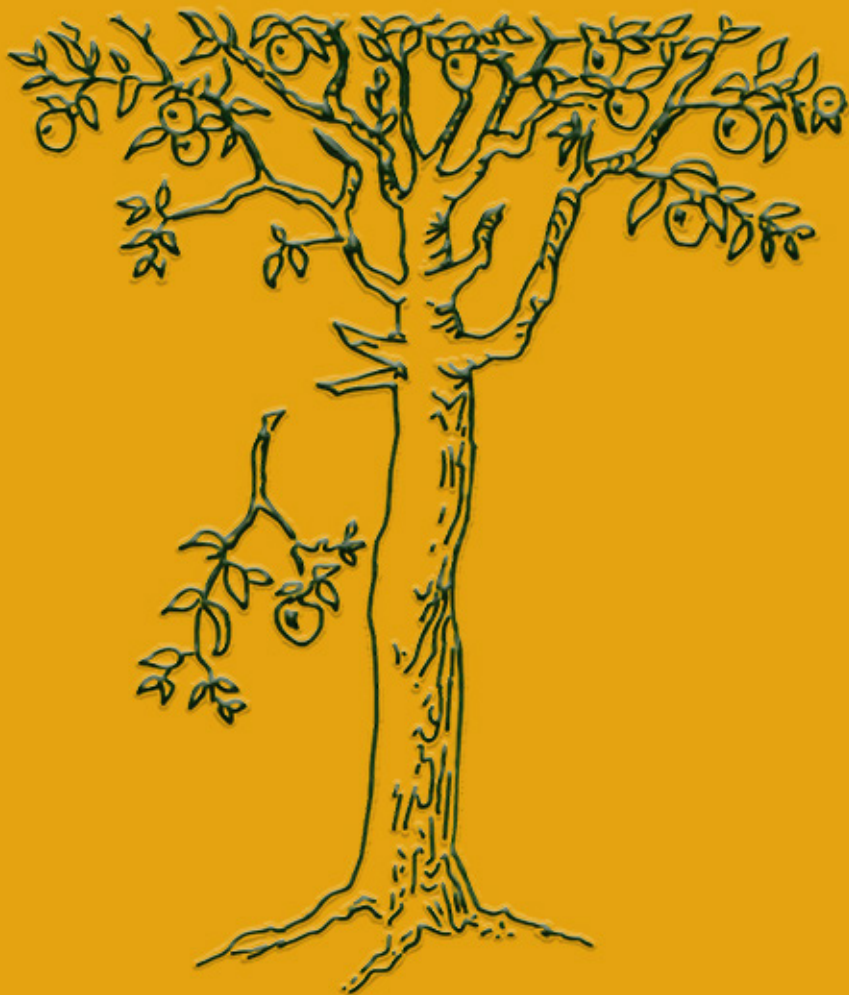


# *The Eternal Fruits of Knowledge*

By Cecil A. Poole, F.R.C



**THE ETERNAL  
FRUITS OF  
KNOWLEDGE**



Cecil A. Poole, F.R.C.

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*Dedicated to Rosicrucians of*

**YESTERDAY**

**TODAY**

**TOMORROW**

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# INTRODUCTION

**T**HE FOUNDATIONS OF Rosicrucian knowledge are the principles upon which to build a practical system of philosophic thought, which might be referred to as a Rosicrucian philosophy. More important, these ideas are the basis upon which to build a philosophy of life.

The human being has always evidenced a degree of curiosity. In fact, curiosity seems to be an attribute of life. Many living creatures, in addition to human beings, indicate their curiosity about objects and events. The human being in particular seems to be endowed with a desire to learn, to *know*. He has always investigated the unknown. He is distinguished from other living things in that he has carried this investigation to the point of determining causes and purposes that exist in his environment.

The traditional Rosicrucian knowledge has been the result of the efforts of individuals who have delved into the unknown, who have searched for the foundations upon which knowledge can be built. Today, some persons believe that philosophy is restricted purely to the academic field. They therefore have only a vague understanding of the scope of philosophy. In fact, some may ask the question as to why philosophy should be studied. Is it not a waste of time to speculate upon those profound questions which never seem to have a satisfactory answer? Is it worthwhile to develop theories that do not necessarily result in actual fact or information upon which proof can be built?

These questions are legitimate. On the other hand, out of philosophical speculation have developed many of the practical as well

as the theoretical disciplines and sciences with which we are familiar today. Even more important for the individual is that possibly the best answer to the questions concerning the value of philosophy is that there are questions. Individuals in the process of asking questions are developing their potential possibilities and attributes.

As long as man asks questions and speculates upon the answers, he is concerned about the process of living. He is inquiring into the nature of man and trying to reach a realization of man's relationship to the universe which he inhabits.

Questions in themselves cause man to reach out of himself and therefore possibly fulfill one of his purposes, that is, to evolve. Through philosophy, man is utilizing his own creative ability in an attempt to adjust to his own life and to his environment.

Whether or not an individual develops an individual philosophy of life based upon an established premise, form, doctrine, or creed, we should realize that living is an obligation as well as a necessity. To find out more about that process of life and its purpose should be an obligation of the intelligent human being.

I have attempted here to outline some of the problems of philosophy and some of the principles which have been discussed and questioned by many individuals and which in turn have contributed to the background of knowledge that the Rosicrucians teach today. This is my interpretation of many of the principles of Rosicrucian philosophy, and I must frankly state that the conclusions reached here are my own personal opinions and do not necessarily reflect the official philosophy of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, with which I have been associated for almost half a century.

Nevertheless, I believe my conclusions are basically in accord with the Rosicrucian philosophy. I have found the study of Rosicrucian principles worthwhile, and I hope that those who share what I have prepared will also find, if not the answers to all the profound questions of living, at least some stimulation for their own thinking that will aid them in directing their own development to a worthwhile purpose and the formulation of a useful philosophy of life.

## ETERNAL FRUITS OF KNOWLEDGE

I acknowledge my debt to various Rosicrucian publications for which I have written over a period of many years. Parts of some of the chapters of this book are taken from articles that have been previously published. I also wish to acknowledge my obligation to Mr. Ralph M. Lewis, the Emperor and chief executive of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, who encouraged me to write this book, also to Mrs. Louise Vernon, who for many years has typed and edited manuscripts for me, including the material contained in this publication.

Cecil A. Poole

*Sunnyvale, California*

*February 3, 1975*



## I

# THE OCCULT—A PATH TO UNDERSTANDING

“And God hath spread the earth as a carpet that  
you may walk thereon along spacious paths.”

—The Koran (Sura LXXI)

**T**HE HUMAN BEING is a unique entity in the universe. One of the factors that makes him unique is the ability to realize that he *is* unique. As far as we know, the being is the only entity in the universe with a well-developed awareness both of himself and of his environment.

In all probability some of the first thinking the earliest human entity ever did was to reflect upon the impressions that came through his sense faculties, and at the same time to reason or attempt to draw conclusions in regard to his own reaction to the sense stimulations. In other words, man was stimulated by events and conditions. While at first he may not have been concerned by his ability to contemplate the physical world about him and his reactions to it, he nevertheless gradually attained a type of realization that enabled him to store in his own mind, in the area we know as memory, an awareness of the existence that he had become familiar with in the physical world.

In this way the human being was able to accommodate or adjust himself gradually to the physical environment in which he lived. The fact that fire burned and could cause pain might only have had to be learned once, because memory immediately came to his aid, making

him prepared to cope with the heat of fire upon its second perception. The same is true of many other experiences, such as dealing with all physical forces, which included those steps our early ancestors took for physical comfort, to provide himself with food, or to gain some degree of enjoyment in the course of his living process. All the steps that led to these ends became not only physical accomplishments but mental concepts, that, stored within the mind, began to build a group of mental ideas that helped the individual to cope with the physical situations about him.

Once a degree of knowledge is assimilated through the experience of the individual it is very difficult to conceive of a time when that knowledge did not exist. We would have great difficulty in placing ourselves in the position of our ancient ancestors, who lived in caves and who wandered about the surface of the earth with a limited range of knowledge and experience trying to gain a living for himself, because he operated primarily upon the instinctive drive to protect himself from harm and to satisfy his physical appetites. These were the necessities of adjustment if the individual was to survive.

When we look back at such a stage in the process of human evolution, we cannot dismiss the knowledge and experience that is ours through our personal experiences and through the knowledge which we have gained in all of man's accumulated learning. Therefore the attitude of modern man looking at his environment produces a completely different concept from that of the aborigine, the ancient, manlike creature who first began to contemplate the physical world and in hours of darkness by himself began to relive his experience with the physical world through the process of reviewing his memories. These in turn led from elementary contemplation to the consideration of concepts which he had stored in memory and of the experiences that led to them.

In the beginning of his experience as a thinking being, man faced a vast unknown. Everything was unknown until it was experienced, and even then its function or, we might say, its cause and effect continued to be unknown. Man might be able to reach a satisfactory explanation in his own mind, at least in his own thinking, to the fact that fire was hot and water was wet. Experience made these accepted facts. He could not, however, explain change in seasons, the change between

day light and dark, the changes that took place in him self physically as he grew through the various life cycles, nor could he reach satisfactory explanation in regard to nature's phenomena, such as electrical storms, the sound of thunder, the flash of lightning, the eclipse of the sun or moon, or other changes in his environment. In this sense, man then faced more unknowns than he does today, and yet even after many millenniums of existence man still lives in a universe much of which remains unexplained.

To many individuals the word *occult* raises images of strange and mysterious practices and ideas. Actually, the occult is nothing more than the meanings that lie beyond the range of ordinary day-to-day knowledge. That which man cannot explain or is beyond his comprehension he classifies as unknown. For example, ancient man, who could not understand thunder and lightning, decided that they were actions or the result of actions carried on by a being which he was unable to see, a being that was beyond the range of all his physical senses.

This idea may have contributed one of the building blocks that caused man to develop superstitions and religion. To assign the cause of conditions that were beyond his immediate apprehension, beyond his immediate grasp of his environment, to a factor outside himself and out side his environment led to the establishment within the human mind of the concept that there are forces and powers that lie beyond the ordinary range of man's comprehension. Therefore, all that existed outside of man's experience or of the results of that experience which he had accumulated in memory and in his mental concepts was in the area of the great unknown. These concepts were the beginning of occultism.

The occult, or what we would classify today as hidden knowledge, may have been one of man's first abstract conceptions. Today an individual might think of occultism as being a system of strange practices that are not to be exposed to the public eye, or that occultism includes methods by which individuals might be able to attain unusual powers which he would use in dealing with the circumstances of his environment.

This belief leads to a popular conception that the individual who is familiar with the occult is able to deal with phenomena directly in a manner that the average individual is not able to contemplate or understand. Therefore, many individuals classify such subjects as magic, miracles, or unusual events as being a part of the occult. We must realize that what man considers in this popular sense to be the range of the occult is less limited today than it was in the time of early man, because at that time we might say that everything was occult, in that the meaning and the basis of manifestation were hidden or were unknown.

As man progressed in his thinking and rolled back the boundaries of the unknown into the known, he was developing what we now call *science*. That is, man studied the phenomena with which he had to cope and gradually found answers to some of the questions that previously had been hidden. Therefore, the concept that the occult has to do with strange or weird practices, a concept prevalent today, is not without some basis. Science, as we know it today, has taken over the boundaries of much that was the occult in the past. What was previously unknown has become known and is no longer hidden.

Occultism still confirms, however, that there are functions within human experience that are not completely understood. We are not able to explain many of the problems that have occupied the minds of outstanding thinkers throughout all the ages. For example, there has never been a satisfactory solution to many of what are commonly called the problems of philosophy. These problems include the question of reality, the question of knowledge, the nature of the Absolute, and whether there is purpose in the universe. Fundamentally, we are not able to explain life or the soul, or the perennial problems of the nature of evil or the relation of the mind to the body. The question of immortality still lies outside the area of man's positive knowledge.

The lack of answers to these problems seems to indicate that we are deficient in our knowledge of philosophy. Actually, philosophy, in a sense, might have grown out of the occult, because as man contemplated and dwelt upon the subjects of his own being and his own environment, he built a vast accumulation of opinions and ideas and conclusions that led to the body of modern philosophic thought.

Some individuals have criticized philosophy for never reaching a final conclusion. It is a valid criticism, because when a final conclusion is reached, the subject is no longer one of philosophy but one of science. The idea or problem that is solved passes from the realm of speculation to the laboratory where the problem can be dealt with on a concrete basis. This does not mean that all such problems in the area of science have reached final conclusions and final solutions, but the trend is in that direction.

The electrical storm which our ancestors experienced is no longer a question of philosophical speculation. Science has explained this phenomenon. So much is known about it that the mystery concerning the phenomena of thunder and lightning no longer appalls the individual or forces him to explain the phenomena in terms of occult knowledge.

Philosophy leads man to understanding. Understanding leads to experimentation. Experimentation leads to the accumulation of laws and principles that become the basis of science. Man applies this knowledge to his benefit or his detriment, depending upon how he directs his activities and his response to such information.

We will then accept, I believe, that philosophy, man's contemplation of himself and the universe might be considered a prerequisite to science, but there is still an area of the occult. There are phenomena which are not explainable in terms of physical science, as far as we know today. Neither are they explainable in terms of present-day psychology. The realm of the human mind is probably less explored than the realm of the entire physical universe.

To contemplate man and his place in the universe, we need to think in terms of philosophy, not as a rigid discipline, such as mathematics, physics, or chemistry, but as a speculative discipline, which leads man to consider himself and his surroundings and the methods and procedures by which he fits himself to his environment and tries to explain the circumstances in which he lives.

Many people consider philosophy as being detached from actual day-to-day experience, and therefore academic or visionary. The opposite should be the popular concept of philosophy. It should be a reflection of man's own thought and the conclusions which he

reaches. Anyone who has considered an event after it has happened has philosophized. Every individual has developed beliefs that guide his actions. These actions lead toward certain ends and purposes. Our beliefs and aspirations assist us in selecting a course of plan in life. This process of selecting a course of action or setting aims for ourselves is in itself a philosophical function.

A still more complete conception of philosophy takes us beyond everyday experience. Philosophy makes a critical examination of the foundations or the reasons for an individual's beliefs or goals. It is not enough to accept beliefs or to set goals for ourselves. Analyzing why those steps have been taken leads man into philosophical contemplation. Critical philosophy examines the validity of the results of such an examination of the beliefs and aims of the human mind.

In the final analysis, we might conclude that life is a process of thinking. Man is a thinking animal, and as a thinker, this thinking process is as important as the steps that lead to experience. He directs much thought toward his place in the physical universe. Thought of this nature directs us and constitutes philosophy.

All men are to a certain extent philosophers. Every individual who has considered his own mind, his own experiences and his reaction to those experiences has been philosophizing. His desire to gain and respect wisdom and knowledge will help him realize the aims that he has set for himself and to develop the procedures that will lead to those eventual goals.

