

## BEING HUMAN

Being human is a rare experience. This may be your first time. You may not do it again for thousands of years. Perhaps never. Of course, it is more likely that you have been human several times before, and will be several times again. Nevertheless, it is still a rare experience.

A human being is, by definition, a soul using as her vehicle an animal body of the species homo sapiens. Before she entered the body she was not human. Once she leaves it she will cease to be human. Similarly, the "human" body was not human until it became the vehicle for souls. It is a common fallacy to say that mankind "evolved" from an earlier ape-like form. What actually occurred was that a particular type of body evolved until it became a suitable vehicle for the incarnation of souls. Soul without body is not human. Body without soul is not human. As soon as soul entered body, humanity was formed, no less human and no more human than we are today. That is why the "missing link" will never be found.

The first human beings were very much less rigidly bound to the body than we are, and much more in tune with the subtle realms of nature and with pure Spirit. The so-called "cave-man" is not a primitive or early form, but a much later degeneration.

The soul, of course, does not evolve (despite the claims of certain materialistic people who can only understand non-physical things by imagining them to be exactly like physical things). She is subject to an entirely different process. Her development (or otherwise) takes place not through any inbuilt "evolutionary" tendency, but solely through the spiritual faculty of moral choice, which creates her moira.

The collective name for humanity is maid or maidkind. This word comes from the same root as "may", meaning "to be able", or to have the power to do something (thus "might" both means "power" and is the past tense of "may"). It is essentially the power to act or not to act; thus maid is literally "she who chooses". We may note in passing that "man", on the other hand, comes from manas (mensis, mental, etc.) - the lower mind or reason which responds only to the material world, as opposed to intellect or wisdom - jnana (gnosis), Sophia, both titles of the Mother - which has direct apprehension of pure Spirit. We can thus see that modern society is in the deepest sense man-made.

Choice is the essential faculty of the soul because she is what she is wholly because of her choices. Her outward circumstances, from the greatest to the most trivial, are nothing but a mathematically precise reflection of her inward spiritual state. And that state is nothing but the sum total of all her moral choices - that is to say, her choices between Good and evil, between Goddess and antiGoddess - from the beginning of time to the present moment of her present incarnation.

"Maid" is also connected with the veil of matter; the material realm in which her choice is crystallised and worked out.

The special quality of physical matter is its solidity. Unlike the subtler forms of matter, it is very resistant to change. It does not shift with every movement of our choice-faculty as does mental, or astral (emotional) matter. It stays still. Now this provides the soul with some very special opportunities. When we try to meditate, often the mind shifts and slithers and cannot be held still. But if we paint a picture or carve a statue, it will not shift with the mind, but will hold its shape and help to pull the mind back to its object. Again, we can use the spoken or written word to mould our mental and emotional matter into shape, any shape that we wish. Outside physical matter we cannot call on these aids. The mind and emotions run wild as they do in dreams, unless the soul is strong enough to tame them - and it is when the soul has lost that strength that she must descend into the physical to find it again. Thus it is said that one of the signs of a hera is that she can control her dreams. And again, the world, because it is the reflection of the pure Creation of the Goddess, manifests countless symbols of pure Truth, from the seasons, light and darkness or the planets to flowers, birds and beasts, all of which are rich in symbolic truth, provided we see them for what they really are, and not as mere "accidents" of the material world.

This is the priceless opportunity of human life. Yet we are told that human incarnation is "hard to obtain"; for having thrown away that opportunity, it may be long before it comes again. The great pitfall of human life is to become hypnotised by the very solidity of physical matter; to forget that it is an "aid" or "prop" helping us toward Reality, and to mistake it for reality itself. This is the error of materialism - the error which reduces maid to "man". This, therefore, is the profound symbolic significance of patriarchy. The belief that maid "evolved" from a lower physical form is a blatant example of this error. The belief that the soul "evolves" like an animal species is a subtler version of the same thing.

Modern society is pervaded by the materialist error. It permeates its philosophy, its everyday "common sense", and even (perhaps especially) its religion. Yet for a soul in human incarnation, no error can be more dangerous; for this is the very error which is most calculated to induce her to waste the priceless opportunity of that incarnation.

Like a crutch, the world both limits and supports us. With it we may learn to walk, so that when on death it passes from us, we shall be free. But if during this life, we have treated the crutch as an end in itself, polishing it and decorating it and showing it to our friends, but never using it for its true purpose, then when it is taken from us, we shall fall.

Through the many supports of physical existence, we have the opportunity to awaken our souls from the dream of separation, to see the Real behind the veil of matter. If we grip onto the transient forms of this world, then when they pass from us we shall be in a formless void; but if we use them as "supports" to lift us beyond them, then we shall continue to rise up into the Light when

they are gone. We do not need to become heras - we have only to set ourselves in the right direction.

The universe is not a "natural phenomenon"; it is a manifestation of Divine compassion. It is beautiful because it reflects Her absolute beauty; it is imperfect because it is only a reflection and not the Reality. At every level it manifests symbols of Her absolute Truth, which are clear to anyone who has not fallen into the error of seeing them as things-in-themselves or "facts". Throughout it breathes the Spirit of Her Daughter, pure Maid and pure Goddess, asking us to take Her hand, that She may lead us from being human to being divine. But we are maid - and so the choice is ours.