



THROUGH  
THE  
MIND'S  
EYE

BY RALPH M. LEWIS

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## DEDICATION

To  
The Memory of  
My Wife  
—R.M.L.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to express my appreciation for the valuable typing of the manuscript by Cynthia Swanson.

*Ralph M. Lewis*

*September 1981*

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# INTRODUCTION

**F**ORTUNATELY, WE HAVE been endowed with peripheral vision and are not limited by nature to only that which may be seen directly ahead of us. Mental vision also has its boundaries, yet these are not just those which are imposed upon it by nature but by the will of man. As a consequence, we often deny ourselves those experiences that more expansive observation and thought might have produced.

It is advantageous to have a primary goal in life. It becomes the focus of our mental powers. However, if the line of mental vision is too narrow, we exclude those observations, experiences, and thoughts that could cause the final goal to be far more gratifying.

Our life, our personal response to it, is determined by our evaluation of experiences. The more we perceive and think of what we experience, the greater the breadth of our understanding. There is also then, more of the things of existence which we can draw upon to create a world to our liking.

We are quite aware of the impact of environment upon our lives. It is a tremendous factor in influencing both our thoughts and the actions which follow from them. However, it is one thing to respond to a new experience from an entirely individual point of view, and quite another to appraise its value from knowledge derived from the experiences of others.

The great importance of history is attributed to learning how men in the past responded to certain circumstances and events which have their parallels today. History reveals the errors which men have made in their confrontation with unanticipated occurrences. It likewise discloses what men have learned in their relations with each other, the lessons of which have descended to us.

There are many things we should know that might be beneficial

to us, which ordinarily do not come to our attention. They are not necessarily all that which we should believe or accept, yet they often may confirm what we think by the rational presentation of their ideas. On the other hand, such may cause us to question our conclusions open-mindedly and contemplate their value to us. Most of us can look back upon our lives by means of self-analysis and admit that a previous concept or decision was not right and that we might have acted differently if we had known otherwise.

Psychologically and philosophically, we can only arrive at a personal notion of the good of anything by first knowing its antithesis—that which, by contrast, seems bad. Therefore, how—right or wrong we are about our evaluation of human experience, of our ideas and ideals, can be rationally appraised by contemplating any contrary ideas which may exist. It is *through the mind's eye*, our mental vision, that we discover the real essence of the vicissitudes of life. Such provides us, figuratively speaking, with a peripheral vision of relative and practical truths that might otherwise escape us.

This book, *Through the Mind's Eye*, seeks to introduce a variety of subjects which have an effect upon not only our personal lives but upon modern society. It is not a preachment; it is not a continuity of doctrines; it is not recommending any particular way of life. Rather, the book is an anthology, a collection of challenging thoughts, of past ideas, whose effects we now experience and perhaps live by, and also those ideas which we confront today. The book is concerned, too, with speculation about how our thought and action should be directed toward the onrushing tomorrow.

It is hoped that one or more of these facts, theories, and abstractions herein may fit into the fabric of the reader's beliefs and personal philosophy. But even if they are rejected, we believe the reader will derive satisfaction in the renewed conviction arising out of his own outlook on life—its past, present, and what the future should be.

*"It is not what men believe that matters, but what actions emerge from their beliefs."*



## Chapter 1

# IS THE UNIVERSE CONSCIOUS?

IN THE ABSTRACT speculation of this subject, we must first consider how the word *universe* is to be accepted. We are not thinking of the universe as a complex of galaxies and island universes which are an outgrowth of a primary beginning. Rather, we are thinking in the terms of *Absolute Being*. The ancient Greek philosopher Parmenides contended that Being could not have come into existence. For Being to have come into existence, it would need to have arisen from something or from a “nothing.” If, however, we give “nothing” such an identity as to make of it a “something,” then that too is Being. We are then obliged to ask. Whence came this “nothing”? In this manner, we can be led on and on, *ad infinitum*.

It, of course, challenges common credulity to assume that the Cosmos, considered as the whole of Reality, had no beginning. Such an idea ordinarily conflicts with our common experience of causation, in which everything seems to have a cause. Therefore it is presumed that Being, the Cosmos, must also have had a cause. But such reasoning only leads us to imagine a prior state and then once again to question whence it came. We conclude from this reasoning that only Being could exist, and that it is eternal and immutable. By *immutable* we do not intend to imply that the greater universe is inert or that it cannot express itself in myriad ways. Rather, our intention is to convey the idea that Being can never be other than what it is. There is no substance or state into which Being could retrogress or dissolve, for that would presume the existence of something other than itself.

In fact, we can use the philosophical abstraction that the idea of a “nothing” is first dependent on the perception of something. More succinctly, what I see as existing, for example, I can therefore imagine

as also not existing. It is this idea of something which gives rise to the notion of a state, or condition of nonexistence. A pure nothing, if it existed, could never engender the idea of anything coming out of nothing if we did not have a previous experience of Reality, of things seeming to exist.

This brings us then to the theory of evolution. Being *is*, but in human experience it does not seem to be inert. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c. 500 B.C.) said that nothing ever is, but everything is becoming; all things are passing, nothing abides. "You cannot step twice into the same river, for fresh waters are ever-flowing in upon you." Thus permanency of form, of particulars, is but an illusion. If there is fixity, then there would be a predeterminism, but have things been ordained to be only as we perceive them? More simply, was there a plan for the whole Cosmos? Are the changes that are occurring but a moving upward in an evolutionary scale toward an immanent or indwelling idea in the Cosmos? Again, would this not result in a state of ultima Thule, a final stage that would be reached in some infinite period of time? And further, then, would Being be arrested under a condition of final inactivity? Such a concept would not be reconciled with the theory that Being is eternally active and becoming.

Here we are brought into conflict with two opposing ideas. One is that there is an innate intelligence existing in Being, which is its motivating force. This intelligence plans, determines, and in its so-called evolutionary process is but a progression from an original Mind Cause. The other concept is that the whole operation of primary Being is mechanistic; simply, it does what it does by the necessity of what it is, just as gravity functions as it does with out any immanent purpose behind or in it.

Of course, another question often considered is whether evolution—that is, a series of changes from simplicity to complexity—actually constitutes a superior state of an organism or integrated thing.

The theory of *holism* affirms that an organic or integrated whole has a more independent and greater reality than the parts of which it consists. This would make the evolvment into complexity a greater state of reality than those parts out of which it evolved. According to

such reasoning, a star then is greater than an atom. But are quantity and intricacy the criteria for determining a goal in nature, or is this just the human idea of evolution? Simply, does nature consider the star more important than the atom because of its complexity? One must take into consideration that the complex states do not always remain so. Devolution sets in and returns them to their simple original constituents. Consequently, we have no assurance that what we term evolution is indicative of a kind of predeterminism.

However, many are the noted philosophers who have conceived a substratum of what to them appears as axiomatic of intelligence, that is, a *purpose* existing in the Cosmos. Without referring to such ancient Greek philosophers as Anaxagoras, we can relate the ideas of relatively more recent philosophers in this regard. Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) expounded the doctrine of *sub specie aeternitatis*—that there is a kind of underlying intelligence accounting for law and order in the universe, and that the whole of Reality is not a mere mechanistic process.

Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716) expounded the doctrine of *petites perceptions*. Briefly, this declared that behind our ordinary conscious act, deep in our mind, is a reservoir of dark, obscure consciousness, that is, unconscious mental states. Regarding these various levels of consciousness in the human, Leibnitz stated, “In order the better to form an opinion of these minute perceptions [*petites perceptions*] which we can not distinguish in the crowd, I generally make use of the example of the roar or noise which strikes us when we are on the shore. To hear this noise as we do we must surely hear the parts of which the whole is made up, that is to say the noises of each wave, although each of these little noises only makes itself heard in the confused combination of all the others together, that is to say in the actual roar, and would not be noticed if the wave which makes it were the only one. For it is necessary that we should be slightly affected by the motion of this wave, and that we should have some perception of each of these noises, however small they may be; otherwise we should not have the perception of a hundred thousand waves, since a hundred thousand nothings cannot make a something. We never sleep so soundly but that we have some feeble and confused feeling, and we should never be awakened by the loudest noise in the world, if we had

not some perception of its beginning, small as it is; just as we should never break a rope by the greatest exertion in the world, if it were not to some small extent strained and stretched by lesser efforts, although the slight extension they produce is not apparent.”

What Leibnitz is bringing out here is that our consciousness is a *collective consciousness*, that whatever we are conscious of is, in part, the fusion of a series of lesser awareness combining to give us the realization of the whole.

Is consciousness, however, necessarily *mind*? Can the universe, in the material sense, be regarded as having a consciousness, just as we attribute that phenomenon to a function of a living organism? In his famous work *Monadology* Leibnitz attributed a kind of indwelling consciousness to what he termed *monads*. These monads were stated by him to be innumerable particles in the universe and of which all things consisted, even living matter. Each monad was imbued with a consciousness of a specific duty which it had to perform. Some constituted a so-called lower order, as the structure of physical phenomena; others of plants, animals, and finally, even the human soul.

According to this theory there is an obvious correlation between consciousness and intelligence. In other words, there would be sensitivity in each particular monad; it would be restricted to conforming or responding to certain functions which each monad had to perform individually. The universe, then, from this point of view, would be a collection of these elementary units with their built-in “purpose.” The consciousness is the means of attracting to it any other units (monads) necessary for the fulfillment of its function. Yet the individual monad does not exhibit intelligence in the sense of understanding the *how* or the *why* of what it does.

Can then the universe be conscious of what it is, whatever that essence may be? This consciousness, then, would drive the universe to persist in its very nature of Being. Nevertheless, it would not have a Mind Cause, a *purpose* such as man is wont to think. Such a teleological purpose would imply a movement toward finality, an ultimate end. Since there can be naught but pure Being, eternal and immutable in essence, such a determined cause leading to a relative inertia would be contradictory. It

is the seeming repetition of phenomena as perceived by man which gives rise to the human concept that Being follows a determined law and order. But in this thinking we are confronted with the subjective ideas of time and space. To the human mind, such may seem to be objective realities and to be infinite. But what may seem to be a constant succession—that is, a phenomenon having a regular order in a period of time—may actually be going through a change not perceptible to man. It would be a condition that would only suggest to the human mind as being eternal.

The fact that we perceive phenomena that, according to the speed of light, occurred a billion years ago and yet are of the same nature now is not proof of a purposeful order. We are only presuming that such phenomena have a built-in infinite, eternal state as we experience them. The time of which we can be—conscious of a phenomenon's existence is no assurance that in a more remote period it was not different. Further, we cannot be certain that it is not going through a change which will make it different from what it is or seems to be now.

Pure Being, the noumenal world, *the thing in itself*, has no specific fixed qualitative nature. As Immanuel Kant has said, the human mind can only perceive the phenomenal world, and what he attributes to it is his related understanding. It would seem, in human comprehension, that it would be more appropriate to conceive of a conscious universe rather than of one possessed of mind having human-like qualities as its basic cause, such as we are inclined to attribute to it.

Now let us depart from the consideration of the macrocosm, the greater universe, to that of the microcosm, the finite world of which man is a part. *What are we?*

Theology and philosophy have long attempted a definition of man. Each has attributed to him certain basic qualities. However, theology and philosophy have often not been in agreement on just what these constituents of the human are. To refer to man as a composite of body and soul, or body, spirit, and mind, for example, still leaves vague the concept of *self*. The facts that science has disclosed about man in such realms as physiology, anatomy, biology, and psychology have not been integrated sufficiently to remove the aura of mystery surrounding the personal self.

When we refer to *self*, just what do we mean by that term? What does it represent to us? Our separate being, independent from all else, does not alone describe the personal nature of self. If we were not able to perceive our physical person visually, we still would have a consciousness of self. Even if we were not able to have the faculty of touch, we still could not deny the existence of our self. In fact, if any of our receptor organs were suppressed, self would remain if consciousness still persisted.

There is no particular quality corresponding to the nature of self. In other words, self has no such distinctive quality for identification such as color or sound, hard, soft, large, small, or hot and cold. If we fall back upon philosophical abstractions we might generalize by saying that self as a phenomenon is *consciousness of consciousness*. This means that some aspect of consciousness stands apart from the whole and perceives itself. This awareness of the stream of consciousness by itself constitutes a dichotomy, that is, a division of consciousness into two parts insofar as its function is concerned. Or we could say there is a mirror image of the nature of consciousness, the image being the idea of self which we have.

It would be difficult, if at all possible, to prove empirically that self is aware of its own nature. Yet there are phenomena which, although not being the substance of self, are nonetheless related to the workings of it in our own being. If we just give thought to these phenomena, we then have a better appreciation of what at least we commonly call the *self*.

Let us begin with such a common phenomenon as thinking. Here again we are confronted with a complex process of our being. Just what is thinking? Is perceiving—that is, registering impressions which come to us through our sense organs—thought? For example, is the visual sensation of the color red, thought? Is the tactile sensation of cold, thought? These impressions, vibratory in nature, go through a transition in the brain and consciousness to compose the idea which we associate with them. More simply, this sensation, its quality, is given ideation.

But thinking is more than an experience alone. Simply receiving external impressions and knowing them is not the whole process of thinking. If we, figuratively speaking, isolate an idea that forms in consciousness and try to determine its cause, we are then thinking. If we begin to associate mental images—that is, ideas—we are thinking. If we endeavor to react to impressions not just involuntarily but to evaluate them in terms of ourselves, we are *thinking*. If we establish objectives to be attained, and give these objectives a temporal quality causing them happen in the future, we are likewise thinking.

We can subdivide our thinking processes. One, which we may call *perception*, is the receiving and realizing of impressions. The other process we may term *conception*. This latter gives our experience identity or meaning to us. Experience or perception, the gaining of impressions, is the material which conception uses. To think, you first must think about something; there must be an idea related in some degree to previous experience. Simply, we cannot begin with a virgin idea; a thought must incorporate the building materials of ideas engendered by experience.

How this whole phenomenon of thought functions organically, that is, in a physical sense, is what neurologists, brain specialists, and psychologists endeavor both to discover and explain. However, the manner in which we voluntarily arrange our thoughts to arrive at new ideas, or the process of conception, is given several classifications. One of these is called *reason*. Associated with it is *sylogistics*, a branch of logic in which there is the intentional combining of ideas, or the arranging of them, into an order that will bring forth greater enlightenment. Arriving at new and satisfying premises or conclusions does not necessarily mean that such constitutes *truths*. For example, as our ancestors gazed into the heavens and noted the movement of certain celestial bodies, they found it *reasonable* to say that the heavens revolved around the Earth.

Two basic methods of syllogistical reasoning are *deductive* and *inductive*. These are part of the system of formal logic; yet, whether we have any knowledge of this subject of logic or not, in our reasoning we all commonly resort to deduction and induction. Succinctly, *deductive*

reasoning is the method from the general to the specific. For example, we are aware of a particular event and we desire to know what elements contributed to it; what its causes were. For example, what caused the decline of the Mayan civilization? By deductive reasoning, we would try to search out those factors which in particular may have been its cause.