In spite of man's ability to philosophize, and in spite of the voluminous knowledge that we have available today through our own and others' experience, there are many unanswered questions. So it is that the occult, being the range of knowledge that lies just beyond our immediate perception, is still an existing fact. There are still many why's asked today.

There are gaps of knowledge in regard to human behavior, in regard to social questions, in regard to anything that has to do with man's living as an individual entity or in association with other human minds. There are reports of events and conditions that have not always been answered by the logic and reasoning of either philosophy or science. We hear almost daily of events that have not been completely

clarified. They are mysterious. They lie in the area of the unknown. In this area occultism still exists. Man is in a position to continue in his evolutionary process to respect the boundaries of these unknown factors and explore them in terms of reason. Eventually we hope to be able to assign them to a scientific basis and reveal some of the laws that have to do with what now may seem to be strange or unusual manifestations.

Man is always intrigued by what he does not understand. In the daily press we read of events that are mysterious or unexplained. They always attract attention. The report of an unknown object moving in the sky, the report of an individual who seems to gain knowledge other than through the usual physical perception, the reports that individuals have communicated with those who have passed through the shadow of death—these, the cynics will say, have never been verified.

They state that miracles cannot take place in a universe apparently controlled by established laws. Possibly these cynics are right, but also possible is the fact that there are events and conditions that do not respond to the existing limitations of human analysis. There are forces playing in the universe which in terms of man's advancement at this particular time seem to have no basis for valid explanation.

To explore some of the areas of philosophy is to review the age-old problems that have to do with man's thinking of himself and of his environment. Even though we may not reach the conclusions that will solve the problems, it is through analysis, contemplation, and thinking that man has moved from the speculative to the practical. He has produced answers to questions and brought them into a relationship with our ability to understand the universe in which our minds and the physical objects composing the universe have a common factor.

Some believe that the original sin on the part of man was his seeking for knowledge, but it may have been rather the way in which he sought knowledge. The belief that man must strive to ward re-entering the area of the grace of God is common to many peoples in many parts of the world. The principle is based upon the idea that man proceeded from a divine source but through actions of his own was separated from that source. Therefore, man needs to re-relate himself to the source from which he came. In the minds of some, this is the explanation of why

man seeks knowledge. He seeks knowledge of his place in the universe and his relationship to the source of the universe.

That man needs God is a statement that seems to have no contradiction in religion and philosophy, but the opposite point of view has seldom been expressed, that is, that God needs man. Man is, after all, an expression of the source of all the divine essence of the universe.

Based upon a pantheistic concept of the universe that God expresses Himself through all that He has created, it is logical to presume that as God created up the scale of life to the final achievement of man, if God found such creation necessary, then He needed to create this expression in order to fulfill Himself. Man is a fulfillment of God's own expression. God is fulfilled by the nature and existence of man. Therefore, God needs man. He cannot exist without man. Where man finds that he experiences shortcomings, failures, and misunderstandings, it is due to the fact that he fails to put himself in a position to fulfill the need of God. To put this in another way, man is not an independent unit. He is an expression of a force that transcends and supersedes himself. In order to fulfill his own existence, to fulfill his own destiny, man must be a willing expression of the force that brought him into being. When man revolts or refuses to cooperate with the universal forces, which are those of the Creator, then he is failing to fulfill the purposes of creation by not being in a position to express the force that brought him into existence in the first place.

God is not, in a theistic sense, limited to the extent of an individual entity. He is a manifestation of force. Regardless of what we call that force, it is expressing at this moment or the universe would not be what it is. Man strives to meet his own needs, to work with his environment, to maintain himself. Sometimes in this process of taking care of his own needs, man forgets his greatest need, the need to express the force that made him. If we as individual human entities would give less attention to what we want, to how we want to grow, to what we want to achieve, and more attention to how can we express the resident creative force that is inside of us, the world might be a far better place to live. The human race might be far more evolved at this time than we find ourselves.



At the present time we find that man has not changed essentially in his basic nature during the scope of human history. Man still indicates his desire to attain physical positions, to experience physical pleasure, to dominate other individuals, to take over and utilize environment, regardless of the state in which he leaves it after he is through. In so doing, he frequently becomes nothing more than a selfish entity that is desirous only of fulfilling his own needs. In carrying out these desires, he fails to fulfill his most important need, that is, to reconcile his existence with the force that caused him to be in the first place.

We as individuals must come more and more to the realization that we can only fulfill our purpose in life by becoming closely attuned with the nature of life, which is a function or extension of the power of the creative force that caused everything that is to be. Man and God are one. They are essential manifestations of each other. I think to a degree this is expressed by a statement made by Meister Eckhart when he said, "The eye with which I see God is the same as that with which He sees me."

Eckhart was trying to convey that the concept of God and the concept of man are interrelating conditions. They are forces that seem to be separated and distinct, but in actuality, there is only one force. Man can voluntarily relate himself to it or not, but it is there and it is a force of life which is the essence of the ultimate universal force and the essence of man's immaterial existence.

Man must learn to perceive the Creator in all his existence, physically, mentally, and spiritually. If he so lives that the nature of the Divine becomes apparent to him in its manifestation throughout all creation, then man can be a part of that creation and fulfill the existence of the Divine by expressing himself in a way that will create a cooperative type of existence. Man will then reach a state of harmony between himself and the force that not only caused him to be but maintains his existence.

## II

# FINITE AND INFINITE

“I stand amid the eternal ways.”

—John Burroughs

**N**AIVE REALISM MIGHT be considered the philosophy of the average man in the street. It is the concept that does not take into consideration the subtleties of philosophical or scientific inquiry or investigation. It is the concept that man and his environment are exactly what they seem to be. That is, man observes an object and he classifies that object in terms of his perception of it. The object seems substantial. It appears to exist completely separated from his body. Its existence is completely external to his mind. He perceives it through one or more of his sense faculties, such as seeing, hearing, tasting, or smelling, or a combination of these senses. The objects which man thus perceives create an impression in the mind which to him is identical with the object itself.

This concept is the simplest explanation of man and his environment and the relationship between them. Let us for a moment accept this theory and consider that we are naive realists. If we look upon the world, or at least our immediate environment, our part of the world, with that point of view, we will say that the world consists of two factors, the physical structure composed of the various elements that make up what we ordinarily classify as material, and within ourselves a mental factor, the self, that is, our real, private being, which is separated from other individuals or beings, as well as from the external world.

The outside factors of the physical world seem to be obvious. They are the substantial part of the universe with which we are in touch. The mental factor is a more subtle condition. It varies with our moods, and it is dependent upon still another factor that we have not up to this point taken into consideration, and that is the factor of life. Without life, there is no mind. Our mental processes are subject to life. We know this from experience. A deep sleep, or being placed under an anesthetic, or condition of unconsciousness due to a blow on the head—all these factors not only stop mental activity but they stop our awareness of life and environment. Without an awareness of life, there is apparently no mind. Without mind there is no realization of an external world about us.

We might say that this factor of life is some thing that is not controllable by our own minds or thinking. While life exists, the mind is a functioning condition, making possible for us to perceive the external world and to contemplate and draw conclusions about it. Without life there is no mind. The objects which we behold, a piece of wood, a stone, a piece of concrete or metal, seem to have little or no evidence of life. Even a tree, which is a vegetable in the broadest sense of the word, seems only to live, and in it we perceive no evidence of mind. As far as we are able to perceive, it does not have a mental background.

The condition we know as life, then, is related to another condition beyond material. Material is finite, and therefore we would conclude on the basis of this argument that life is a part of the Infinite. It is connected with something above and beyond the physical entity and the physical world in which we exist.

Our acceptance of naïve realism is, as the term implies, naïve because a very important consideration of the study of philosophy concerns itself with the difference between the actual appearance of things and what really lies beyond the appearance. The mind is capable not only of perceiving but of producing perceptions that are influenced by the background of the perceiver.

We ordinarily can see that our so-called common sense readily distinguishes between what is only appearance and what is reality. I see an object out of the window of the room in which I am sitting, and I

have no doubt of its reality, but if I should see a nonmaterial object, such as a ghost or a phantom, or even a flying saucer go by the window, I would seriously doubt the reliability of my perception. My training has been to recognize certain things as realities, and others as products of the mind and therefore not having the substance that is normally connected with reality.

Philosophy goes even further than trying to distinguish between appearance and reality. It tries to analyze what is the basis of the ability to distinguish either in the mind or by experience the classifications known as appearance and reality. Philosophy wants to know the ultimate, the final or fundamental reality. It is the province of metaphysics, one division of philosophy, to try to arrive at an understanding of a final reality. It furthermore wants to examine the causes and effects as well as the original cause and the final end of things to know how to judge the value of any thing that exists in the environment as well as within the nature of the human being.

We find that naive realism breaks down in many common experiences. We need only to turn to illustrations of various optical illusions to find that we do not always see exactly what we think we see. One of the commonest of optical illusions is to stand in the center of a railroad track looking into the distance. It will appear that the rails meet, whereas we know that they run parallel or they could not serve their useful purpose.

In attempting to arrive at an understanding of reality, we try to advance our thinking along lines that will account for the existence of all things, by which we mean the composition of the material world that constitutes our environment and our own bodies and the nature of ourselves as thinking entities. Fundamental to these questions is the basic metaphysical problem, the problem of reality. Probably even primitive man asked himself what was real and what was imaginary, and from what all substantial things evolved.

This problem involves two main issues. They are as follows: What is the nature or the character of that which is real, and what is the relation of the part to the whole? What is the place of the individual or any other part of the universe to the total universe? We might summarize this latter question by asking what is the place of

personality in the universe. Because of the importance to us of the position of personality in the universe, the questions emerge which involve problems of the meaning of that personality as well as the meaning of freedom, immortality, and the existence of forces that are not obvious in the physical world.

When we consider the problem of reality in connection with experience, we realize that there are distinct kinds of beings in the world. There seems to be no one essential form that explains all. We look about us and see nonliving things such as minerals, the earth, and other objects existing in our universe that have no apparent manifestation of life. We also observe that there are living organisms, including the human being and many forms of life included in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. In addition to nonliving things and living organisms, another factor is apparent to us through our own experience in drawing conclusions from the behavior of living organisms. There are minds. This particular factor is the basis for the most complex problems having to do with the nature of reality.

Metaphysics concerns itself with the relation that exists between these three manifestations, and also asks which, if any, of these three, is most fundamentally real or substantial. Are nonliving things, living things, or mind equal, or does one take precedence over the other two?

If we ask whether organisms and minds are the result or the offspring of physical processes, we find two basic answers, one by the materialist, who will say yes, and the other by the idealist, who will say no. The idealist would say that matter and life are products of the minds. To this statement the materialist would answer that such a conclusion is only supposition with no grounds for facts in what he, as a materialist, would consider the real world.

In this manner we see the fundamental clash between two theories of metaphysics, materialism and idealism. Both schools of thought have probably existed ever since man started to philosophize. Man has reached various conclusions about the reality of the universe. Usually his conclusions divide themselves in such a manner that they can be classified in one or the other of these schools of thought.

Basically, materialism states that matter or matter in motion, in other words, energy, is the fundamental reality. Everything that occurs,

including mental processes, is either material in character or dependent upon matter in motion. It excludes the existence of anything external to the physical universe. Materialism excludes freedom of the will, immortality, or the existence of God.

Materialism has been sustained by modern science because it is through the advancement of science based upon the study of universal and physical laws that so much has been accomplished in the scientific age in which we are living. With out the advancements of science we would live in a much more inconvenient or even more complicated world than we do today. Much that caused labor, toil, suffering, disease, and many other human problems has been eliminated by the progress of science. Science has generally based its research and its conclusions upon its understanding of the material world.

Therefore, materialism has much to offer in its favor. It is a logical metaphysical explanation of all that it conceives to exist, but it chooses to conceive existence in terms of what it can explain on the basis of its own premise, which is that material, in other words, the composition of the physical world, is the ultimate reality. Some forms of materialism go so far as to deny consciousness or any of the attributes of the individuality.

One of the important objections to such a theory is that by reducing everything, including mind, to a form of atomic structure and motion governed by mechanical laws, we eliminate the subject, or at least the serious consideration of the subject. For an object to be perceived there must be a subject in the act of perceiving it. If materialism is fundamentally true and has the final answer as to the nature of reality, how can one conceive of any form of matter, without a subject which would be mind, which in turn the materialist claims does not exist?

The most hardened materialist must admit that he conceives of material in his own mind, and yet mind in its final analysis cannot be explained by materialism. We cannot deny its existence, together with all its attributes. Memory, for ex ample, is an experience which is intangible, which is not material, which does not occupy space, and therefore for the materialist would not exist, and yet it is difficult for us to deny the use of memory in our own experience. Materialism is unable to explain life, because life gives no evidence of being a

material entity. As far as the materialist is concerned, life is only a form of energy originating in matter.

The other metaphysical theory is idealism. Fundamentally, idealism is the exact opposite of materialism. Its principal thesis is that the real and underlying part of the universe is mental rather than material. Some forms of idealism state that the apparent materialistic aspect of the universe is completely an illusion, that there is really nothing but mind. However, most forms of idealism uphold the principle that the external world possesses objective validity, a claim also supported by materialism. In contrast to materialism, however, idealism identifies the essential characteristics of the external world with mind instead of matter and energy.

It is difficult to discuss idealism without discussing one of the early philosophers who accepted the concept. The Greek philosopher Plato is considered the great idealist. His idealism is a theory that has echoed down through history in all of man's thinking. The distinctive feature of Plato's teachings is his doctrine of ideas, which upholds the theory that outside or beyond our world of space and time and existing independently of the physical universe is another world, the real world which he calls the world of ideas or forms. Everything that we can consider is only a replica of the idea. For example, the idea of a triangle comprises the essential properties of all triangles. The idea of a circle combines the properties and composition of all circles that have ever been drawn. This idea of a circle or a triangle is a point of perfection. No triangle or circle can ever quite equal the idea, which will go on existing through all time, even though men continue to try to reproduce it.

Ideas are therefore thoughts, not physical things, but they are not necessarily thoughts in the mind of a thinker, either human or otherwise. They are thoughts or ideas that may be self-caused and exist independently of all other things, according to the idealism of Plato.

Characteristic of this concept is that the ideas are eternal. They would exist even if there were no human beings. For example, according to Plato, the idea of a perfectly good man would exist even if no man existed, or the idea of a perfect orator would exist even if all men

became dumb. Such an extreme concept of idealism has in a sense been a model for many idealistic theories since the time of Plato. Many have modified and changed these theories, but they are still a concept that requires our careful consideration in contemplating a world which is governed by forces that lie outside the limitations of the physical universe.

The middle-of-the-road idealism accepted by various philosophers can generally be designated under the heading of objective idealism. Objective idealism is based upon the concept of monism, that is, the belief that reality is one. It does not necessarily accept that the universe is dual in its nature, that it consists of two fundamental different realities, mind and matter.

