

Theosophy provides a unique historical perspective by encompassing a vast scheme of human evolution covering some 16 million years since the incarnation of self-consciousness mind, the separation of the sexes and the origination of language. (*The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. 2, pp. 191 et seq.)

This past as outlined in *The Secret Doctrine* suggests that the values of patience and determination are essential aids to our individual and collective welfare.

The nature of mind is dual. H. P. B. writes: "... Self-consciousness belongs alone to man and proceeds from the SELF, the higher Manas ... between the *psychic* and the *noetic*, between the *Personality* and the *Individuality*, there exists the same abyss as between a 'Jack the Ripper', and a holy Buddha." ("Psychic and Noetic Action," *Lucifer*, October-November 1890. As constrained by karmic law we can choose to identify with and act from either the higher or lower aspect of this principal.

In so choosing we can set in motion each hour of each day our thoughts so as to determine our actions, habits and destiny.

So it is that the third fundamental proposition given in *The Secret Doctrine* states that: "... The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychosis and reincarnations." In other words human evolution is driven by self-induced and self-devised efforts, checked by karma. (*The Secret Doctrine*, Vol.1, p. 17)

This is, as the Bhagavad-Gita puts it, our "glorious unsought battle." The failure to engage in that battle leads to despondency (see Bhagavad-Gita, chapter 1, The Despondency of Arjuna) and defeat as illustrated in this cartoon from *The New Yorker* (on the right).

Bridging the gap between theory and practice requires an understanding of both ourselves and the world in which we live. Henry Ford recognized that we create our own reality when he said: "Those who say they can and those who say they can't are both right."

The world operates under cyclic law. Among those laws that effect our ability to work together are ages of greater and lesser spiritual influence.