The *inductive* method is the principal tool of science. It consists of reasoning from some specific fact, a particular leading up to the general or underlying law of the phenomenon. For further example, a criminologist may select a particular piece of evidence and by the inductive method seek to discover the general motivating factor involved. Sir Francis Bacon is credited with advocating the inductive method in science. In this connection, Bacon placed importance on *negative instances*. This consists of stripping away in one's reasoning all instances which appear to have no relationship to the phenomenon which is under investigation.

*Imagination* is yet another of the important phenomena of which self is capable. No one is without this attribute, though some persons are more endowed with it than others. Students of academic psychology and philosophy have theorized on this mental process extensively. To even have a rudimentary understanding of it, however, does bring us a greater appreciation of the marvel of self at work.

Imagination employs three divisions of time insofar as consciousness is concerned. First, imagination employs the *past*; it draws upon ideas, the result of previous experience. These become its basic materials. Simply, one begins with the *known*. And the known to each of us is of the past.

However, when we think, it is always of the *present* moment, even though the ideas brought forth from memory at the time are of the past. But the process of imagination is *the future*; that is, it is desirous of creating, bringing into existence that which is not of the past and which may not be objectified until a *future* time. The function of imagination is to arrange elements of our thoughts so that they may constitute a new order and an image of a thing or an event as yet unknown in actual experience. No person, as we have said, can have a completely



original idea, one that is divested of anything previously known. No creation by man has any such absolute originality. Imagination projects elements of the known so as to adapt them to an end sought.

Fantasy which lacks conscious direction deviates from creative imagination in that there need not be any conformity to known law and order. In this type of fantasy one unquestionably follows that which pleases the mind, even if it is beyond all probability. For instance, fantasy may conceive an elephant suddenly transforming itself into a human being. However, this could not be based upon a physical law of nature; therefore, it would be futile to determine intentionally whether such a possibility could exist in nature. On the other hand, creative imagination will, by contrast to this kind of unintentional fantasy, endeavor to utilize the known so as to manifest that which is imagined.

*Memory* is a most vital factor in relation to the phenomenon of self. The English philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) said, "Had we no memory, we never should have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects which constitutes our self or person. But having once acquired this notion of causation from the memory, we can extend the same chain of causes, and consequently the identity of our persons beyond our memory . . ." Hume, however, gave greater credit to memory than to imagination. Memory, he said, is the direct result of experience, whereas imagination may often lead to the exaggeration of ideas and self-deceit. In these remarks Hume was evidently referring to fantasy which lacks intentional direction.

What of the *emotions*? We are more inclined to identify them with the self than other functions of the body and brain. With most of us, emotions are far more motivating than are thinking, reasoning, and imagination. The emotions are more specifically essential to personal survival, and they give rise to many of the ideas which we have.

Pain and pleasure are the guidelines for the survival of the living organism. To use an analogy, pain and pleasure are the red and green lights in life, with certain limitations. Pain, as the red light, informs the organism that something is disturbing the internal rhythmic harmony upon which its continuance depends. There is nothing that so forcefully engenders the instinct of caution like pain. As for pleasure, this informs

us that the titillating sensation being experienced is in accord with the vital processes of the organism. It encourages us to continue such conducive effects, provided that they do not cross the threshold of safety, so as to become an excess and then retrogress to pain.

The emotions are related to pain and pleasure in that they serve them in various ways. Fear induces caution; it warns us of possible endangering of the self. Without normal fear, man would not survive, as he would have no hesitancy in engaging a threat to life.

Love is the attraction for something that will conceivably gratify the mental or physical aspect of being. Love is the desire for pleasure, or call it happiness, of varied kinds. Each of the emotions can be analyzed in terms of such a relationship. Hatred is often founded on the fear of what seems to demean or detract from the personal ego.

Compassion, or sympathy, is a form of empathy wherein the individual is extending his personal feelings in a circumstance so as to include another. In other words, in compassion we vicariously feel the hurt which another is experiencing, and we wish to help that other person surmount the hurt in the manner we might personally use under similar circumstances.

The so-called psychic side of man consists of the more subtle phenomena of mind, brain, and consciousness. These subtleties elude specific relationships to such basics as we have touched upon. However, in the sensations that they produce, these psychic impressions are related to ones which we experience from the common receptor senses. The sensations which they arouse are feelings contiguous to the emotions, but it is often difficult to state specifically to which emotions they are related.

We cannot pass by the attribute of will without some comment. The subject of will has engaged philosophers since antiquity. Modern psychologists have diverse opinions about it. Let us think for a moment about will, quite apart from any technical definition. We will to do something, but why? Will is a *desire*; it is an urge caused by thought, which is stimulated either by internal or external impressions. However, will is a dominant desire; it commands the full volition of our being.

We will to do one thing in preference to another because will, as a desire, exceeds at the time all other ideation or even sensations which we might experience. Will power is not a separate entity or attribute of our being; it is a phenomenon by which the Mind focuses its energy upon a single thought to make of it a dominant *desire* that compels action.

The ancients were right when they said that the microcosm, the small universe, encompasses mysteries as great as the macrocosm, our greater universe. Our being and the phenomenon of self are certainly one of the greatest realms of the microcosm. Each of us each day, can become better acquainted with it by a little self-analysis, wherein we endeavor to learn *what we are*. The ancient injunction, "Know thyself," said to have appeared over a temple portal in ancient Delphi, is worthy of our contemplation.

## Chapter 2

# IS EVOLUTION AN ACCEPTABLE THEORY?

**T**HE STRONGEST OBJECTION to the theory that man has descended from lower organisms comes from the fundamentalist religious sects. They contend that the evolution of the species directly contradicts the biblical story of creation and that it also tends to degrade man.

The biblical account in Genesis conceives of man as a spontaneous creation, that is, a creation that came into existence in the physical form in which he now appears. It also states that man is the image of his Creator, being the highest creation in terms of the faculties and attributes that he exhibits. If, of course, the Bible is to be taken literally as being the exact word of God and on those grounds no further facts can be considered, then one conclusively closes his mind to all other knowledge.

In numerous ways, science has shown by means of empirical knowledge that the Bible is a collection of legends, historical facts, and personal revelations. The Bible can be refuted in part, especially when one realizes that those who contributed to it lacked much of the knowledge available today.

Several centuries ago a biblical scholar named James Ussher went so far as to assign the year 4004 B.C. to the time of creation. This date is easily refuted scientifically by geology, astronomy, archeology, and Egyptology. It is known from the translation of Egyptian hieroglyphs and cuneiform tablets that there were well-established cultures that had been in existence for centuries at the time the beginning of creation was supposed to take place.

Geologists, by means of the so-called Earth clock (the ages of the Earth revealed in its strata), disclose that this globe has been in existence for millions of years. Radioactive carbon in objects can be recorded in such a manner as to establish their age accurately. This latest method of physical science has confirmed estimates that archaeologists have given to artifacts that far antedate the creation date set forth by James Ussher.

The modern space age and its space probes and explorations have put to a severe test the literal interpretations of the Bible. Science is not resorting to heterodoxy or heresy; rather, it is impartially searching for truth. If it is established that life exists on other celestial bodies and not exclusively on Earth, and if other beings equal to or superior in intelligence to man are found, this will then make erroneous the statement that the Earth alone was selected as the habitat of an especially created being—man. It must be realized that the early prophets and contributors to the Old Testament accounts did not conceive of heavenly bodies as being other worlds. In fact, most of them were of the opinion that cosmologically the Earth is the principal body in the universe.