Objective idealism believes that there is a force that underlies the manifestation of both mind and matter. It is objective in the sense that it is based upon the theory that physical things can and do exist prior to our knowledge of them. This means that we do not accept the principle that a condition such as the external world would not exist if man did not exist. In other words, man's realization does not necessarily change the physical world, but it does change man's concepts. This theory maintains that what we think the world to be is determined by the nature of the physical world and not by the nature of the knowing mind.

Without idealism, it would seem to many that life would be meaningless and the world would be a sterile, unnecessary creation. Idealism has attempted to answer the question of reality and give man the ability to better understand himself and therefore adapt to his environment. Idealism furnishes a more reliable background for ethics. To live justly in a society demands more than merely complying with physical and mechanical laws. There is more motivation to the individual who believes that the ultimate reality of the universe lies outside the physical world than there is to those who accept only the fact that the physical world is the final and ultimate composition of all the universe, including man.

The idealist would naturally ask the materialist what would be the value of trying to live in accordance with the principles advanced by society for the good of society, or why try to broaden and understand



our moral lives. Idealism demonstrates, as far as a metaphysical theory can do so, that we are essentially a part of the underlying reality, that is, that we are more related to mind and its source than we are to the physical world. This of course is a basis for religious and certain philosophical thought because it makes us a part of a force that is external to us and one which we try to understand and to abide with. Idealism urges us to assume our proper dignity in this relationship and to express our moral action in a manner that may become universal and therefore most closely allied with a source that exists outside the physical world.

There are of course objections to idealism, mainly that it may be sentimental, that it causes us to shut our eyes to what the materialists concern themselves with as the ultimate reality. But the individual who accepts objective idealism need not isolate himself from the world. The idealist asks that we consider the ultimate decision on the part of the human being to be a matter of deciding on values.

Physical science will acknowledge that the laws of energy and conservation of matter and motion show that the physical world is a changing condition. It is obvious from what we know of astronomy and of the geology and composition of the physical world that its constant change will probably eventually bring it to complete annihilation. We see evidence in the universe that suns and stars have existed and died. It is possible that the solar systems have gone with them. The sun of our solar system is a constantly self-consuming form of energy that will eventually lose its ability to produce energy. When that happens, this solar system will become a cold, isolated place in the universe where life as we know it, at least, cannot exist.

The finite is limited to the finite and will not always exist, but if we accept the theory that there is reality in the mind and it is associated with an external power or an idea, then we can look to the Infinite as a place of permanency, an area with which man can become more acquainted and toward which he can evolve. We generally accept the principle of physical evolution, that man as a physical entity has evolved through eons of time to the state in which he exists now. More important, in a sense, is the evolution of man himself, of his mind, and that mind which is a part of the manifestation of life is centered within this physical entity, which many believe will continue to exist

when the physical composition is worn out and can no longer sustain the life force and mental activity that now resides within it.

Therefore, if we place our confidence in values that will endure, idealism offers to man the theory of reality that is related to eternity, and man can, according to this concept, advance toward the realization of eternity. Any physical or material achievement, whether in possessions, accomplishments, or making impressions on the world, is very small in comparison to the source of all life. Life will proceed. Each physical existence that we may experience will be a stepping stone toward a realization of an eternal existence and a realization of the place that the soul or real self exists in relation to the all-over existence of the universe.

We cannot expect physical values, regardless of how high we may consider those values to be, of any benefit except in relation to a physical function.

Just as a square peg cannot be put into a round hole without considerable modification, so a physical entity cannot become a part of a non physical entity except as it serves as a medium for a temporary experience. The physical constitutes the external environment of the universe. The psychic is the area of the soul. The physical is the area of the body. The soul is the home of the mind. The physical is finite; the soul is in finite. Physical values are temporary. Eternity is forever.

It is legitimate that man should accumulate physical values, but he must place them in proper perspective, and that perspective is in relation to the physical world. He must also accumulate immaterial values, values which will cause him to become a part of the eternal force of the universe, the area of the ideas described by Plato, a part of the eternal force of the Infinite. In that way, man's perspective will not be limited by any physical boundary. He will find himself a segment of the Infinite as well as occupying a body, which is finite.

Man's realization of the ideal and the actual may lead him to where he can find and live in an ultimate reality that originates in the Cosmic. Such a realization will enable us to develop a philosophy which permits us to transform the bad to the good and permits the ideal to control the actual. When we gain a realization that includes the virtues and moral concepts toward which good men aspire, we are brought to the

## ETERNAL FRUITS OF KNOWLEDGE

portal of mysticism and to a realization of the highest concepts of metaphysics, a search for a true, ultimate reality that will motivate our lives, transform our existence, and make us cosmic entities rather than mere physical beings.

### III

# KNOWLEDGE

“If there is anything within the reach of man that is worthy of praise, is it not knowledge?”

—Unto Thee I Grant

**A**MONG THE PROBLEMS of philosophy it can not be said that one is necessarily more important than another. Nevertheless, in the problems concerning knowledge are found some of the fundamental questions that underlie the understanding of many other philosophical problems. In the early history of philosophy Aristotle stated that all men desire to attain knowledge. Human beings have knowledge of many and varied objects. These objects are conditions with which sometimes there exists no direct experience.

For example, we read in history of events or objects that once existed and that no longer can be verified through actual physical perception, but yet we have knowledge of them. We have knowledge of the nature of parts of the universe that we cannot possibly reach in terms of time. We have knowledge of stars in the universe which can be perceived only by the light that left them many centuries ago. The archaeologist and the paleontologist tell us of extinct living creatures and objects that no living person could possibly have seen, and yet we have knowledge of them.

Knowledge in itself is a form of experience and serves as a medium that connects the self with something outside of it. Knowledge links the knower with the known and even bridges the present and the past.

It also relates the immediate surroundings of our environment with objects and events that lie external to that environment.

When we speak of the objects of human knowledge, we must realize that the object is not limited merely to a physical entity. Anything that is perceived and comes to constitute knowledge is in the full sense of the word one of the objects of knowledge. The vital question of what constitutes knowledge and how we can recognize it is actually very seldom considered until we direct our attention to it. If a child, after his first day at school, is asked, "What did you learn?" he might even be confused by the question. He would not yet be familiar with the fact that he had participated in a process of learning. Life has been accepted by the child of that age at its face value. He has not previously stopped to analyze that there were facts previously unknown that now seem to be known, or impressions that he was unable to interpret that now seem to have some meaning.

To such a child the process of learning has been nothing more or less than a degree of adaptation to environment, which has taken place without the conscious realization that a learning process existed. The child was not aware that he existed as the subject and the things he learned were the objects which when assembled as a part of his mental comprehension, became knowledge.

Generally speaking, as adults, we accept things more or less at face value. We look about us and we draw conclusions based upon the impressions which we receive through our physical senses. One of the basic problems of knowledge is whether our knowledge has any correspondence with the objects external to us. When, for example, we perceive a tree through our sight, exactly what is the relationship between the tree which is outside of us and the concept of the tree that is registered in the brain through the stimulation of sight and the creation of a picture of that tree in miniature, as it were, on the retina of the eye?

Actually, we accept without question that we acquire knowledge through the process of perception. It is questionable as to just exactly how we conceive an external object except through a perceptive process that translates into a definite impression within our own consciousness. While almost everyone seeks knowledge to a degree, knowledge that

may be of value to one either in his work or in finding entertainment is usually attained through presentations outside of us, by reading, by hearing someone else, or by having direct sense impressions of conditions which bring us concepts that create a totality of knowledge.

Those who have an inclination toward philosophical inquiry, study the opinions of others in order to broaden their horizon of knowledge, yet very few people consciously direct themselves toward the acquisition of knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself. The average individual does not attempt to define knowledge or what it is that constitutes the process of learning. We merely assimilate certain phases of experience without going through a process of analyzing them. What we attempt to learn is primarily associated with subject matter. If an individual wants to become a bookkeeper, he studies that particular subject matter. In other words, he learns the routine procedures that are necessary for a basic knowledge of accounting.

In the experience of most people, knowledge is usually specific, yet the nature and validity of knowledge involves one of the most profound phases of human inquiry because we are dependent upon knowledge for growth. What knowledge is in itself actually is seldom analyzed separately from the information that we attempt to learn. Our need and dependence upon knowledge is so vital that every step we take in our lives, whether these steps be related to earning a living, to entertaining ourselves, to gaining further facts, is closely related to the knowledge process.

Down through time man has asked the question that has been echoed from generation to generation: What is knowledge? How do we know when that knowledge is valid? The same question from a philosophical point of view might be stated, "Can man have trustworthy knowledge? Is it possible to perceive something that has sufficient value to be the basis of learning within the human consciousness?"

This question arose when man first began to formulate an elementary philosophy. Plato classified human knowledge into two categories. The first he called true knowledge and the second he called belief or opinion. According to Plato, true knowledge is reliable, but it is difficult for any one other than a mathematician or philosopher to grasp the concept of true knowledge. Belief or opinion is the equipment of the

ordinary individual. This is quite unreliable. In fact, belief or opinion, according to Plato, is the ultimate source of all error. Man fell into error through depending upon opinions and not trying to obtain true knowledge.

In realizing the ease in which man fell into error, skeptics raised the question as to whether it is possible to obtain certainty in any branch of human knowledge. That question still exists. Can true knowledge be obtained, or is everything that we know a human error within itself? Is what exists in our consciousness merely the result of impressions that have sifted through our sense faculties and from which we formulate our individual conclusions? Are these conclusions only opinions or beliefs which have little validity in comparison with a true knowledge which by itself would have existence and validity of its own, regardless of whether or not there were human beings to perceive it?

It is impossible to discuss the problem of knowledge without also considering the question fundamental to metaphysics. Metaphysics asks, "What is real?" There are two metaphysical theories to explain reality. If our metaphysical point of view is materialistic, the world of physical objects constitutes the world of final reality, and there is nothing in existence that has value beyond that of material things.

If, on the other hand, our point of view is that of the idealist, if we are more concerned about the nature of the Absolute and the existence of beauty, truth, virtue, and justice than we are of the nature of the material world, then these concepts create a better life with fuller meaning. In the world of the idealist, where ideals predominate, material things obviously take second place. Merely to make our thinking conform to what we interpret as being the nature of the physical world is not a true criterion for knowledge.

The average individual accepts naïve realism, the belief that the external world is identical to what we perceive it to be. He therefore presumes that what he perceives is an exact duplication of what exists in the phenomenal world. However, we all know through experience that the senses are not always reliable. From time to time we have experienced optical illusions. Possibly you think of a tabletop as a rectangle because experience has shown you through measurement that it is, but we do not see it as a rectangle. We see it through the

position from which we view it, and that is as a four-sided object that is not a perfect rectangle.

Parallel lines which we observe appear to meet at some distant point, while we know this is contrary to fact. We see many things contrary to what physical examination shows them to be, and so our world is a world which is constantly being divided between reality and illusion. Illusion is our concept of what may exist, or what we choose to believe exists. Reality in this sense is our realization of all that exists, whether it be in the field of physical phenomena, psychic phenomena, spiritual existence, or any other category.

We also have experiences that confuse the nature of knowledge. The naive realist assumes that our experiences result in sense data that produce a duplication of the world which we observe. Yet, to take a simple illustration, we say that heat is a product of fire. If we approach fire, we describe our experience by observing that we feel warmth. We say that the fire is warm. The warmth seems to be in the fire. If we approach too close, we will feel pain. Then we say that the pain is in us. How can we explain that warmth is in the fire and pain is in us? Why are not both heat and pain either in the fire or in us?

The subject-object relationship here indicates that in the acquisition of knowledge, knowledge is a condition that results as an interchange between a subject and an object. Of all the objects of human knowledge, the human being, to our best information and experience, is the only entity that can be both a subject and an object simultaneously. As a subject, we can perceive ourselves and our own conscious activity.

There is certain validity in naïve realism. Accepting the premise that the world we behold in our minds and through our senses is essentially a duplication of what it is has proven useful. Man can use the world based upon that principle. Generally speaking, however, we believe that thoughts and ideas while being different from physical objects do have substance in that they are in a sense mental replicas of what we perceive. We obtain knowledge that is dependable when we can utilize it. Insofar as human experience is concerned, most of our day-to-day knowledge is obtained through the physical senses. Through being able to perceive the universe by seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling, we create our mental concept of the objective world. If



it serves our purpose, if we are able to adjust to it, we accept without question the fact that the knowledge which we gained is substantially a working basis upon which we can accept the fact, to us, at least, that there is correspondence between subjective experience and objects external to us.

The materialist, of course, accepts this principle without question. There is no reason why the idealist cannot also accept it, but the idealist will go further. He will state that there are objects of knowledge that transcend or supersede physical experience. The idealist states that the supreme values of life lie outside the physical universe. They lie in what Plato referred to as the world of ideas. The expression of life itself is evidence that we are related to factors, conditions, and causes which lie beyond the limitations of material. Therefore, if life itself is an expression within a physical body of a force that transcends the physical world, then it is only logical to believe that knowledge is also obtainable from that source and that man need not rely exclusively upon the physical senses for all sources of knowledge.

This is why the Rosicrucians add a sixth sense, which we call intuition. It, too, is a source of knowledge just as the physical senses are the source of the basic components of knowledge insofar as the objective mind is concerned. Intuition is frequently confused with reason. Even for the most accomplished individual, it is not always possible to determine how much knowledge comes to us through intuitive channels and how much comes from the process of reasoning within our own consciousness.

When we relate perceptive facts, the results may appear to be new or at least different from the individual fragments of which the knowledge is composed. This result of the reasoning process frequently makes it appear that information we have obtained is entirely new and therefore might be considered to be intuitive, while actually it may be only the mental functioning, the coordination of knowledge which is obtained through physical sources.

There are many testimonies to the existence of intuition. Great writers, leaders, inventors, mystics, philosophers, teachers of the past and present have many times credited inspiration with the source of what they were able to gain as knowledge and to use. Using intuition is

an art, how ever. It is not something that can be developed overnight. It cannot be mastered merely by reading a set of instructions. It is a condition that must grow. It develops just as mental faculties develop. We must learn to heed the voice of intuition just as we learned to coordinate our sense faculties and gain knowledge through our physical senses.

When an intuitive ability is gained in any degree, it permits us to be guided by the coordination of knowledge and experiences that we already have obtained from any source, physical or intuitive. Intuition coupled with reason will direct us in applying what we already know. In this sense, intuition is coordinated with experience and knowledge.

The individual who wishes to perfect his intuitive ability will never cease to study, to learn, and to experience. By proper application of his mental processes and by attunement with the Cosmic, the higher forces of the universe, and with the broadening of his conscious and psychic horizon, he will be able to utilize the intuitive knowledge that may become, a little at a time, a part of his consciousness. Therefore, if an individual is going to advance mentally, spiritually, or psychically, he must never cease to direct conscious effort toward the acquisition of knowledge through any source that is available to him.

