object is painful. No fetters exist for him who neither likes nor dislikes.

From attachment arises grief; from attachment arises fear. There is no grief for one who is free from attachment. Whence, then, can there come fear? (Verses 210—212)

Likewise, goes on the Buddha, affection, indulgence, desire, craving—all ultimately lead to grief. Those who indulge in such emotions miss out the purpose of human life and move further away from the path of happiness.

Life expectancy has gone up in recent times, and so have health problems among the aged. In *The Futurist* (September-October 2001), Michael Brickey, psychologist and author of *Defy Aging*, suggests strategies for happy and healthy longevity. The biggest factors distinguishing those who age well from those who don't, he says, are mental, or what he calls the four "Be-attitudes":

1. Be optimistic for long-term health. Many people think of optimism in terms of positive thinking, such as asserting that a glass is half full rather than half empty. But optimism also affects how we think about the causes of good things and bad things that happen to us.
2. Be grateful: Gratitude builds a healthy perspective. Maintaining a sense of perspective can help us stay calm when life's irritants threaten to trigger an angry, unhealthy response....Gratitude is a powerful antidote to stress.
3. Be proactive: deal with your problems. Worrywarts are self-absorbed, playing the same mental "audio tapes" over and over. It is more helpful to get absorbed in something purposeful.
4. Be a learner: embrace life-long learning and change. You need to maintain enough ties with your past to give you a sense of being rooted, while embracing enough change to meet your needs to adapt and make life interesting. As Alvin Toffler puts it: "The illiterate of the future are not those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

These strategies and attitudes are a product of how we choose to think. We are thought-formed. It is our thoughts that make or mar our lives.