Shortly after Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) promulgated his idea that the Sun and not the Earth was the center of our universe, he became the victim of attack by theologians. They accused him of detracting from the divine eminence and importance of man. Man was God's chosen creation, they said, citing the Bible. The Earth was created solely for him.

Consequently, if the Earth were not the center of the universe and if it held a subordinate position, man's status would also be inferior. Copernicus himself wrote, "In the center of everything rules the sun; for who in this most beautiful temple could place this luminary at another or better place whence it can light up the whole at once?—in fact, the sun setting in a royal throne guides the family of stars surrounding him . . . the earth conceives by the sun, through him becomes pregnant with annual fruits."

Today, nearly five centuries after Copernicus, truth is again in conflict with religious orthodoxy. Even a high school student in his studies has

the evolutionary processes in nature demonstrated to him. Breeders of cattle and poultry know the mutations that result by special breeding; in fact, they depend on such for the improvement of their stock. The horticulturist and even the amateur gardener can discern the variations caused in plant growth and form by environmental effects.

What seems to strike particularly at the human ego and dignity is the belief that organic evolution involving man means that "he comes from a monkey." Most of those who acrimoniously inveigh against the theory of evolution have never read any of Darwin's works or any other textbooks on the subject. Their opinion is that evolution is atheistically designed to attack their faith.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) did not declare that man is a direct descendant of any primate. His postulations and researches present the idea that there is "a tree of genealogical descent" and that there are related forms branching off from common parents. Simply put, he meant that life came originally from simpler common forms. In the passing of time, these common forms as parents had many branches from their original stock. These branches or their variations account for the different species due to natural selection and environmental factors.

In his renowned work *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin states that these variations account for different organisms as the result of competition for restricted food. Those with favorable variations survive and produce their kind. Man was not created as he is, but various factors in his existence, in his gradual survival, have brought about his organic structure. Further, the impact of present conditions will gradually make other changes in him. Man's hands, for example, were not spontaneously given to him as they are, but their prehensile quality was developed with his need to cope with his environment.

In his works, Darwin shows that the embryological development of the individual "tended to follow roughly the evolutionary development of their races revealed by fossil remains." In other words, the human embryo goes through changes which can be observed and which correspond to earlier forms of organisms whose fossilized remains have been found. This indicates that man preserves in himself the

early forms of living organisms through which his physical being passed until he reached his present highest stage of development.

Instead of this being shocking and detracting from the status of man, it actually indicates that man may not yet have reached his zenith of attainment. There is the potentiality of still further development, which is a yet greater tribute to cosmic law and phenomena. We think that Charles Darwin beautifully expressed this thought in the following words: "Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having risen, instead of his being placed there aboriginally, may give him hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future."

Organically, man is an animal. Attempting to separate or to distinguish man's organic functions physically from other animals is an absurdity. The cells of the human have the same basic function, such as irritability, metabolism, reproduction, and excretion, as living cells in other forms of lower life. It is man's physical vehicle which the evolutionary theory states is a product of evolution and continues to be.

What reflection does this have upon the religious, the mystical, and philosophical conception that man is "a living soul"? Theology contends from its hagiography, its collection of sacred writings, that man alone has soul. From only one point of view can this postulation be supported. Man, at least, as the most intelligent being on Earth, has the most highly developed self-consciousness.

This consciousness of his emotional and psychic nature causes him to conceive that entity of his personality which he calls soul. He terms it *divine*, and it is divine if we designate all cosmic forces as being of a divine nature. It is erroneous to say that man alone has a soul. If, as previously stated, beings having a self-consciousness equivalent to man are found in the future to exist in the greater universe, then, certainly, they would have the equal right to claim such an entity as soul.

Until man became *Homo sapiens*, a rational, highly developed self-conscious being, he had only the essence of soul, but no conception of

it. The lower animals possess that same vital force and consciousness which gradually evolved in man to its own awareness and designates itself *soul*. Those people who fear that the theory of evolution demeans man's status will perhaps learn before another century has passed that there are many other factors striking at man's egotistic conception of being "the central object of all creation."



## Chapter 3

# THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN RACE

**T**HERE IS CONSIDERABLE interest today in people tracing their “roots”—their family origin. Knowledge of such may or may not be gratifying to the ego, but otherwise it is not particularly expedient to the present day. When referring to the human race in general we may presume the term *roots* refers to the origin of man.

The time factor of the earliest known specimens that can be designated as man is being moved back further and further. The earliest date proclaimed today by the renowned family of anthropologists, the Leakeys, is several million years. Africa is now being recognized as the possible locale of the earliest manlike creature, *Homo erectus*, the erect walking hominid.

Throughout the earlier periods of the science of anthropology the honor of being the first center of human life has shifted from one continent to another. The Sinanthropus, or Peking man, was long heralded as our ancestor. This resulted, however, in considerable controversy as to the authenticity of the findings. Kenya, in East Africa, has brought forth skeletal remains which, according to radiocarbon dating, are said to be nearly three million years old. Examination of the skulls of such early specimens reveals a capacity of 600-800 cubic centimeters. This is about half the brain capacity of modern man.

Findings of more recent human remains during the last Ice Age, estimated to be some 30,000 years old, show evidence of simple craftsmanship. Pebbles were used as tools for cutting and percussion, that is, hammering. The shaping or selecting of flint for tools was then acquired. This consisted first of percussion, that is, knocking off the edges of flint rock to a desired shape.

Slowly, progress was made to the point of pressure. This consisted of pressing a stone along the edges of the flint to remove undesired parts. Attaching these Hints to the pieces of wood that were grooved to hold them and then affixing handles was a much later technical advance.

As one anthropologist has noted, there seem to have been certain cultural advances existing side by side with a stagnation in the improvements of what had been done. For example, roughly executed art depicting animals by scratches on bones was found. This was an indication of imagination and creativity. However, this artwork was still carved with the same crude tools that had been in use for thousands of years.

Did variations in climate and temperature during periods of glaciation—the advance and retreat of the ice—cause man's emergence to be localized in one area of the world? We do know from extensive research that anthropoid apes were confined to Africa by climatic conditions. They never developed the ingenuity and reasoning powers to venture beyond their favorable climate to adapt themselves elsewhere. But *Homo erectus*, or walking man, and later *Homo sapiens*, or thinking man, did venture forth and exhibited a degree of adaptability to a new environment.

A question still being considered by science is this: Did man evolve from primates to hominoids—manlike creatures—solely in Africa? Are the findings of the Neanderthal man in France and Spain the result of later pilgrimages from Africa? There are traces in Europe of prehistoric peoples, called Mousterian, of the late paleolithic period. Their culture appears the same as that of the remains found in sections of Africa.

A remarkable find was made in the outskirts of Vladimir near Moscow. It was a large upper paleolithic settlement cemetery containing well-preserved burials, the date of which have been estimated to be 22,000 B.C. In one burial, apparently laid out in ceremonial form, were the skeletons of two young boys. Polished mammoth ivory beads were scattered upon what had been their clothing, and both also wore elaborate headdresses. In the burial were found a number of bracelets and rings. The burial was obviously of an advanced culture as indicated by the arrangement of the skeletons, the headdresses, and the jewelry.

Did these people originate in Russia or did they migrate from Africa?