There is no final answer upon which all philosophers and scientists have agreed in regard to the epistemological problem. A realistic answer to the problem has a utilitarian value, based on the fact that we do know reality in part. We are capable of growing in our knowledge of it. By our reaction to our environment and by the development of our intuitive abilities, knowledge becomes more valuable and more valid to our conscious processes. The process of learning indicates an increasing correspondence between the mind, or knower, and the world. That is, the subject and the object can become more familiar with each other. There is growth in agreement between thought and things and this evolution is manifested in the progress of science.

Above all else, the real world from a metaphysical standpoint must always be considered from the standpoint of the percipient organism. Man is the subject of knowledge. We know that we are capable of experiencing certain sensations and perceptions. As taught

fundamentally by the Rosicrucians, in the final analysis, what is most important to the human entity at the present time in his present state of evolution is his realization. What he realizes of the external world and of the inner self in coordination with each other brings a certain validity to the knowledge which he experiences, and which, if he finds useful and practical, will serve him in dealing with the problem of learning and knowledge.

## IV

# THE NATURE OF THE ABSOLUTE

“I hold that God is the immanent, and not the  
extraneous, cause of all things.”

—Spinoza

SOMEONE HAS SAID that all metaphysical thinking leads to the problem of God, which is the supreme problem of philosophy. If God, the Absolute, or the Supreme Force of the universe, regardless of what we want to call it, is the supreme problem of philosophy, it is also the basic premise of religion. Religion and philosophy deviate in attempting to arrive at an understanding in some degree of the nature of the Absolute.

In approaching the subject of the Absolute, we should be perfectly honest. That is, if there is an absolute force in the universe, it has to be infinite. We, on the other hand, are finite. The two extremes can never be reconciled. Proof is impossible, insofar as the relation between the two is concerned. The finite cannot prove the Infinite, and some might go so far as to say that the Infinite cannot prove the finite.

There are those who advance theories to the effect that if there is a God, if there is an absolute force in the universe, it is not all-powerful. It, in a sense, is limited and exists somewhere in the state that we as human beings would classify as infinite or finite. For example, even if God is infinite, it is inconceivable that He could know something that

does not exist. Even an absolute force could not comprehend that which is not. In that respect, an infinite personal power that many religions consider as God could not know the future, because the future does not exist. How could any mind, finite or infinite, grasp a fact that still is not in existence?

Philosophers have dealt with the problem of the Absolute. They have attempted to prove the existence of God. Such proofs are somewhat limited. The ontological proof, for example, is based upon the principle that perfection implies existence. That is, the idea of a perfect being of which the mind can conceive is proof that such a being exists, or the idea would not exist. The idea of God, then, is the idea of a perfect being. Therefore, if man has the ability to conceive of a state of perfection, the idea is in itself evidence of existence. However, this is only an argument. It does not conclusively prove the existence of an absolute being. It is weak, in that an individual could have an idea of something that did not or could not exist at all.

The cosmological argument for an absolute force is based primarily upon the assertion that every thing that exists must have a cause. This First Cause, or uncaused cause, would have to be an absolute force or God. The teleological argument is based on the analogy that whenever we find a man-made thing, we infer that it is the work of an intelligent designer. Therefore, we presume that a purposeful thing indicates a purposeful designer or creator. Since there is a universe and there are laws that cause it to function, it is presumed that there was someone or something who started it. There is also the moral argument of Kant, who believed that a righteous God exists, and that if men live in accordance with accepted moral standards, they will be in tune with that God on the merits of their moral worth.

Regardless of how we may conceive of an absolute force, there is one thing certain, the belief or conviction on the part of man that such a force exists or arguments on the part of philosophers to try to prove that force is no basis for absolute assurance that such a force does exist. In ancient Greece many intelligent individuals, both men and women, believed in Olympian gods who resided on Mt. Olympus. Their belief was sincere. Their devotion to the gods was also sincere. They worshiped the gods according to prescribed procedure. They practiced the rites of their religion, but as we well know, no gods lived

on Mt. Olympus. In other words, sincere belief and conviction was not a proof of the existence of the gods.

Today no conviction or sincerity can in any way produce proof of the existence of a supreme being. A supreme being is probably best considered on the basis of the *teleological* argument, that is, if we presume that everything that functions has been created, has been designed, then we must presume that something external to man, something beyond his finite capacity, has caused the entire universe to be. It is man's lot to function in it and attempt to gain some idea, some concept of that designer who can be looked up to as a final source or a final authority for all things. In accordance with the concept of mysticism, he may attune himself to this absolute cause and feel that he is intimately related to that force.

There are different views of God's relationship to the universe, if we accept the premise that there is an existent higher force. The pressure of logic causes the average intelligent individual to accept this fact. While not proof in itself, there is substantiation to a degree in the fact that intelligent human beings throughout all of man's history have accepted generally the concept that there are forces in the universe which supersede the ability or powers of man.

The two views most common in relation to the Absolute are known as theism and pantheism. Theism is the belief in God as the creator and ruler of the universe. Theism states that this being has the power of revelation through contacting the destiny of human beings, or through human beings contacting him. Deism, on the other hand, acknowledges the belief in a God strictly as a ruler and director, with no association with what He created.

Many who subscribe to theism restrict their belief to the concept of a personal God, a human like individual who is the final judge of man. This concept has grown in some orthodox religions. Theism apparently grew out of a monotheistic concept, the belief that one God exists in the universe and is able to reveal himself to His creation. This common concept of God conceives of a being who exists away from and independent of the universe, but yet who can willfully, if He chooses, express Himself to parts of that universe.

I believe that most enlightened religions, particularly those of a monotheistic nature, are adherents to a type of theism, the belief that God is external to the universe and yet is accessible to the intelligent entities that populate that universe. God created and directed the universe, yet He can be reached by men who raise their consciousness and contact Him through prayer, concentration, and meditation. This, then, is the sum and substance of theism, except for modifications that are particularly related to various religious beliefs and practices.

A concept which may be less prevalent but which has much to recommend it is pantheism. It is the belief that the whole universe partakes of the nature of the Absolute. Pantheism expresses the concept that God exists in the combined forces and laws which are maintained in the existing universe. This concept actually conceives of an absolute force which is more intimate and more attainable. That God created the heavens and the earth is a traditional statement in at least three great religions, but these religions do not say that God entered into the creation as a conscious act and infused Himself into the universe.

In the pantheistic concept, the whole of all that exists is an expression of God. In this concept the materials that compose the universe are extensions of an absolute force. In accordance with the pantheistic concept, God created by extending Himself. God is a force manifesting in the form of energy. This energy becomes expressive in physical manifestations. The entire universe came about and continues to exist simply as a continuation of the manifestation of a force that is the Infinite.

As long as God, then, expresses Himself, the universe exists. If He ceased to be an expression, the universe would also cease to be, because it is an extended manifestation of that original absolute force. In the pantheistic concept, the fundamental or first force of the universe continues to exist and exists in all things including the highest expression of this force, man himself. The force we call God manifests in the physical sense as part of the components of the physical body. At the same time, the force manifests as a nonphysical force, which is the life essence or the nature of the soul that expresses within a physical entity.

Theism has a tendency to emphasize the doctrine of cause and effect, a doctrine that God is the fundamental cause of all things. While this would not be denied by pantheism, pantheism on the other hand stresses the concept of inherence, that is, that God is a living substance and that all things inhere in God. God did not exist simply as a transcendent being but as a First Cause. He is transcendent to the universe and also immanent within it.

According to pantheism, all things, material or nonmaterial, partake of the nature of God. There fore, God is a part of all that we can conceive. Man began as a living entity, either primitively or as an infant, to perceive the world about him and with his first conception perceived a part of God, since all that exists is a part of that absolute force.

There are those who object to pantheism, as there are objections to all theories, because as already stated, there can be no absolute proof of this theory. One objection is made upon the basis that it is a cold philosophy that leaves no room for a human being's emotional concept of a force higher than himself. I believe this idea is due to an overly vehement desire to uphold a concept of God as being no more than a superman. While I am agreeable to leaving the concept of God to each individual to decide for himself, my reason for not being able to conceive of a deistic concept of God is similar to the deist's reason for not being able to conceive of a pantheistic concept. That is, it is based upon the extent of our total philosophy, our intimate outlook on the entire universe from our personal standpoint.

The critic of pantheism also states that as a cold philosophy, it does not give proper credit to a divine being who should be considered somewhat removed and isolated from the universe. There fore, it is conducive to disrespect. It does not inspire proper respect for a supreme force of the universe to consider that God is an expression of Himself in everything, including the clod, the rock, the cloud, the bird, the man, the star—every thing that exists.

It would seem to me that this argument could also apply to deism, to a certain extent. To consider God as a human like entity with superior power or super forces and super ability is in a sense a form of reducing God to a human level, but on a slightly higher scale. If God is no more than a highly evolved or highly developed human being, then



He would inevitably have the same imperfections as man and cannot be the ultimate or final absolute force that supersedes all other forces. A manlike creature must partake of the nature of man, and therefore, since man is to a degree limited, any creature who is like him would also be limited.

Those who argue in favor of accepting a personal god are in a sense placing God at a lower level than that of an absolute universal force. Furthermore, to conceive of God as being only a little higher than man and of an anthropomorphic nature is to presume that man himself is an ultimate of creation and has attained the superiority that justifies conceiving either an absolute force as being modeled after him or as a human being modeled after the absolute force.

This idea is contrary to many evolutionary concepts. There is no proof that man is the ultimate evolved living creature of all evolution. It is quite possible that there may be other living beings evolved in the course of time that will supersede man in every respect. Therefore, to conceive of God as a superman is to place him lower than what an evolved man of the future may be.

Both the theistic and deistic concepts of God lower the concept of God to a lower level than a concept of the divine should be.

The concept of pantheism puts God on a scale so enormous and so much greater than any individual entity that we readily realize it is a force transcending and at the same time pervading all the universe. With this concept man believes that God is approachable, that He can be found in the nature of the universe which is a part of man's environment. Man can have emotional enjoyment in beholding the expression of God. Artists in their paintings, their music, and other creations have reached up and grasped the divine concept and put it into a physical or material expression.

When we are impressed by a sunset or an act of heroism or by some expression of an existence beyond what man can create or conceive, then we are reaching out and becoming a more intimate part of the Absolute existent in all things which we have beheld, an absolute which expresses itself in us. Thus, pantheism places God in an accessible position to man. Man is never left without God, because God continually and constantly expresses in everything that is, and

it is man's challenge to learn about everything that exists, his mental, physical, spiritual world, the world of his mind, the world of his total being. In learning of little things, the nature of the physical world, he learns in part the nature of the divine, creative force put into effect by the Absolute.

As already stated, there is no proof of an absolute force, except through man's reasoning based upon his observation of his environment and of his own nature. Consequently, each individual must arrive at his own interpretation but he must also attempt to feel a linkage with a force that causes him to be. That is why the Rosicrucians have for centuries believed and directed their thoughts of a divine force to "the God of my realization."

# HUMAN AND UNIVERSAL PURPOSE

“For the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on.”

—The Book of Mormon (Mormon 8-22)

**T**HE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS of human life, at least in this stage of history, are such that we think and act on the basis that practically everything we do is purposeful. We work, earning money to spend to satisfy our desires or our physical appetites. When we walk in a certain direction, it is usually with a purpose in mind, either to arrive at a certain destination, to exercise, or simply to view the scenery. When we sit down at the table for a meal, the purpose is to consume food. Everything in the general area of human behavior is linked up with this idea of purpose. Even the individual who does practically nothing, who is at rest, has gone through certain actions or procedures to bring about the condition enabling him to rest.

Purpose, therefore, to a considerable degree dominates our lives. It is almost inconceivable for the human being to contemplate an existence that is not purposeful in some degree. Purpose, however, in these terms is limited to individual behavior and to individual desires and needs. What we do in our daily lives is due to the purposes which we have individually adopted or that society has forced upon us.

The fact that man lives with this constant idea of purpose in his consciousness has led him to accept the concept that everything about him is also existing in circumstances or conditions where purpose is a

factor. It is almost impossible for an individual living as we do today to conceive of a universe without purpose.

In philosophy, the theory that the designs of nature are purposeful, that there is a purpose behind the expression of universe, and that there is an ultimate end to be attained by nature's forces is a discipline known as teleology. The teleological theory of the world concerns itself with the purposes that exist in the whole of the world, or rather, in the entire universe. A process is teleological if the end to be attained, that is, the final result, is the cause of all that goes to produce it.

The commonly accepted basis of teleology in religion is the belief that a supreme being not only caused all that now exists but that the final attainment of all the universal forces is to reach a point where they are again associated with that absolute force. Teleology, then, signifies that the final end of all things is the cause. The cause and the end are synonymous. All nature's functions originate with an absolute force and eventually will culminate in it.

The term *teleological* is also applied to the processes of nature, which are believed to be the work of an intelligent purposer or designer. In this sense the meaning is only slightly different from the first. That is, it is an acceptance of the principle that nature is purposeful, and something behind nature or contained within it is working to bring about that purposeful end.

Purpose is a human concept, however, and is not provable insofar as the universe is concerned. Nevertheless, arguments which support the teleological concept have to do with human observation of the circumstances that exist about him. One supporting argument of the concept that there is purpose in the universe is the obvious manifestation of law and order in nature. We know in general how the seasons will pass, how the earth will rotate, how day and night will come and go. These movements of universal bodies within the universe are governed by law and order to the extent that man can predict many years in advance certain occurrences, such as eclipses of the sun or moon, and other natural phenomena.

The human reaction to the obvious state of law and order existent in nature is to presume that if there is law and order there is also purpose in their existence. Man, for example, does not make laws except to

carry out a purpose. A higher force therefore must exist and make laws to bring about a purpose.

Another principle that supports the teleological theory is the answer to the question of how we can account for the fact that the world is a cosmos and not a chaos. The whole universe could be a chaotic confusion, but we observe from our human vantage point that it functions in accordance to certain law and order. Another argument in support of teleology is that the manifestations of nature and the functions of nature's activities seem purposive, based upon the fact of adaptations of means to an end. We see that plants grow, produce flowers, and eventually bring forth seed or fruit. This procedure seems to be purposive from the time the plant comes to life.

Without the teleological concept we can find no reason, insofar as the human being is competent to reason, as to why the universe exists in the first place. To the thinking human entity the observation of existence is in itself a supporting argument of a teleological concept.

There are, however, objections to the teleological theory. One obvious objection to the view that the world is purposive and has an ultimate goal is the unwarranted assumption of a likeness between human beings and the universe as a whole, or we might say, a consideration of the differences between what we could call God's purposes and man's purposes. In reviewing what has already been said about human beings being purposeful, we must realize that man's purposes are finite. They are only the reasoning of the human being and we may be presupposing too much to extend this reasoning to the belief that a higher, absolute force would also be reasoning in terms of purposeful activity. This, in summation, is that man's purposes may not have any relation ship with the purposes of a higher being, if that being exists and has brought into existence a purposeful existence.

Another objection is that the idea of purpose implies a goal. That goal belongs in the future in some far-off event. Therefore, to say that the universe is purposeful is to interpret conditions which we do not thoroughly understand as being parts of a purposeful function that has its attainment far removed. When for example we start out for a certain destination, it is conceded that we will arrive at that destination within a reason able length of time and our purpose will be accomplished. In

other words, purpose will be obvious, due to our actions culminating in what we wanted to achieve. But if the universe is such that the purposes for which it exists do not culminate for millions of years, then it is difficult to see a relationship between a purposeful process and the end to be attained.

A further objection to the teleological theory is based upon the acceptance of evolution. The drama of evolution, according to the popular concepts of Darwinism, is the struggle for existence, or the survival of the fittest. In such a picture there is no need for purpose. All is a matter of development, depending upon what evolves and what survives. This is a mechanistic argument against a teleological concept.

Still another objection is based upon the difficulty of understanding what is meant by ideas, purposes, and designs operative in nature. We do not know or understand all of nature's laws. We have little knowledge of the Absolute, and therefore our concept of purpose is definitely limited. The psychologist William McDougall claimed the chief goals of life are survival and growth, and he meant growth in the fullest sense—physically, mentally, and spiritually. He therefore believed that a purposeful universe existed to make possible the individual's struggle for survival and growth.

It is very difficult for us to understand a universe that has no meaning. There is no explanation of the existence of the universe that would not have significance or an eventual purpose. C. E. M. Joad said, "The most natural expression of the conviction that the universe is rational in the sense of having an explanation is the view that it was created by a mind and had therefore a beginning in time." This is a concept that the Absolute is a form of mind, and that there is a dual expression in the universe of which matter is only one. On this basis it is quite obvious that there cannot necessarily be any purpose purely in a mechanical or physical universe, that if we are to seek purpose, we are going to have to reach out beyond the physical universe and its manifestation.

Mind is an important factor in man's life, as well as in consideration of the Absolute. Mind, we know from personal experience, can have an effect upon matter. After all, it is minds that bring about the

building of machines, of buildings, of all activities that have brought about the accomplishments of a modern world. If the mind of man is directed in the physical world toward a purposeful event, cannot it also be a natural consequence to believe that a higher mind is planning the universe and its structure and its composition?

There is also a question of need. All living individuals, and all living entities, lower on the life scale than man, have certain needs. These needs, in addition to satisfying the physical appetites may be nothing more than trying to gain sustenance, wealth, or power or to achieve some specific human end. However, in themselves, such needs are not worthy goals. In the first place, not everyone can achieve them, and insofar as wealth is concerned, as Plato pointed out, the wealth of the world is limited to a certain extent, and if any one individual attains a great deal of it, to a certain extent someone else does not attain it.

Also, the satisfaction of physical appetites does not bring peace of mind or satisfaction. In the attaining of wealth or power, for example, the process of attainment feeds on itself, so that regardless of how much fame or power or wealth you may have you never think you have enough. You have to continue working to attain more. This indicates the fact that attainment in the physical world is not an answer to the purpose of existence on the part of the human being.

Most intelligent individuals will agree that there are impulses which are not satisfied through selfishness. We can look about us among contemporaries and also in history and find many examples of those who have served a cause. Some have spent their lives doing good for someone else. Everyone at times has helped others when they suffered hardships. Many people have done these things even at a cost or an inconvenience to themselves. How can we account for such action on the part of human beings? They cannot be judged by any standard of a physical or worldly nature nor can they be judged in the sense of bringing about worldly possessions or even fame.

A question worthy of serious consideration is, Why should one individual help another? Why should some individuals, and particularly thinking individuals, prefer duty to living a life dedicated to pleasure? Why should individuals sacrifice for anything? The answer to these why's is that such sacrifices are for a higher purpose than merely the

accumulation of worldly goods. This consideration seems to imply a purpose in the universe which transcends or supersedes the purpose of men fulfilling the routine of their daily lives.

This concept, of course, has been long taught by moralists and in religion. It is better to live morally upright lives, to evolve ourselves through the development of our own understanding, and to establish a relationship with an external, absolute force rather than merely accumulating worldly goods, which are transient and which do not give permanent satisfaction, but lead rather to further and further accumulation and effort.

The cosmos is vast and we are experiencing only a part of it. To attain the eventual purpose may possibly be beyond human grasp. This does not prevent the process of evolution from advancing beyond the limitations of physical existence. The eventual purpose of the universe lies external to the universe itself. Only as we as human beings extend our concepts of purposefulness beyond the physical limitations with which we are surrounded are we able to grasp a view which is cosmic, rather than universal or personal.

We will never prove or disprove on the basis of human reason or upon the basis of the components of the physical world the nature of a purposeful universe. We can, however, walk and live in a life which is morally good and which contributes to our own well-being as well as that of other individuals as we strive to attain an understanding of a purpose that may lie just beyond our finite grasp.



## VI

# BODY, MIND, AND SOUL

“The proper attitude to employ in any consideration of the basic questions is always one of humility touched with wonder.”

—David Elton Trueblood

**S**URELY ONE OF the most insistent and profound questions that has faced thinkers through all ages of man's history has been what has generally been classified in philosophy as the mind-body problem, the relationship that exists between the mind and the body, particularly as applied to the human being. The decisions reached in answer to this basic question reflect generally the philosophy of the individual making the answer.

It might be well to consider briefly the scope of this problem as it applies to the general outlook of philosophers, and also some of the solutions that have been advanced. It should be pointed out, however, that none of the solutions has been universally accepted by all thinkers. In fact the question is one which will be discussed and considered by all those who think on the problem of human behavior as long as there are human beings.

Generally speaking, we accept the principle that our minds and bodies, or our mental activity and our bodily activity, are different, but yet they are intimately related. We know that they both seem to exist and produce awareness in our consciousness. What is the nature of this relationship? How can two entirely different things be related to

each other? This latter question has puzzled philosophers through all the time that speculation has been directed to the subject.

The commonsense attitude toward the mind body problem is that there is no particular mystery. Since experiences are related to bodily action we believe that bodily conditions affect mental conditions. There are interrelationships between mind and body. How those interrelationships might exist is not under consideration.

Technically, however, the question is raised as to how two different things affect each other. In man's experience the law of cause and effect is usually concerned with situations that have a causal relationship. We understand for example that energy can produce movement. Heat can produce chemical changes. But when we think of mind, an entirely nonmaterial thing, and then think of body as no different from the composition of the rest of the material world, we ask our selves how a thought, which has no substance and is of a nonmaterial nature, can react upon that physical body to the extent that a thought of movement can lift an entire human body or cause it to walk, run, or move. How are the thought and the weight of the body related?

The consideration of this problem goes back into early Greek philosophy. Anaxagoras was believed to have written on the subject, because Socrates was influenced by the theories of Anaxagoras when he discussed the subject. Actually, in the conclusions reached by Socrates, he established a tradition which has been more or less generally accepted in the Western world and is known as psychophysical dualism. This point of view is that minds and bodies, while different, are united. For example, they are united in the human being and definitely have reference to each other. Thoughts, for example, can be actual causes. Mind can be the cause of mental activity and physical movement.

This point of view is acceptable to many individuals for the reason that it is logical and it does not deny the existence of the physical world or the material universe. It emphasizes, in fact, the existence of a physical world and of a mental world working smoothly in cooperation with each other.

This theory is sometimes known as the interaction theory offered in explanation of the problem. It is based upon the apparent fact that mind and body interact and react upon each other. The main argument

in support of this theory points out the absurdities if we deny the interaction. We know that mental actions do result in physical actions. For example, if I at this moment hear an unusual noise or explosion that occurs without my anticipating it, it will cause a physical reaction if nothing more than being startled.

Objections to this theory are based primarily upon materialistic concepts, such as the fact that it is obvious to most people that only matter in motion can cause changes in material things. Therefore the materialist would say that thoughts cannot actually influence material conditions. Furthermore, it is generally accepted that a series of changes that are present in the physical world make a closed circle. This means that only physical energy can exist in the physical world and mental in the mental world. Neither can interfere with the other. In spite of the objections to the theory it is still one which seems to be generally accepted because it is obvious in the working experience of the average individual.

The philosopher Descartes was responsible for advancing another theory which is now known as the theory of parallelism. This theory states that along with physical processes there are simultaneous mental processes. The relation between the series is one of concomitance and not one of inter action. This theory extends the idea that while there seems to be cause and effect between mental and physical processes, actually they are two separate processes going on at the same time. The only advantage of this particular theory is that it moves away from one of extreme materialism. At the same time, it is not completely valid.

The arguments against this theory are mainly those already given in support of the interaction theory. Commonsense evidence seems to support a connection between mind and body, and to say that there are two parallel functions is to create a new situation that is not supported by logic and is generally untenable.

Furthermore, we know that the mind is intimately related to the physical brain structure. Anything that interferes with the normal functioning of the brain, such as drugs, injury, or lack of blood supply, also interferes with an individual's mental life. If the theory of parallelism was completely acceptable, one would have to accept the idea that even though the physical structure was affected, the separate, parallel mental structure could continue to work separately.

A fundamental weakness of parallelism is that the Cartesian dualism upon which it is based rests upon the assertion of complete separateness of mind and matter. It may be that they seem to be separated when considered from a standpoint of a mechanistic universe. Actually, they could have their origin in the same source.

With the unsatisfactory solutions to the question through interaction or parallelism, many thinkers have abandoned the question altogether. They simply conclude that the question is a riddle. Some have as a result suggested a hypothesis based upon the concept of identity, that is that certain mental processes and physical processes are one and the same thing. This latter explanation is known as monism, the idea that there is only one force in the universe manifesting in different ways. Some idealists will not be in accord with the theory of monism because it can so easily be translated in terms of materialism. The materialist who believes in monism would state that there is only one reality and that is matter. Consequently, this would eliminate the concept of mind as a separate force altogether.

In the Rosicrucian philosophy, the concept of monism is quite satisfactory. We accept the premise that there is one fundamental force in the universe, a creative force that causes all to be and to continue to function. Mind and matter are two phases of this force. We might say that they are, for illustration, the positive and negative manifestation of the same force. The interaction of mind and matter in the human body is of no particular significance, because we are dealing with a fundamental force that is operating in two different expressions.

This latter idea appeals to many individuals, even though some philosophers do not consider it to be a substantial enough theory needed to cause universal acceptance. Unless we do accept the principle that there is a universal force, however, we have no explanation of the existence of mind or matter. Thus, there are only two alternatives in considering our question. Either the mind is a part of the body, or it is not. If the body and mind both are manifestations of the same source, both are interrelated. The human entity is an expression of a universal force showing a combination of the two realms, we might say, of universal expression, the realm of the nonmaterial and the realm of the material.

Basic to this question is still another factor, the factor of the soul. Many scientists and philosophers do not acknowledge the existence of the soul. Whether we use the word soul is much like whether a person who is an agnostic uses the word God. It makes no difference what we call the life force that is resident within us. When we are alive we express certain attributes and perform certain functions. They seem to have origin in the mental states, and they are expressed at a physical level.

As I have already stated, the force behind both of these is a part of a universal force. The individual expression of it in the human entity is what we can call the soul. *Soul* is therefore the term we apply to one individual expression of a universal creative force that is resident within the physical body. Man is a living soul, the soul being resident and incarnated in a material medium which we call the body. It is the same material as the rest of the physical universe which the body inhabits.

Man therefore looks out upon the universe, or at least upon the part of it immediately adjacent to his physical body, and sees the expression of the physical world about him, but he occupies this body as a vehicle. It transports him. It provides a channel by which he can become aware of his environment, which is made up of the physical and nonphysical universe.

In accordance with the fundamentals of Rosicrucian philosophy, man is a living soul. He is not a body and soul. He is a soul that has a body. The soul is of such a nature that it expresses itself in the area in which it is at the moment existent. The only way which man as a physical being can be conscious of the soul is its expression through a physical body. We do not perceive a soul as an isolated entity. We perceive it as a form of expression in the behavior of ourselves and in the behavior of other entities similar to us.

Life and soul are therefore substantially synonymous. They are considered the same, because the soul carries the essence of life, of being itself. It is to the body what a battery is to a flashlight, or an engine to an automobile. However, this illustration has to be taken with certain limitations, because the engine of the automobile is of the same nature as the other parts of the mechanism. That is, it is a physical

composition, as is the rest of the automobile. To make the automobile fulfill a purpose and be of any value it must also be directed by a mind, the mind of the man or woman who drives the automobile, and therefore utilizes the engine to produce motion.

Therefore, we might say that the soul is a combination of the engine and the mind, because it does not need a separate mind to direct it. The soul produces the energy and makes possible the mental contact of the individual who utilizes the soul. The soul is not of the physical world. It is not a material essence. The soul is therefore transitory in this physical world. Its true home is elsewhere. It exists in the universe of which the objective mind and the physical body have little knowledge. Only imagination furnishes a general concept. Since the soul is of the nature of the Divine, which is the source from which it came, it is restless. It lives in a physical body to cause the expression of body and soul, to evolve a soul personality which in the end in some mysterious way we cannot fully define adds to the totality of the experience that constitutes all the lives that have ever existed on the physical plane.

So it is that man should seek to better realize the value and importance of the soul that is resident within him. He should direct himself toward the realization of this purpose, toward the realization of his true place in the cosmic scheme. In this way he can utilize in his physical life the attributes and the gifts of body, mind, and soul.

## VII

# GOOD AND EVIL

“Freedom of choice between good and evil must be assumed; automata cannot acquire the thing called character.”

—David R. Major

**P**HILOSOPHERS AND RELIGIONISTS have throughout time puzzled themselves about the existence of evil. The problem of good and evil has always existed as long as human beings have given serious thought to their life upon this earth. It is probable that no explanation in terms of finite human existence will ever be forthcoming. We cannot explain the existence of good and evil to the satisfaction of every individual and to every type of thought.

Basically, evils can be classified in two ways. First, those evils that are due to forces of nature beyond human control: floods, tornadoes, earth quakes; conditions that cannot always be anticipated and which bring much harm and suffering to individuals directly affected. Then there are the evils that are due to causes wholly or particularly within man's power to control. These are, for example, bodily ills, diseases of body and mind, moral ills—sins, vice, and crime. It is the latter that is the most difficult to explain because so frequently the innocent suffer. It is true, of course that the innocent suffer from evils caused by natural forces, but it always seems more pitiful when individuals who live good, upright lives and who are minding their own affairs and not interfering with anyone else should suffer the indignity of crime

that results in the invasion of the human right of an individual to live his own life and ends in pain, shame, or disgrace.