Science does not accept the theological idea of a spontaneous generation of man. As previously mentioned, the famous estimate of 4004 B.C. for the creation of man was made by James Ussher, who based his calculations on the age of Adam's descendants as given in the Old Testament. This was later refined by Dr. John Lightfoot of Cambridge University. He claimed that "man was created by the Trinity on October 23, 4004 B.C. at nine in the morning." To accept such a date, of course, would be to reject all the empirical evidence of man's evolution throughout the eons of time. To accept the evolutionary concept does not diminish man's dependence upon the cosmic phenomena of which all reality exists. Man has evolved physically and he is continuing to evolve mentally as well. The real status of man was finally arrived at when he became a self-conscious being—when he realized himself as apart from all else. This state of creative awareness is still undergoing development, which we shall later discuss.

*Race* means breed. Race is said to have originated where the human stock was subject to certain environmental conditions over long periods of time. Physical race marks or characteristics were deeply impressed on the competitive stocks of the early world. However, no biological stock is, in a sense, invariable. Man may be subject to certain severities of climate which will eventually reproduce racial characteristics through heredity. But due to the plasticity of the human organism, generations of people subject to a new environmental condition will eventually produce different physical changes in their offspring. In other words, some human characteristics undergo alternative modifications that, once acquired, are reproduced with a high degree of regularity.

The variation is evidenced in head forms, hair texture, and in skin color. Eye color and shape and the breadth of the nose are further examples.

The cradle lands of races have been called "warm fauna and cold fauna"—in other words, animals (and humans) of cold or warm areas of the world. In these various and often extreme climates and other environmental factors, man has been subject in his early beginnings to

an intense struggle for survival. The effects of this can be recognized among existing human stocks and sets its mark for heredity and the birth of a race.

These prehistoric beginnings of race are studied by anthropometric means, which involves the observation of height and weight of skeletal remains. Such findings, of course, are not absolute, but they do show variations related to extreme climatic differences. With increasing intermingling of races in the modern world, racial distinction will become more difficult to determine. Theories have been made with some degree of viridity upon the differences in eye and nose shape, skin coloring, and height and weight as well. Certain climatic and environmental influences are attributed as the cause.

When it comes to the question of "superiority" of race, science at first attempted to relate this to intelligence and to brain capacity. However, it has been established that some primitive peoples have a brain capacity equal to the average individual living in an advanced culture (approximately 1200 cc). Furthermore, the offspring of these primitive peoples, if brought as children into an advanced culture to be reared and educated, exhibit an intelligence equal to those native to the place where they are reared.

The alleged superiority of race has been mostly due to superiority of advantage rather than any innate quality. If we consider the subject mystically, all humans are infused with the same cosmic life force and its potentials, and there is no variation. It is the exposure of the being to environmental and cultural influences which can result in the greater exhibit of intelligence.

Each of us knows of young men and women who have doctoral degrees and in other ways show a marked intelligence. The I.Q. of their parents would also reveal an excellent native intelligence, but perhaps they were not given the opportunity of their offspring to apply it through the medium of education, training, and application. Here superiority was in *advantage* only.

We refer to primitive peoples as though all such were necessarily naive and lacking in intelligence. The general designation of a primitive

people are those whose culture shows a considerable diversity from the Euroamerican one. As said previously, modern anthropology, however, has proven that taking into consideration the environment of primitive people they have often displayed in their customs and practices a high degree of intelligence. But it has not had the influence of the development of an advanced culture.

Humans often indulge in what may definitely be termed primitive reasoning. This type of reasoning seems to be innate to the human mind. We may even say it is an embryonic or elementary form of thinking. However, with experience, with literacy, and with the effects that come from a more complex culture this reasoning is most often modified. Also, this primitive type of reasoning, or what can be called "immature thinking," persists among many peoples in the so-called advanced cultures. It is not indigenous to any one race, country, or nationality. It constitutes the principal cause of persistent superstitions and the perpetuation of often meaningless customs and practices.

The persons retaining this primitive reasoning may outwardly use the habiliments of modern civilization. They may utilize all the conveniences that science and technology provide. However, such is only a veneer and adaptation which often they do not fully understand. Whenever a new and different circumstance arises for which there is no existing custom to apply, they revert to their immature thinking to provide the solution. The result, then, is often a fallacy of thinking which may compound the problem they confront rather than solve it.

What constitutes this primitive mind? The primitive mind perceives differently. We can ordinarily distinguish an objective presentation from subjective associations. In other words, we can tell the difference between the qualities of what, for example, we feel about the experience or what we may imagine about it. But with the primitive Mind the properties of a particular thing are assumed to also contain a mysterious occult force. The thing is thought to possess a certain immaterial supernatural power. The perceptions, the empirical experiences of the primitive mind are subsequently outweighed by subjective elements.

Such magical and imaginative attributes cannot be verified by sensation as can perception. For example, when we perceive

something visual we can go up to it, feel it, and by our other receptor senses verify the essence of what we see. Conversely, that which is imagined to exist as a magical property in an object cannot be verified by any external sensation. Consequently, the nature of the object is erroneously presented to our mind, or at least a confused conception of it is obtained.

It must not be thought that the perceptions of the primitive mind are necessarily clouded. Their perception or faculties—sight and hearing for example—are as fully developed as those of the mature thinker. Their wrong reasoning is due to the influence of desire, anxiety, and imagination. The imagination is excited by pressing needs which attribute qualities to the perception which do not exist in the things themselves. For instance, the individual stumbles over a stick in his path. In its form it resembles a snake to him. Then drawing upon his actual experience with such reptiles, he *imagines* the inanimate stick to possess the dangerous and fearful qualities of the reptile.

Anthropologists are of the opinion that the primitives have a more intense imagination and therefore find it difficult to distinguish the ideas engendered by it from those ideas arising from perception. Their imagination is so intense that it may often cause their death. If, for example, they have been told that they have been execrated—that is, a curse has been called down upon them—their imagination will make this suggestion become a reality in their mind and eventually cause their death. The same results of intense imagination may occur from fearing the consequences of violating a taboo. Simply, to the primitive mind *thinking* can be as efficacious as seeing or feeling.

Another example of primitive mind common among men of modern society is the association of instances without concern for the differences in quality. More simply put, two things quite different in their qualities will often be associated because of some relative function. For example, a primitive may put a lock of a man's hair in a fire so that the hair may be destroyed. He knows that fire burns the hand. The lock of hair belongs to man and therefore the fire which burns it likewise burns the man. We see this type of primitive reasoning existing in modern religious sects. Many who resort to primitive practices in their religious zeal are, of course, not aware of their immature primitive

reasoning which often shackles them to superstition and prevents a true intellectual and spiritual attainment.

Another example of this same type of reasoning is the Zulu courting a girl. He chews a piece of wood in expectation that as the wood is reduced to pulp, her heart, too, will be softened. The processes are not parallel, in that the wood and the heart are different. But the relationship between them, the softening process, is thought to be the same. Many persons wear amulets which are from places proclaimed to be sacred. With a great number of such persons the primitive reasoning is that the place from which the article was taken was sacred and had a supernatural efficacy. Therefore, this object must likewise have that efficacy and will extend its protective influence to any person.

The primitive mind commonly confuses *cause and relation*. If one thing happens after another, it is presumed by this type of mind that the first thing observed was the cause of the others which followed, when actually no such relationship exists. In other words, similarity is presumed to be a causal quality when it may not actually exist as such. Observation and mature thinking will often reveal that things appear to be similar yet have fundamentally different causes for their existence.

A number of theories have been established concerning the way we think. Different schools of psychology advocate these different concepts. One is the *stimulus-response* theory. We have an external stimulus received by one of our receptor senses which then produces a response or sensation. That sensation may in turn become a stimulus in producing still another response and possibly arousing an idea within the mind by association. Meaning, however, is more than just a simple response. It is the allocating of identity to response. This consists of the evaluation of the response and the combining of simple ideas into more complex ones. Such a process is often done involuntarily, with the ideas just arising in the mind from a previous perception.