There has always existed the question raised by cynics of whether God could not or would not keep evil out of the world. This question has never been answered. If God could not keep evil out of the world, then He is not omnipotent and all-powerful. If He would not keep evil out of the world, then those who are cynical would say that God purposely wishes to torment the very manifestations of Himself that man is supposed to be and that He created. There is no final answer to this question that is satisfactory to everyone.

Insofar as the problem of evil is concerned, man can make one of three choices. He can ignore the problem, he can speculate or philosophize about it, or he can assign the entire responsibility to a deity, a force outside himself and outside the universe. In these three choices we summarize what man has done concerning the problem of evil.

There are those who like to ignore any problem which seems to have no pat solution. There are those who continue to develop theories about the problem without really arriving at any final conclusion or satisfactory explanation. Then there are those, who, like the first group, ignore the problem in the sense that they pass responsibility somewhere else. The latter is a form of religious belief upon the part of some individuals, and consists of assigning to a deity all the problems that man cannot solve.

Such a practice seems to me to be inconsistent with the concept that man is a living force, and the force of that life must have come from a source external to the material world, which we can call divine or by any other term we choose. If we are of that source, then it is part of our responsibility to try to explain the problems with which we must cope in life. If this latter concept is true, then it is man's responsibility to learn all the intricacies of the force with which he is endowed, rather than direct problems back to its source and thereby attempt to relieve himself of any responsibility concerning them.

I have been interested in the problem of good and evil over a long period of time, as have many other individuals. Obviously, as we study a problem through the years our points of view will change. I believe



any individual who has seriously considered the problem of good and evil, or as far as that is concerned, any other problem that is intimately related to our human experience on this earth, can trace a change of opinion and concept in regard to the problem.

I remember at one time writing about evil, and I said something to this effect: "Evil means any thing that interferes with our plans, that may cause us to abandon our hopes and aspirations or separate us from our most cherished desires, that destroys what we have worked to create or causes us to suffer bodily or mentally." This is possibly one definition of evil. In fact, it is more of a definition than it is an explanation of the problem of good and evil. It is a concept of evil that is substantially subjective. My definition was based upon the acceptance of a simple fact, that any thing which interferes with our individual plans, wishes, and aspirations is evil.

Such a definition is relative. It is to a degree true, but it does not go far enough. Merely to define anything in terms of human hopes, human ambitions, or personal aspirations is to take a somewhat egotistical point of view that has been described by many philosophers as anthropocentric, that is, putting man or self in the center of the universe, accepting those things that contribute to the well-being of that self and attempting to modify, control, or ignore anything that does not easily and without effort contribute to that well being.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that good and evil must always be considered from the standpoint of a relative position. For example, it is impossible to classify all things as either completely good, or completely evil. We may use fire as a good illustration of this fact. Fire is useful. It warms us. It cooks our food. It contributes to our well-being. In these respects it is good, but that same fire can burn us and cause pain, or destroy our possessions and cause us much mental harm as well as bodily harm. In this respect it is evil. Therefore, we cannot put a label on fire and state that it is good or evil. The same can apply to water. Without water we cannot live. It quenches our thirst. It sustains life within our bodies, but it can destroy our property in a flood, or we can drown in it if we are completely surrounded by it. It is therefore in one respect good and in another respect evil.

If fire and water can have relative meanings, that is, can be good or evil depending upon how their effect is related to us, then is it not possible that if man could see beyond the limitations of his own self and his own environment all good and evil might not be a relative matter? It is possible that this relative nature makes it so difficult for man to arrive at a complete understanding of the nature of good and evil, or to explain their meanings and functions within his life experience.

For many years I have held another theory in regard to evil, a theory that proved to be extremely controversial. When I have expressed it, I have always received many criticisms and objections. Nevertheless, it is a theory, and since we are dealing here with theories and individual explanations, it may be worthy of consideration. Evil, according to my point of view, is exclusively an attribute of the material world. Everything that is evil, or has its repercussions in evil action and evil behavior is in one way or another related to the material which composes the physical world in which we live.

More and more I am inclined to accept as a fundamental premise that evil is inherent in matter, and that evil exists as an actuality in the world. As long as we are bound to the physical world, as long as we live as incarnated human entities, we are forced to deal with the solution of the problem of evil because it is ever-present; it is ever about us within the environment of which we are a part.

The concept of evil being related to matter, as I have indicated here, is denied both by materialists and by idealists. The materialist does not want to acknowledge that the physical world, which he considers the ultimate reality, is evil, although many materialists are unconcerned as to the nature of the reality upon which they have agreed. The idealist frequently prefers to consider evil as an illusion, that the purpose behind the universe is good, and that all that is created is good, and that it is only man's lack of understanding that causes him to interpret certain manifestations as being evil.

Such an idealistic concept would have us believe that evil is purely an illusion of the senses, that it is not an actuality, and exists only to the extent that we project it into the environment and the circumstances that are a part of our lives. This point of view could be carried even further. To state that evil, then, is only a subjective phenomenon,

that evil only exists in the mind of man and he projects evil into his environment by his own thinking, is a rather extreme theory. I have taken the stand that evil is inherent in matter. Another extreme says that evil is inherent in the mind and only projected into matter. Still other individuals, both materialists and idealists, say that neither is an explanation of the problem, and that good and evil do not exist except in terms of experience.

Common sense and a degree of acceptance of naive realism prevent us from wandering far afield in our speculations in regard to the nature of good and evil and to acknowledge the fact that we have to cope with good and evil as a problem, whether we like to or not. If we accept the principle that the universe is purposeful, we must concede that the creator of a purposeful universe could only have put into operation forces leading to the ultimate culmination of the purpose with which he endowed the universe in the first place.

Since it is only logical to assign good intentions to the Absolute and to His creation, then we would conclude that the ultimate purpose of the universe and everything that is affected by it is good. In this sense, good is related to the creative forces of the universe. They are resident within the manifestations that are most closely related to the source from which the manifestations came. Life, then, with its dependency upon this creative force is the obvious external expression of that force away from itself, at least insofar as our physical ability to perceive the connection between them is concerned.

Our concept of the world, the environment of which we are a part and in which we live, is based upon the perceptions that we receive, whether those perceptions be through our physical sense faculties or whether we receive them intuitively or psychically. We give emphasis to the physical perceptions and thereby create, as it were, a screen or glass through which we perceive all else. Our environment is colored by the screen of our own opinions, our prejudices, our ideas, our hopes, and even our basic philosophy. Looking through, as it were, the accumulation of ideas that is ours over the period of our lifetime, we find a diverse and rather unorganized accumulation, because few can say with absolute truth that they have developed a complete philosophy of life that will be satisfactory to meet the demands of all situations with which we must cope.

To say that evil is inherent in matter does not necessarily imply, as one might at first conclude, that matter itself is evil. This may appear upon first consideration to be a play upon words or an actual contradiction. The concept that keeps occurring to me is that material is related to evil because material is not a permanent condition. Since material is transitory, our observations and manipulations of this material cause us to deal with it with a lack of perspective.

If you had before you a soap bubble and a nugget of gold and you were given your choice to select one or the other as your permanent possession, your decision would be obvious. But why would you choose the piece of gold instead of the soap bubble? The reason is elementary. The soap bubble is transient in nature and therefore cannot have enduring value. From your experience with material objects, you know that gold is permanent in its nature and would continue to have value. Your choice would obviously be to select what has value. Actually, both of these objects are material things. We can carry the idea further by realizing that in the overall existence of the Cosmic, that is, in the relationship between the physical objects here and in eternity, gold is relatively as transient as the soap bubble.

This brings us to the conclusion that may help to develop a better approach to the understanding, or at least some degree of explanation of the problem of good and evil. All that is material is transitory. All that is not material is permanent. The physical existence of the universe is finite. The existence of the creative force that caused it to be and maintains it is infinite. Therefore, we resolve our problem in a degree to the level of the physical decision between the soap bubble and the gold nugget, that is, between value and no value. Value lies in the gold in our physical experience because of the use placed upon that material. No value lies in the soap bubble, because its short span of existence cannot possibly endure sufficiently to have other than possibly transient, aesthetic value.

We might therefore conclude that evil is confined to the nature of the finite. It will not endure forever, while good is in no manner restricted to the finite. In fact, good is practically synonymous with the Infinite and has permanent and eternal endurance. It exists about us at all times. We can draw upon it because it is endless and has its origin in a bottomless source. Our choice is to use it or ignore it.

We might say that good is like the wind. Out of the window I see trees. On the trees I see leaves that are in motion. The wind is moving these leaves, but the movement of the leaves on the trees does not in any way use the wind to the extent of exhausting its existence or its energy. The wind passes by. It continues. Whether the tree is there or not, the wind goes on, and so it is that good, like the wind, exists about us and passes by us at all times. Most of the time, because of our primary interest in our physical environment, we let it pass by. We simply become like the leaf, something that good flows around and over but does not consume.

Man has designed objects that utilize the movement of the wind and from its force we draw power for useful purposes. Man can also let good go into him by acknowledging that it is a part of the Infinite and that we can perceive through our psychic senses that force with which we can be in harmony. Harmony and realization of inner selves, and in turn of the inner self's realization of the presence of a divine source, will cause us to gain in the understanding of infinite values and in the realization that good is intimately related to our highest hopes and aspirations and is ours upon which to draw.

If the divine force that created the universe and functions through it is good, then man can choose the good. If man has a degree of freedom of choice, any individual can choose to be good when he could have been evil. In the process of acting the good, man is adding to the good of the world. As good is added to man's good behavior, he is diminishing the totality of evil.

Good and evil, therefore, are problems of human existence. To absorb one and avoid the other is one of the purposes of life. Possibly another purpose of life is to gain the experience to learn how to use the good and to minimize the evil. Good actions, good thoughts put us in harmony with the purposeful and good intentions of the Creator. Our lot here as human beings is to try to live in harmony with those forces about us. It is obvious that to be harmonious with good and to recognize that evil is restricted to the material world, which will eventually have no more value, is to realize one of the universal purposes of creation.

## VIII

# MYSTICISM

“In the strictest sense, a mystical experience involves a unity of the mortal consciousness with that of the Divine or Cosmic Mind for a varying period of time.”

—Ralph M. Lewis

**I**N VIEW OF the fact that mysticism is not a generally popular subject or even generally understood by many individuals, it is necessary to examine this subject first from the standpoint of definition. There are those who do not or will not attempt to differentiate between what is mystical and what is mysterious. To many individuals mysticism considered in the popular sense has one of two connotations. Either it is considered to be a system of unique and unusual mysteries or it is associated with a devout, orthodox religion. I believe that I might be safe in saying—although there is probably no statistical proof of the statement—that nine out of ten people who might be approached regarding the nature of mysticism would indicate that their concept fell into one or two of these classifications.

In reality, mysticism does not need to be associated with mystery other than to the extent that anything unknown obviously carries a degree of mystery about it. To the person who knows nothing about mysticism, then mysticism would be considered mysterious, but if that same person knew nothing about astronomy or higher mathematics, these subjects too would be a mystery, insofar as their techniques and functioning are concerned.

Mysticism, then, is mysterious only to the extent that the individual who attempts to define it may lack *knowledge* concerning exactly what it is. There is no relationship between mystery and mysticism when a complete and proper definition of mysticism is known except possibly in the similarity of the words.

The other popular consideration of mysticism is to associate it with religion, particularly with a devout or orthodox religious practice. Many of those considered to have been mystics from a standpoint of a religious organization are pictured as being recluses, individuals who by certain religious standards were considered holy men or women. We see this evidenced in the art of the church, where some of these individuals are depicted with a halo about their head, or pictured in other strange appearances that would immediately separate them from the rest of humanity. These mystics were individuals who seemed apart from the general stream of life, and who lived in a phase of existence outside the normal experience of ordinary mortals.

These concepts of mysticism naturally emphasize the difference in individuals rather than the common ground of human beings. Mystics should not be looked upon as freaks. They are human beings who have had certain experiences that may not be completely understood or completely accessible to all individuals but who are otherwise rational human beings.

To proceed with a definition of mysticism, I am going to comment on two definitions which have much in common but yet which are slightly different. The first definition is "Mysticism is the doctrine that the *knowledge* of reality, truth, or God is attainable by direct *knowledge*." The key word in this definition is the word *knowledge*. It presupposes that man has the ability to gain knowledge and that knowledge actually exists. In the definition, the first time the word *knowledge* is used it refers to the fact that mysticism is a doctrine, that is, a manmade belief. All doctrines, all beliefs are made by men. There are no divinely established doctrines, contrary to some religious teachings. That man has and can gain knowledge is indicated in the definition, because it proceeds to state that man can attain knowledge of reality, of truth, and of God, three of the highest concepts within the ability of man to receive.

Such knowledge, according to this definition, is attainable by what the definition calls direct *knowledge*, a contrast to what we might term as

hearsay knowledge, that is, gained from another source. It is upon this basis that I take my objections to many established religious creeds and dogmas. Such creeds and dogmas are based upon the principle that one man, or a group of men, has established as a system of thought.

Any creed or doctrine that exists consists of a dogma that was agreed upon by one or more individuals and established as a principle. When another individual accepts the concepts which constitute the doctrine, then that individual is restricted to the concept of the man or the individuals who established or wrote the creed or dogma or doctrine in the first place.

By adhering rigidly to an established created doctrine the individual does not have direct access to direct knowledge. His access to knowledge has been simply the accepting as fact or knowledge the opinion of someone else. The acceptance of such doctrines or creeds limits rather than extends man's ability to live and learn, because he is not exercising his own mental faculties or his inner abilities but rather is satisfied to accept the ideas of someone else.

In accordance with this definition, mysticism asserts that every human entity can gain knowledge of reality, truth, and God directly. By being able to perceive and comprehend the wisdom of the Cosmic, being able to understand that each human entity is an individual segment of life, which after all is a manifestation of the Creator, we are able to gain knowledge that does not have to come through another individual secondhand, but comes intuitively into the mind of the individual.

There is a similarity with the first definition in the following: "Mysticism is the doctrine that direct knowledge of God, truth, and the cosmic scheme is attainable through immediate intuition or insight in a manner differing from ordinary sense perception." In this phraseology, it is emphasized that mysticism can be the means by which direct knowledge of God, truth, and the cosmic scheme is attainable.

Knowledge is the keynote again, the knowing situation, the knowing ability of the human being and the knowing of a source beyond the physical world. This direct knowledge is attainable through immediate intuition or insight, that is, through our inner awareness, through a process that might be compared with Jung's explanation



of the unconscious mind. This process of knowing, this process of understanding, differs from day-to-day sense perception in that it comes from the source of all knowledge instead of being filtered through the physical universe first or agreed upon by other individuals.

Mysticism concedes that we live in two worlds, a physical world and an immaterial world. We might say that we live physically and psychically. One of the challenges to the human being is to relate these two areas so that they will be in sympathy with each other. Through a proper sympathetic relationship between the physical and the psychic, the human entity expresses itself as a whole. Mysticism can provide the means by which the physical and the psychic can be related and establish harmony. It is in fact an appropriate link and possibly the only link that connects the knowing mind with the unknown.

The mystical experience, that is, having awareness of knowledge intuitively or from an external, nonphysical source, is a function or attribute of the human entity in the same manner that the sense faculties provide the channels by which man perceives the physical world. The mystical experience therefore, if described in the broadest sense of meaning, is a sensory process, a sixth sense, as it were, that causes man to be able to perceive the area which is beyond the range of perception of the physical senses.

There are a number of ways in which the mystical experience can relate man's physical and psychic lives. First of all, the mystical experience provides the basis for intuitive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge can be knowledge that is of equal or even higher value than that which is perceived through the physical senses. Probably only among a minority of individuals is mystical experience developed sufficiently that it can be well known.

There are those who have claimed to have achieved this ability but many have only made claims and not been able to actually utilize the ability. To be able to span the gap between the physical and the psychic and use the intuitive awareness of the mind, the soul must be awakened to that ability that it alone possesses and that enables it to perceive beyond the limitations of the physical senses. Through such perception we are able to look into the meaning of the physical world and beyond the physical world into the significance of the Cosmic.

Many who have preceded us, mystics who have lived in the past have had glimpses of knowledge that were not received by the majority of mortals.

In the lives of these individuals we see concrete examples of the means of establishing a relationship or link that relates the human being to a condition different from physical sense perception itself. In beholding a scene of great beauty, such as a sunset, or seeing the innocent wonder in the eyes of a child, or in the observation of an act of self-sacrifice we experience that in addition to the physical perception of these events we are also affected or inwardly moved by the experience that accompanies such a perception.

If we try to express afterward why we had such feelings, it is probable that all we can say is that we perceived a glimpse of something beyond and in addition to the physical sensation itself, that a force external and accompanying the physical event made an impression upon our consciousness. This is an experience similar to intuitive perception. We gain a degree of knowledge through our inner sense of perception through that connection of our life with the source of life.

This sensation or additional feeling that accompanies physical perception is in addition to the physical perception itself. The intuitive level of our perception penetrates beyond the outer experience of the physical order of the universe. Such insights in themselves are not uncommon experiences. It is within the ability of each individual to develop the techniques that will permit him to function even further. The most profound moments of mystical experience are limited in comparison with the vast scope of the Cosmic from which such intuitive urges arise.

This idea was expressed in the words of Job, "These are but fringes of His ways. How small a whisper do we hear of them." Until we have the competence to perceive the Absolute itself, we will be unable to realize the vast extent of existence that transcends the physical world.

The second way in which the mystical experience can serve as a link between the physical and the psychic is that it recognizes the fact that two orders of being exist. Man is not alone. He is not independent. He is a physical entity, but as a soul he is related to all other souls through the source of life. As long as man lives here on earth, he functions as

body and soul and must coordinate those two orders of being into a harmonious balance if he is to exist to his maximum capacity.

That there is a physical and a mental world I have already mentioned, but these worlds of which we are a part, this world or environment which is of a physical nature and in which I live and have my mental concepts are two very minute segments of all existence. We must realize that the physical world in which we live and our private mental world are two small manifestations of two great realms of being which were ordained by our Creator to be the total manifestation of the Cosmic. We must learn to adjust ourselves to both these orders of being if we are to live a balanced life.

The third way in which the mystical experience functions as a link between the physical and the psychic is to give recognition to the value and dignity of the individual. The individual soul-expression of the human entity is a part of the Absolute, a segment of the Divine. To depreciate this fact, as some political theories would do and think of life only as a conglomerate group of individuals functioning for the benefit of the whole, is to degrade the Divine. The Divine, in all its manifestations, should be considered to be of more value than the composite force that a group of lives can form jointly. The state that attempts to bend the will of the individual to the purpose of the state and to deny the evolutionary growth of the individual is running counter to the divine purpose of the universe. The divine purpose in its basic essence tends toward the evolvment of each segment of life as found individually expressed in the human being, so that this segment of life may re turn to the level of the divinity from which it sprang.

The fourth way in which the mystical experience functions is to bring to the objective consciousness of man the awareness that the soul is an equal partner of our existence, its origin being in the Divine and its nature being that of the Absolute. The soul is the point of contact with the psychic world into which our physical senses can not penetrate. The mystical experience serves as a link between the physical and the psychic by giving more meaning to the soul, its origin, nature, and relationship with the Cosmic.

The fifth way in which the mystical experience links the psychic and the physical is in the nature of the mystical experience itself. This experience is a process of perception. We may wonder by the free use of the terminology just what the term *mystical experience* means. I believe it cannot be better described than this concept of being a link between the two extremes or two orders of being with which man is concerned.

The most profound experience in which the human being can participate, which brings him an overwhelming sense of contact at what is ultimately and fundamentally real is the process of the mystical experience. The emotional over tones that accompany such experiences are expressed by mystics who have written in the past by such words as *bliss, harmony, joy, and perfection*. This concept causes the divisions which produce a sense of a separate self as an individual entity to vanish or cease to be. Consciousness is greatly expanded. As a result, the self becomes a participant in the higher levels of being and existence. Such experiences can be accompanied by an infusion of knowledge which we might call an intellectual illumination. In such an experience there is a clearer awareness on the part of the participant in the vast plan and purpose of the cosmic scheme and a fuller realization of the fundamental truths of existence.

Such an experience contributes to an evolutionary process in the sense that the soul is moving toward a new recognition of its source or a re union with the Absolute from which it came. Probably only a few in all of history have become masters, that is, have reached the state of permanent illumination, but to those individuals illumination becomes a part of their experience. It is with them at all times, the sense of self becomes subordinated to the nature of their understanding a greater world, that is, a world of both physical environment and of a psychic nature.

Under such circumstances the inner self or soul, as far as we understand it, will no longer be strictly restricted to a physical level but will gain a full, conscious awareness of being as the center of cosmic purpose. Individuals who have had such experiences have something even beyond illumination, that is, an experience which is compelling in its wonder and is felt as a condition that belongs to human nature but has seldom been realized.

## ETERNAL FRUITS OF KNOWLEDGE

In the experience of most individuals who have attained any degree of such experience or of illumination, they have immediately experienced that nostalgic feeling of returning home, returning to the place where they feel they should have remained all the time. This is one of the criteria of mystical experience.

We can gain some comparison with the mystical experience through the aesthetic experience. The concept of beauty causes any individual to have emotions or feelings that extend beyond the perception of a great painting, a work of art or a beautiful sunset. These overtones, as it were, are indications of the ability of our minds to receive intuitive impressions which are transferred to us, as it were, through the medium of the soul.

## IX

# IMMORTALITY

“He giveth his beloved sleep.”

—The Bible (Psalms 127-2)

**I**T IS ALMOST impossible to discuss intelligently the problems of immortality because so many beliefs, opinions, and prejudices have existed for so long that everyone has probably arrived at his own opinion of the subject. It is certain, however, that the subject of immortality cannot be approached without giving at least some consideration to the fact of life.

Life can be divided into three parts, birth, maturity, and death. After birth the living entity goes through a maturing process, and just as certain as that individual was born, equally certain is the fact that the maturing process will end in what we know as death. In fact the living being on earth, be it human, animal, or vegetable begins to die when it is born. We might say that death is a fact of life.

Since man has faced this fact through history, he has built up all kinds of theories about it. In religion and in philosophy there has been an attempt to explain this life process, to make some explanation of how it begins and how it ends, and if anything precedes its beginning or follows the ending of this physical existence. Superstition gave way to religious doctrine and gradually a great deal of tradition has been accumulated in human thought to provide various explanations of the process. The process, of course, is most concerned with immortality, that is, what follows death, but first there is one thing that every intelligent individual should consider. That is the realization that death

is normal and inevitable. It is not something to be feared.

The fear of death has grown in human thinking because of the individual's desire to hold on to material possessions as well as to maintain association with those whom they love. Further, there is the mistaken impression that death is painful. Illness, accident, any harm to the physical body may be painful, but in actuality death is a release from this pain, not an exaggeration of it.

In this respect I would like to quote a statement by R. V. C. Bodley: "In whatever way death comes, it need not be feared or allowed to become a source of worry. It should be thought of as a friend who approaches with comforting relief to smooth out our cares and take away our pains and infirmities. Death alone can draw restful curtains over our tired eyes and set us free to find that peace which passes all understanding. In the attainment of serenity death is the climax and the greater the tranquility of mind the easier the departure will be."

From a physical standpoint and from the stand point of objectiveness there is no generally accepted proof of immortality that can be proven in a way that is acceptable to all individuals. I shall not attempt to analyze those claims of individuals who state that they have in one way or another had communication with those who have passed out of life into immortality, as we generally conceive it. Those individuals have their own interpretations and are usually based upon their own convictions that do not lend themselves to proof, insofar as other individuals are concerned.

If for example you have had an experience that leads you to believe that you have contacted an individual who has died, or, as the Rosicrucians say, has passed through transition, and that belief and conviction brings you peace and satisfaction, then that is your experience. It is your realization, but you cannot share it with me, because it is not my experience. A secondhand experience will have little benefit as far as I am concerned.

What we must constantly keep in mind is the fact that to those who believe in a teleological universe, who believe in the existence of an absolute force that precedes and follows the creation of the universe and its purposes, that what we are here as living beings are physical beings, and that physical phase of our existence is not associated with

immortality. Plato said, "The seen is the changing, the unseen is the unchanging." In this I interpret his meaning that the ideals of a nature higher than anything associated with our material existence remains while what we can perceive with our physical sense, what he refers to as the seen, is transient. It is the transient that dies. It is the unseen that shares immortality.

If it were possible to assemble all the literature that has been gathered on the subject of immortality, we would have many, many ideas, but I share a view with James Martineau, who said, "We do not believe in immortality because we have proved it but we forever try to prove it because we believe it."

Almost every individual, regardless of the literature and information that has been assembled on the subject of immortality, actually believes in the privacy of his own thoughts that there is some thing more permanent than physical existence, and that some type of survival will continue after the physical body no longer functions.

While it is true that we have no objective proofs of immortality, as I have already stated, it is also true that we have no objective proofs that anyone who has passed through transition has suffered from it. In other words, the millions and millions of individuals who have lived throughout all time and have physically died have never to our knowledge registered a complaint of any kind. It must be a way that is in accordance with nature and one which we will not seek but which we can anticipate as being a culmination of our existence.

The one kind of immortality that each individual seeks is a personal survival. Whether there is such a thing or not we do not know. Some individuals believe that immortality is the remembrance of what we have accomplished that might be worthwhile during our lifetime. Others believe that the life force within us, which we call soul, is some way absorbed into the Absolute, and that the individual entity may no longer exist. We do not know which of these is true, but with the statement by Martineau, the average individual deep down in himself carries a continuing hope that immortality will be individual, that the personality which we have developed will in some way be associated through eternity with the soul, and it will continue to have an expression of its own.



The hope for immortality on the part of man has not always been supported by the highest of motives. It has sometimes been a purely selfish desire to perpetuate oneself, or in some cases to perpetuate one's property, possessions, or pleasure. In other cases, this hope for immortality has been a pathetic hope. Many religious doctrines have emphasized in their beliefs and have appealed to all who may have suffered or have been persecuted the principle that life, after all, is not what it seems to be.

This belief is ingrained in the mind of all those who may be unfortunate or living under stress of some kind. The appeal held out by such a doctrine is that there is a better life than that which we now live. This other life will give us, as it were, a chance to get even. The ideal is held out to those who suffer that the time will come when such suffering will be no more, when those who are now rich may be poor, and those poor may be rich. Those who now suffer will be free from pain, and those who are now free from pain may then be caused to suffer in order to balance out their freedom from suffering as a physical entity.

This is the fundamental doctrine upon which the belief of heaven and hell is based. These concepts grew out of the primitive religions and were gradually incorporated into the thinking of human beings in various places. This thought is nevertheless based upon a fundamental principle that life is a continuous entity that would at one time arrive at its ultimate purpose and its understanding of all things, and at the same time find its reward or its punishment.

This concept of immortality, however, is so limited that it causes us to restrict our whole concept of the Absolute and the Cosmic. It is not within the ability of man to conceive or describe those phases of immortality of which we are not presently conscious. Immortality is a condition that lies completely beyond us. We cannot describe it because we are not aware of it. We do not know, for it is impossible to define an unknown. You cannot describe to me, for example, something with which you are not familiar. What is unknown cannot be expressed in words or put into any kind of objective manifestation. Therefore, an attempt to describe an experience that has not previously existed in consciousness, that has not come into a state of objective realization is impossible while we are living, physical entities.

Therefore, a concept of immortality consisting of exactly what it is and how it functions lies beyond the grasp of human consciousness. Nevertheless, there does seem to be some evidence that life is a continuity and I believe that continuity is eternal.

One very important factor which we do not take into consideration, if we consider a personal immortality, is the fact that time and space are physical concepts. Time and space apply only to the material world. It is impossible for us to conceive of a condition where neither time nor space would have physical existence and therefore not be a part of our environment.

It is upon this basis that I have often thought that if there is a personal immortality, then those who have passed on from this life are living in a state where they no longer are concerned about time or space, and since time is nonexistent outside the physical world they would not be in a position of trying to contact those who are still living because for them there would be no pause, no break in existence or contact with those with whom they have been associated as physical beings.

Many times the term “the silver thread,” has been used symbolically as being the connection between the Absolute and the spark of life that is within us. Whether or not it is based upon evidence or truth is not important. Symbolically, the silver thread can be considered to be the evidence or the description of the link between the Absolute and the individual manifestations of life which we observe in the physical world.

If we visualize or conceive of the original source of all force and energy as being another world in which the origin of this force resides, then we can also conceive that out of the Cosmic, which is a composite term applied to the source of energy, is the point at which the symbolic silver thread has its origin. Not only does this thread symbolically have its origin, but it is the channel by which the soul receives its nourishment and is maintained. From this cosmic unity or center there spring these threads that reach out to individual manifestations of life, and there at the termination of these threads is the manifestation of life as we are conscious of it and as we perceive it in physical form.

We can also conceive of the silver thread as being the thread of existence which eventually returns to its source in another world, the storehouse of all energy and all force. Each personality may have a function, just as individual parts have functions in a physical apparatus. The individual soul then may play a part in a cosmic drama.

Away from the physical plane of which we are conscious now is the true home of the soul. The soul's residence outside the immaterial world is temporary. Those who have tried to prove immortality or the existence of life after transition by using as a standard the judgment of man's conscious awareness on a physical plane are trying to carry over into a nonmaterial area a function that may not equally apply to both areas. The manifestations of life that are passed over into this higher plane are different in the sense that they no longer are primarily entities in the sense that we consider a physical entity completely isolated insofar as being connected with other entities.