When we reason, we intentionally will what responses should be combined or so related as to confer their meaning. We may be wrong in our interpretation of the meaning, but if such voluntary thought is done, we are then less apt to fall into the common errors of the primitive Mind, which Mind is latent in all of us.

*Free association*, is that process of thinking to which at times we are all inclined. Free association of ideas is that form of thinking over which less control is exercised. In free association one thought just stimulates another. The thought is not oriented toward any particular solution. It does not consciously reflect a theme. For example, we may think of a warm day, then there comes to mind last summer, then perhaps a place to which we went or a disappointment that we did not go, then the thought of those who bought clothes for a journey, then we may think of a shop we may recently have seen with an announcement of a sale. This is an example of free association.

On the other hand, *fantasy* and *daydreaming*, as we have said previously, are directed toward a solution but one that is not realistic, that is, principally imaginative. A youth in fantasy, for example, imagines himself an astronaut on a journey to a distant world encountering other peoples there. He is creating a theme in a related manner of ideas, but it is not realistic. In other words, it is not supported by fact or even by the possibility at the time that he could ever experience such an event.

Let us remember that it is not what the world is that really matters, but what we think it to be that contributes to our conscious state of reality and living. However, we should create such a world as clearly as our mental faculties permit. We can discipline our thoughts and our reason so as to avoid misconceptions which may adversely affect the welfare of our lives.

We often read or it is said that the prehistoric or primitive man has been more elementary in his reasoning but that he had certain faculties which were more acute than those possessed by modern man. It implies that the man of today has such innate faculties but they are semi-dormant within him. In particular, the question has been asked, "Since primitive man developed his intuitive faculties to a high degree and we know that inner development is never lost, why is civilized man so lacking in this faculty?"

A distinction must be made between *instinct* and *intuition* although there is undoubtedly a psychological relationship between them to some degree. Instincts are definitely lessons which have been learned



by an organism, especially a complex one such as man. These lessons have been acquired through the long evolutionary process of the living thing.

When we say "learn" this cannot be equated with our common interpretation of the word. It is not that which has been consciously realized and evaluated by the self, such as we would learn a language, music, or mathematics. In its slow ascent and in its confrontation with its environment the organism was subjected to conditions which either favored or opposed it. The continuous influence of these similar conditions, for perhaps thousands of generations, left permanent impressions on the genes. These alterations and mutations, it is theorized, were transmitted to offspring.

The inherited characteristics became behavioral responses. In other words, whenever the organism was subjected to the same stimulus there would be an impulsive urge to act in response to it as it always had. To use common technical vernacular, the genes of the organism had been programmed to function in a certain way. These innate indwelling urges are what we term *instincts*.

It takes a considerable exercise of will power to resist the intensity of the stimuli of instincts. In fact, there are several instincts which we wish to direct but most certainly should not suppress, as for example, *curiosity*, the inquisitiveness that draws the attention of a person or of lower animals to the unfamiliar. If we were devoid of curiosity the human would probably never have advanced beyond the Neanderthal stage. In fact, he might not ever have attained that status. There is also the almost irresistible instinct of *self-preservation*. This instinct or urge is deeply ingrained in the simplest of living organisms. It is survival of the life force itself.

Throughout the ages and with the varying cultures that arose, these instincts have been subject to some modification. We are also forming new habits which, if they are retained and perpetuated for many generations, will undoubtedly establish at least the nucleus for additional instincts.

These instincts are not necessarily spiritual or divine unless we attribute every human faculty and characteristic to such a source. Generally summing up, the instincts have very definite biological functions. It would appear that those long-formed habits which are “remembered” by the genes are principally concerned with the protection, survival, and the well-being of the organism. In fact, the very existence of an organism can be said to depend upon its instincts. It therefore must be obvious that the organism could not learn or acquire these necessary behavioral responses in just one lifetime.

It is quite probable that early primitive man relied more readily upon his instinctive impulses than does *Homo sapiens* or rational man. The rational man is inclined to establish intellectual values which at times counter his instincts. A good example is the ascetic who, for religious reasons, suppresses fundamental physical drives and impulses and may even practice self-mortification—that is, abuse of the body. Furthermore, the conventions of society, its moral and ethical codes, tend to restrict and subdue impulses of the instincts.

Intuition is termed *insight* in most modern psychological texts. This is what we might term an *inner perception*, a kind of immediacy of knowledge. It is, in other words, an influx into the conscious mind of ideation, a chain of ideas which have not been labored upon by the reason and are suddenly realized. This intuitive knowledge, which principally rises from our subconscious mind, consists mostly of a kind of higher judgment and subconscious organization of our knowledge so as to compose new ideas or concepts which are then realized.

The stimulus for these intuitive impressions may be derived from several sources, but there are two principal ones. If one has been laboring with a problem for some time and his reason has not brought forth a satisfactory solution, the subconscious continues with the work that has been dismissed from the conscious mind. This is commonly called the *unconscious work* of the mind. Of course, it is not really unconscious, but rather a different phase of the stream of consciousness applied to the problem. Our desire to know becomes a stimulus that puts the subconscious to work even when the conscious mind has discontinued acting upon the idea.

Also, our subconscious can be psychically stimulated by the Cosmic or the thoughts of others to which it may have become attuned without our conscious mind realizing that it has been receptive to such external ideas. Ultimately such ideas are discharged into our conscious mind as intuitive impressions. These aspects of intuition are difficult to relate to instinct, but there are other intuitive impressions which appear to be instinctively motivated. For instance, we may have an intuitive impression not to do a certain thing. It may be a kind of premonition of an impending danger as we perceive it. Conversely, and even sometimes opposed to the conclusions of our reason, we may have the intuitive impressions as a “feeling,” or again, a kind of mental vision, to go ahead with something.

We can only surmise that there are more subtle aspects of the instincts, or combinations of instincts, that in such cases are reacting to our conscious decision. More simply, the instinct “knows” from its innate experience that what we are intending to do, or to which we are exposed, will in some way threaten our personal security and well-being. These instinctive impulses then act upon the organizing power of the subconscious mind to bring forth the intuitive impression in an intellectual or cognizant form. Succinctly put, the instinct creates the sensation, the ideas of intuition at times, so as to arrest or to motivate us.

As said, most intuitive impressions are always related directly to the physical and mental well-being or to the security of the individual. Rarely do they concern matters which we can say are extraneous to self. That is, self is always the determinant factor in connection with intuitive impressions. Though it would seem that instinct and intuition can and commonly do function independently, yet in other instances they give evidence of a conterminous and harmonious relationship.

We can only speculate, but we doubt that prehistoric man had a more developed faculty of intuition than contemporary man. This is because intuition plays a greater part only where there is the intellect to image in some form the impressions received. When we have an intuitive impression, it has the structure of thought, the form of an *idea*. In other words, we associate and we identify the intuitive impulse

with a specific chain of ideas. We may say, for example, that we have an intuitive impression of this or that nature, whereas instinct is expressed more through the emotions as in feeling. We may *feel* but we do not always know why.

We may now associate ideas with instinct, but primitive man, as said, was primarily motivated by them without associating any meaning to their impulses. The primitive man is more dependent upon instinct only because he has not acquired the intellect and reasoning capacity as its substitute and often as a conflicting obstacle. Although we are able to be more responsive to intuition as so-called civilized persons, we have been inclined to subordinate the communications of intuition to our conscious minds.

The society in which we live has compelled us to put almost total reliance upon our reason and objective faculties. Only now is the populace becoming aware of this and trying to reawaken the channels of these other levels of consciousness. However, this is not a new enterprise for the Rosicrucians. Their monographs have been teaching principles concerning this development centuries before the present day and before the often vague expositions by modern parapsychologists.