I am convinced that if individual consciousness in any sense of the word remains in this other life, these souls that now dwell in another plane are involved in functions of which we can have no concept. Therefore, if we expect those souls to make themselves known to our consciousness, we may be deluding ourselves, because we are not taking into full consideration the transitory, temporary nature of this physical world in which the soul manifests in the medium of a body for a limited time.

As a temporary place of being, we can realize that once we have been released from our material limitations, our attention and concern will be directed away from the physical universe, and we will not be using what we might describe on a physical plane as valuable time for the purpose of dealing with a plane from another level to which we have escaped or evolved or advanced into higher processes.

Of all the theories in regard to immortality, the one which seems to be the most logical, although, like all other theories cannot be proven objectively, is the theory of reincarnation. This is not the time or the place to go into a study of the subject of reincarnation, as it has been done more thoroughly in many other places.

In the book, *Mansions of the Soul*, Dr. H. Spencer Lewis outlines the theory that the soul is an evolving entity, that over a period of time gradually develops a more complete soul personality that at some future time finds residence with the Absolute. During its evolvement it is incarnated in one physical body after another. Exactly how long this process lasts and exactly the nature of the full end to be attained is beyond human comprehension, but there have been indications of individuals who have had memories of situations and conditions that seem to be inexplicable except on the basis that they may have lived at the time when the experience took place.

Furthermore, whether or not we can prove the theory of reincarnation, it is a reassuring theory. It is a theory that accounts for the relatively short time of physical life. It also accounts for the fact that the human entity has to have many kinds of experiences, some pleasant and some unpleasant, but that after a series of reincarnations, it may reach a place where all these experiences will be put together in one whole and thereby realized as having been a contributing factor to a development which now we cannot see.

There are, of course, other theories of immortality, and each individual will have to arrive at one that conforms to his own philosophy of life and his own convictions, because all we know is that we are a living entity and that our obligation in life is to express that entity as a growing personality as best we can. If we do that, then we will come to the realization that immortality, contrary to general opinion is not a future state but is the state of life, that we live in a state of immortality through all time.

As a concluding thought regarding immortality, it is interesting to remember that man has many physical appetites and desires. Man lives insofar as his physical existence is concerned on a level of satisfying those physical appetites which are a part of his nature. Man desires to fulfill any appetite that seeks fulfillment, and it is interesting to observe that within his experience there are means or ways of fulfillment for practically every desire. Man can satisfy his appetites. He can strive to fulfill a desire that drives him toward fulfillment. He may not reach complete satisfaction in his lifetime, but he can work toward such fulfillment.

What I am trying to emphasize is that there seems to be even in the limitations of the physical world a means of fulfillment for the desires and appetites that man has. Since man seems also to have a desire for immortality, might we not follow this logic in believing that since there are means of fulfillment of other desires, there must also be a means of fulfillment of this desire? It would seem contradictory that man would be able through his own efforts and striving to fulfill his physical appetites and yet carry through life a strong desire for immortality which would have no means of fulfillment.

I will be the first to acknowledge that this certainly is not proof of immortality, but it is an indication that man seems to be equipped or created with the means of fulfilling that which he really has to fulfill. Furthermore, in connection with these thoughts, it would seem to make good sense for man to hope for immortality. In hoping that there is an immortality, there is nothing to lose. This hope of man gives life a certain quality and a fuller meaning than it would have without that hope.

Together with the quality and meaning that the hope inspires, man is able to develop a perspective which makes life seem better and also seem to have more meaning. Even if we as individuals are in error and there is no immortality, if there is no future beyond a physical life; in other words if we are wrong in our conclusions and our beliefs, we are still ahead because of the satisfaction that is brought to us in carrying this hope. If we are right, if eternal life lies ahead, in our future is fulfillment greater than any attained in fulfilling a physical desire.

## X

# ROSICRUCIAN PHILOSOPHY

“A true Rosicrucian usually becomes a walking question mark and gradually begins to analyze all past knowledge and belief.”

—H. Spencer Lewis

**I**T IS TRUE that the one purpose of being a Rosicrucian is to seek knowledge and ways to use that knowledge for the betterment of oneself and of humanity. However, there is no one system of thought that can be classified technically and strictly under the term *Rosicrucian philosophy*. What I have attempted to outline in these chapters has been some of the foundations of thought upon which Rosicrucian knowledge is based, but ultimately and finally, the Rosicrucian philosophy is the philosophy that the sincere individual evolves through his study of the Rosicrucian teachings.

It is important to emphasize that an individual philosophy is developed by the person who studies the Rosicrucian teachings and the principles that underlie these teachings. It is not necessary for that individual to have a complete grasp of all the philosophies that man has evolved through history, but rather to be able to bring together in his consciousness an expression of a knowledge that leads the individual toward the evolving of his own attributes and abilities.

Dr. William H. Halverson has written, “Of all the elements that play a role in determining the affairs of men, none are so persuasive or so

far reaching in their influence as the ideas to which men subscribe.” Dr. Halverson proceeds further to state, “Philosophy is man’s quest for the unity of knowledge.”

These ideas are consistent with the statement of Dr. H. Spencer Lewis that the Rosicrucian is a walking question mark, that he analyzes every piece of information and every experience in order to determine the usefulness of that information or experience insofar as his own life is concerned, particularly with regard to his own development, mentally, spiritually, psychically, and physically.

If man has the ability to question, then he is able to realize the truth that the most important influences in his life are the ideas to which men subscribe. Man will reflect his ideas. This has been stated so many ways on so many occasions that it should be an obvious fact. As someone has said, “I am a part of everything I have ever met.” In other words, he indicated one’s total environment was something that goes into the composite whole that becomes the expression of his personality.

Among the many purposes of life, there is a need for man to have ideas to uphold and to seek a unity of knowledge that will make these ideas purposeful. Human endeavor should be directed toward a goal that will make it possible for man to relate himself intimately with all the existing forces that exist in the entire universe. The universe is an extension of the source that caused it to be. This is particularly stressed in the concept of pantheism, which we have discussed in earlier chapters. As such, man is a part, then, of the expression of the force that has brought about his creation, has brought about the basis of his expression. While man cannot summarize or define on the basis of mathematical certainty the purpose of life, it still must be to *be* a walking question mark, to concern himself about the universe of which he is a part, and to develop ideas to which he can subscribe that will be suitable to uphold him in his journey through life.

Such was the message of Plato in trying to point man’s way in an area of ideas that superseded the material world. Such is the concept of trying to develop a unity of knowledge that will weave together, as it were, the threads of individual pieces of knowledge into a pattern that will provide an all-over expression of life.

In the preceding chapters, we might consider the various topics that may be referred to as individual threads of our total experience. We have considered the hidden, the occult. We have considered that there are areas of physical and beyond the physical. Other subjects have been the nature of knowledge, the Absolute, purpose, certain attributes of man and his experiences in dealing with the world and the fact that he faces both the areas that are conducive to his growth and those which thwart his purpose. Then we have considered mysticism and immortality as important subjects in the experience of man's growth.

Each of these threads, while seeming separate, should be considered to be not isolated subjects, not separate disciplines of man's thought, but a continuous process that must be brought together and the filaments of each thread woven into a tapestry that will cover us, as it were, in such a manner that it will become a unity of knowledge with which man can develop himself and strive toward the infinite from which he sprang.

The Rosicrucian philosophy, then, is a combination of all sources of knowledge, those known and those unknown. As long as the human being expresses himself in a physical body, as a physical element, he will strive to reach out and put together these individual portions of knowledge, trying to develop a pattern which will make life for him more understandable, more useful, and more purposeful. This will be the foundations of Rosicrucian knowledge and upon these foundations can be built a philosophy of life, a Rosicrucian philosophy.

There is more, however, to the Rosicrucian philosophy than mere speculation. There are many fine philosophical and religious concepts that have been developed throughout man's history of thought, but more important in a sense than the basis of a philosophy is the use of this philosophy. In this respect, the Rosicrucians believe that the Rosicrucian philosophy is unique because the Rosicrucian teachings provide the direction and the exercises necessary to make practical many of these concepts, so that man may apply them to his life and utilize ideas not merely as a hypothetical concept floating above him and beyond his reach, but as the basis of a true philosophy of life that is practical and that functions in his daily conduct and becomes a part of his behavior pattern. More important than all the highest aspirations that can be expressed in philosophical or even religious concepts is the



ability of man to take these ideas and put them into practical use and application. That is the message of the Rosicrucian teachings.

Of what value, then, we might ask, would be the development of a philosophy of life? It may help us if we conscientiously use a philosophy in which we have developed convictions to meet the obstacles of daily existence. There is a tendency for all of us to overdo the emphasis upon obstacles in life that really have no significance. We concern ourselves over many grievances. We tend to exaggerate words and gestures that we think relate to ourselves. We have a tendency to glorify those things in which we believe. The objects of our affections are sometimes overly emphasized in the efforts we make to express our concern, and yet we permit our spirit to drop to the lowest ebb the moment anything goes wrong, frequently blaming someone else or conditions exterior to ourselves for what is our own fault, and for our refusal to look beyond the material level of our existence.

We depend too much upon others to support us, to give us praise, to express their opinions. In that respect, we frequently live a life expressing in tolerance of everyone except ourselves when we should be looking within.

George Santyana said, "Man is not made to understand life but to live it." As I have frequently stated in these pages, while no philosophy may give the ultimate answer to the questions that man has asked to the perennial problems of philosophy, the inquiring mental process can teach man to live. He may understand only in degree but to the extent that he understands, he can apply, and he can live to the fullest extent of his potentialities. That is the true challenge of life.

This, in summary, means that Rosicrucian philosophy is a philosophy of life, the philosophy of life that the intelligent individual develops through his own study, contemplation, and meditation. This is well illustrated in the fact that no two Rosicrucians subscribe in detail to a fundamental creed or belief or dogma, such as has frequently been expressed in religion.

I know that I disagree with some other Rosicrucians. I have disagreed with some of the Rosicrucian officials with whom I have been associated. We have each developed our own philosophy of life, but have found a common source of knowledge and application of that

knowledge in the Rosicrucian teachings. Hundreds of books similar to this one could be written upon the foundations of Rosicrucian knowledge or upon Rosicrucian philosophy, or upon philosophy and other disciplines in general, but each individual will take from those sources the principles that are most applicable to his existence and to his life.

The question as to what constitutes Rosicrucian knowledge is a complex one, because it, like every system of thought or any course of study, is obviously one which deals with various subjects. Rosicrucian knowledge is combined in an entire philosophy which borrows from many philosophies and the experience of many individuals, and is translated into a philosophy of life by the conscientious students. This is sometimes referred to in various forms, such as the Rosicrucian teachings, the Rosicrucian philosophy, or as a Rosicrucian system of thought.

Philosophy in general has not always been restricted to any specific subject matter, since the word in its derivation means a love of wisdom.

The philosopher has been the individual who attempted to examine all knowledge, learning, and experience, in an effort to draw wise conclusions as a result of his examination and contemplation.

Some philosophers have believed that all men desire knowledge, that they are born with that desire. They base this conclusion upon the apparently obvious truth that all men do seek knowledge in one way or another. The knowledge that one individual seeks may be considerably different from what another may seek, but man in all his activities indicates that he is consciously or unconsciously directing his efforts toward learning something.

The learning that some may acquire may be no more than the satisfying of curiosity, or the answering of a comparatively unimportant question, but still the individual with a normal curiosity and the resultant questions that arise in his mind is attempting to gain knowledge through the answers. Worthwhile knowledge can be translated into useful experience. This is usually the knowledge that man gains which he can place to effective use.

Whether or not a man finds knowledge useful depends a great deal upon his point of view and his aim in life. If we accept as a basis of understanding that the one purpose of man's life on earth is his adjustment to the environment in which he finds himself living, then it would seem that the obvious conclusion from this premise would be that man can adjust himself better as he acquires and utilizes more knowledge.

The concept of the Rosicrucian philosophy states that man is not only a citizen of the physical, but he is an existent entity in the Cosmic; that is, he is a soul expressing in the manifestation of all existence. Therefore, the Rosicrucian seeks knowledge for the same fundamental purpose as anyone else, which is to relate himself better to his environment, and therefore to find an explanation for the purpose of life and his place in that process.

At the same time, this concept widens the horizon of environment. Environment for the Rosicrucian should be considered to be everything that is, and the greater knowledge that we attain and our ability to utilize it, the nearer we will come to the understanding of all the forces that exist in the universe about us.

The Rosicrucian philosophy, therefore, offers an extensive knowledge through its synthesis of mysticism, science, and art. These three fields are quite inclusive of all that man seeks to attain in his psychic, his physical, and his aesthetic foundation for living. These three fields represent the composite knowledge of man. They stand in complete because man is still evolving. He is still growing and developing physically and mentally.

Therefore each passing generation has the obligation of adding to the knowledge as represented in these fields, and the present generation benefits from the heritage that has come from the past.

Each individual who fails to contribute to these fields of knowledge, even if it be in a small way, has to that degree failed in living. According to the law of Karma, life becomes a repetition of similar circumstances and events until man grasps his obligation to learn and thereby push back the limits of the unknown to a better and more complete understanding of the Cosmic.

It is important to realize that mere restatement of knowledge already attained is not the creative growth that is important to the human being. If I would propose what I claim to be a new science or a new philosophy, and upon examination it was found that the only thing new was the terminology used to express it, then it is obvious that I have only made a restatement of already existent facts.

Since man constantly searches and strives for knowledge, there are always those who in an attempt to benefit by this urge on the part of their fellow men will constantly hold out so-called new ideas or systems which in the final analysis turn out to be old facts in newly coined terms.

We have the right and privilege to use the knowledge accumulated through history, but we are also given the ability to reason and to rearrange these facts creatively for more usefulness.

We are given the curiosity and the impetus to discover new facts. These are the challenge of man's growth and evolution.

Therefore, look upon all knowledge as a challenge to creative thought. Do not fall into the habit of merely repeating established facts or ideas which were formulated by another person.

Through the accumulation of knowledge and experience, you will evolve a philosophy of life and the Rosicrucian teachings, when applied to the individual life, will be the means of directing the individual toward the utilization of a philosophy that otherwise would be no more than theory.

# THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AMORC

## *Purpose and Work of the Order*

The Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is a philosophical and initiatic tradition. As students progress in their studies, they are initiated into the next level or degree.

Rosicrucians are men and women around the world who study the laws of nature in order to live in harmony with them. Individuals study the Rosicrucian lessons in the privacy of their own homes on subjects such as the nature of the soul, developing intuition, classical Greek philosophy, energy centers in the body, and self-healing techniques.

The Rosicrucian tradition encourages each student to discover the wisdom, compassion, strength, and peace that already reside within each of us.

[www.rosicrucian.org](http://www.rosicrucian.org)