## Chapter 4

# CAN WE KNOW THE ABSOLUTE?

IT HAS LONG been proclaimed by the adherents of mysticism and esoteric studies that the apex of such practices is *unity with the Absolute*. This unity is variously described as a state of oneness with the Absolute. The personal consciousness is said to merge with the Infinite—to be absorbed, in a sense. Another term for the phenomenon is *Cosmic Consciousness*.

However, this absorption into the Infinite does not imply a complete loss of personal identity, as the ego, the “I,” still persists. In other words, the individual consciousness embraces a greater realization of reality than can be had by objective perception, yet it is not devoid of the awareness of its own existence as an entity.

However, this suggests a question as to just what is meant by the *Absolute*. Can it be defined as the Ultimate, a state or a condition beyond which nothing else can be? Is this Absolute the end of a progression and a hierarchical order of development? Or is the Absolute to be construed as the Infinite, the *One* and *All* of Being, and therefore a state of perfection? Is it a state of perfection because it is fundamentally of one essence, there being nothing in its nature less than its quality? In other words, a thing cannot be considered as other than perfect in itself if there is nothing else by which it can be compared.

Another question that then arises is, How can the mind of man embrace this Absolute? or to put it another way. How can the finite consciousness of the human mind comprehend that which is infinite and limitless in its manifold nature? Figuratively speaking, can a cup hold within it the vastness of the sea? The human mind, its phenomenon of consciousness, is part of the spectrum of natural (or cosmic) laws.

It is but one of a myriad of cosmic phenomena. This gives rise to still another question: Can a part know the whole of which it consists?

In their writings mystics have frequently referred to this *Oneness*. Subsequently, *Oneness* resulted in a noetic experience—that is, an influx of new knowledge constituting an intellectual illumination like nothing had previously. However, such revelations as are related to us in mystical literature do not attempt a comprehensive picture of cosmic phenomena. Little is presented to explain the workings of the physical order of the Cosmos as a whole. Rather, these writings describe the emotional state which is had when the *Oneness* is experienced. It is expressed in terms of the summum bonum of moral righteousness. The individual also endeavors to relate the ecstasy of his experience in terms of freedom from the burdens of mortal finiteness. This consciousness of the Absolute is then not so much knowing the structure of the immanent nature of reality as it is a state of euphoria, of ecstatic well-being.

The mystical experience of unity with the Absolute is perceived through an uncommon higher state of consciousness. It is a consciousness of that which we never ordinarily experience in our objective or subjective states of mind. Therefore, the experience of this consciousness can embrace phenomena which transcend our other levels of consciousness.

Undoubtedly the mystical state of consciousness transcends the peripheral senses and reason. We can say that it is responsive to phenomena, to aspects of reality, of the Cosmos that evade the normal mortal state of awareness. To the mystic it is unique and so entirely different from anything he has ever experienced before, that it seems to be the Ultimate. It is a state, a condition, beyond which he cannot think of anything greater. Consequently, to the reason it would seem to be the *Absolute*.

But again, we find it difficult to conclude rationally that such an experience is actually a vision, an insight into the whole of reality. The exceptional nature of the mystical experience may suggest the assumption that the phenomenon embraces the Absolute in its entirety. Mystics who are strong devotees of a particular sect will relate their

experience as a personal consciousness of whatever image of the Deity is set forth in their theology. Thus, instead of referring to a unity with the Absolute, they will term the experience “a glorious vision of God,” or “an entrance into Heaven.”

The emotional impact upon the individual who experiences Cosmic Consciousness is so all-absorbing of his higher sentiments that it exceeds the capacity of the imagination to conceive of anything beyond it.

Is knowing the Absolute a fantasy, a self-engendered delusion? We may not know the whole nature of a thing, yet we can know a representation of its quality. For example, as yet we do not know the whole nature of the structure of matter. But piece by piece, from molecules, atoms, electrons, protons, down to the recent discovery, the gluons, we are gaining a more comprehensive idea of what its entirety may be, and we are coming closer to the Rosicrucian concept as well. So, too, as limited as our mystical experience of the Absolute may be, it is of its nature. It is a spreading outward of the human consciousness by which the ego feels its relationship with that Infinity.

Ordinarily, we are made very conscious of our finite nature; its limitations are ever impressed upon us. Science is making the relative distinction between our being and the vastness of the physical universe more and more apparent to us. Objectively, then, we become diminutive in comparison to the greater universe consisting of billions of galaxies and an inestimable number of suns and planets. The mystical experience bolsters our ego, releases it from a sense of inferiority. We are able to feel a *oneness* with that which far transcends this Earth, this galaxy, and our physical being. We become momentarily merged in that oneness—a state of consciousness that objectivity and the peripheral senses could never produce. The mystical experience provides the pulse of the Absolute, if not its anatomy.

Since there are variations in the depth of feeling of unity with the Absolute, we can surmise that some individuals are more contiguous to it in consciousness than others. If consciousness is a stream of levels of sensitivity and responsiveness, then some persons' inner perceptions of the Absolute will be far greater than those of others, but none will know its entirety.

We can further assume that if there are Minds else where in the universe capable of a greater depth of perception and responsivity, or consciousness, than our own, then their experience of the Absolute may have a dimension which we can neither imagine nor experience. But again, they too will not know the full nature of the Absolute.

The subject of the Absolute is often related to *God* and the *Cosmic*. In fact, these two latter words are often interchanged. There is an old adage that says: "A rose is a rose by any other name." However, a distinction by other than name can be made between these two. Religion, mysticism, metaphysics, and certain philosophical doctrines expound that there is an omnipotence transcending not only man but all phenomena.

Beyond this common agreement, however, differences emerge. In other words, in just what manner is this omnipotence conceived? The *theistic* concept states that this Supreme Force is anthropomorphic, an entity or being embodying human-like qualities. It is presumed to be an intelligence and determinative—that is, a mind that reasons, has purpose and emotions which to an extent parallel those of humans. This intelligent being *feels* as well as thinks; that is, it *loves*. And in sacred literature of some sects it is stated that it is jealous and expresses its anger.

Theism, then, proclaims a personal god, a super-entity. Such an entity, it is stated, is not only the first cause of all reality, but it is also the conscious director of all the phenomena which it has created. Succinctly, it has the arbitrary power to alter that which it has brought into existence. It is believed by theists that this supreme entity has established the laws of nature just as a craftsman would create tools for his purpose—that is, a mechanism to manifest his objectives. However, the fundamental theist will conceive that the God he accepts may at any time intervene to suppress, rescind, or alter those laws or phenomena which He has brought into existence.

Though this God in all His attributes cannot be completely embraced and understood by man, yet the theists will generally affirm that "man can know the Deity." It is further believed by such theists that this God is a patronizing one, that is, a "loving Father." Simply, it is thought that



man can appeal to this Deity as a loving, beneficent Being, who also functions as an omniscient judge. In this sense, the laws of nature are not believed to be absolute but rather subject to the “Divine Will” of the single, eternal Deity, who is infinite in wisdom and power and in all of His fiats and acts. Such actions by this Deity are considered by the theists to be innately *good*, no matter how they may be perceived or experienced by man.

These qualities attributed to God are difficult to distinguish from the mind and consciousness of humans except in the extent of their efficacy. The absolute theist embodies this super-Mind in a kind of form; it is not ethereal, but rather a sort of immaterial substance which is commonly imaged by him as a human-like form.

The *mystical* and *metaphysical* concept, on the other hand, advocates a Primary Cause which is a kind of Universal Mind, a consciousness and intelligence. However, this idea is not theistic in the sense of being a personal entity; rather, it is thought of as an all-pervading, self-generated force. Yet this conception contends that this Universal Mind is arbitrary in its functions; it does not submerge itself in its own creations. More simply, a *duality* or parallelism exists. It can change whatever its nature manifests. It is potential with new phenomena other than what it now expresses, whatever comes forth is always this mind's will. It knows and is conscious of itself and of its creations. It is likewise communicative in that it can reach into the consciousness of man and make him aware of its existence and its will. Also, it is expounded that man can, under certain circumstances, realize this Universal Force, this God-Mind, and intuitively draw from its intelligence personal efficacy and help.

The Cosmic can also be interpreted in several ways. It can be said that the Cosmic is a Universal Intelligence, a Mind. It is omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal. This Cosmic Mind, then, according to this conception, is inseparable from its own phenomena, from the laws underlying all reality. Specifically, it is thought to be a mind and a body of laws operating as one. This, of course, is strictly a monistic idea, the concept of a *one*—that is, both a directing intelligence and a manifestation of the phenomena of reality.

There is yet the *dualistic* concept of the Cosmic. There is mind on the one hand, creative, determinative; an intelligence that lies behind all creation, it being the First Cause of all existence. However, the other aspect of this duality is the great matrix, the order of phenomena by which the thought, the idea of the Cosmic Mind is made manifest. This complex of laws is therefore a subordinate part of the Cosmic Mind. To use an analogy, it is just like thought and will are related, but thought, the idea, first must precede the will so the will may act upon it and then objectify it.

In this particular notion of the Cosmic, there is really little distinction between it and the theistic idea of God. In both conceptions, the Primary Cause is a Mind, an arbitrary determining intelligence. However, in this conception the Cosmic is not restricted to any imagined form. This Cosmic Mind, it is stated, can also be appealed to by humans and then, in its omniscience and wisdom, can so direct the forces or phenomena over which it has control to intercede in the affairs of mankind. Ordinarily, its forces, its subordinate part called *nature*, operate in an orderly manner without change, unless the mind-aspect of the Cosmic intervenes. Thus, from this point of view, prayer can be made to this Cosmic Mind, much as one does to a God, as an appeal for intervention.

There is still another doctrine regarding the nature of the Cosmic which is more or less a naturalistic viewpoint. The Cosmos—that is, all of reality—as an Infinite Being is self-generated and is thus said to have no beginning, for nothing could exist before or apart from it. This Being, in this idea of the Cosmic, is construed to be a *Universal Energy*, a great spectrum of forces arranged in what man calls *order*, like octaves of a piano keyboard. There are no exceptions to its manifestations.

However, it is held that this Universal Cosmic Energy is not entirely mechanistic, for it is said to have a self-awareness or consciousness. *It knows that it is*. Its persistence in being and striving to be is thought to be the example of its consciousness.

Man, it is affirmed, can appeal to this Universal Cosmic Consciousness. But it is not like an appeal to a theistic deity for an arbitrary decision to intercede on man's behalf, nor is it like an appeal

to a judge to determine its merits. It is rather the effort on the part of man to attune his personal consciousness with the greater forces of this Cosmic Consciousness which flows through him and which may be termed the *psychic self*. In this way, it is affirmed, man will be made intuitively aware in his own judgment as to the righteousness of the appeal which he has made—that is, whether it is in harmony with the whole cosmic order. Man may in this manner also receive *illumination*, knowledge which will guide him. He can also experience by this means *Peace Profound*, a state of euphoria causing his consciousness to rise to a greater awareness of the Universal Consciousness of the Cosmic.

In this latter interpretation, God and Cosmic are accepted as *one*, except that there is no attempt to relate the Cosmic to any mental imagery or form. This conception of the Cosmic may also be termed *mystical pantheism*. Since all things are of this Universal Cosmic Consciousness and energy, and since it is in all things, man can embrace this divine force by bringing himself into harmony with all life, all phenomena of nature. This must not be construed, however, that man worships nature or that he considers it to be the whole essence of the Cosmic. Rather, then, in each thing and in all things man sees this Cosmic Consciousness and energy at work.

## Chapter 5

# IS THERE PREDETERMINED DESTINY?

**C**AUSALITY HAS LONG been the subject of great interest to man, especially as it is related to the Cosmos. Philosophers since antiquity have speculated on causality. Some like David Hume have stated that causality is merely the product of the human mind. He states that we ascertain certain effects of a similar nature and then conceive that there is a specific condition or cause for them all. Further, it has been expounded, and with reason, that every effect in turn becomes a cause and every cause ultimately an effect.

Man is aware that the origin of certain of his acts is the result of his own impulses or ideas of which he is conscious. Therefore he considers himself causative, in that he brings such things into existence by his own motivation.

If man is or seems to be causative, then all that came into existence, or reality, must also have a cause, it is theorized. According to the doctrine of ontology there was a *prima materia*, a first material from which all came. The ancient alchemists sought such a First Cause. Thales, the Greek philosopher, stated it was water; others said it was air and fire. Anaxagoras said it was mind. Before then *theogony* prevailed, that is, the belief in gods and that each phenomenon was the result of the action of these gods. The theistic concept of the divine, as we have noted in a preceding chapter, is that a god, human-like in desires and emotions, is believed to have created the universe such as it is. The literal interpretation of the Christian Bible has this supreme deity creating the Earth as the principal, or even unique, world with the stars being subordinate to it. Modern science has long shown that

this religious concept appearing in the ancient Hebrew version of the Bible is erroneous, though other religions in their cosmogony have had similar ideas in attributing the origin of the universe to one of several gods.

The ancient Babylonians and Chaldeans, the first serious students of what later developed into the science of astronomy, declared that the seven planets then known were gods. These gods in their movements influenced human destiny, the lives of those born under their sign. This was the birth of astrology.

In all of this we see man attributing *determinism*—a preconceived purpose—to natural phenomena. From a rational point of view we cannot accept the attributing of purpose to a supreme deity. Purpose presumes an end or objective, something to be obtained which is not yet had or that which is not yet perfect. This idea obviously demeans the divinity and perfection which one would attribute to a supreme being. Why should such a power be now inadequate and have to move toward an ultimate state of perfection? Why, also, would such a being as a First Cause create the evil that man believes to exist on Earth, and why would it be allowed to occur? The more we think of a god or a supreme being as causative, such as humans think of cause, the more ambiguous—in fact, chaotic—becomes the idea.

When we think of a cosmically predetermined plan for each human we again enter into a realm of not very sound reasoning. We are said to have been cosmically or divinely endowed with the faculties and powers which we possess as humans, such as reason, imagination, will, memory, intuition, etc. We are also taught philosophically and otherwise that these gifts are for us to use in the *mastery of life*. Of what avail is it to attempt the mastery of self and environment if a specific destiny as fate has been predetermined for each of us?

If such a cosmic plan has been established for each of us, then our humble efforts in ignorance of it might cause us to counteract it to our great detriment. To submit to a presumably predetermined destiny would rationally require that we remain passive—in other words, do nothing! We would be obliged to just let time and circumstances compel and impel us. All human initiative and creativity would cease

and ultimately, unless this predeterminism were a reality, humanity would also cease to be.

The question then arises. Are we entirely dependent upon the finiteness of the human faculties? From a mystical view point the Cosmos consists of a *universal consciousness* that persists in the nature of what it is or, as man says, according to a system of laws and order which underlie all phenomena. It is then possible for man to attune to this order to some degree so as to be enlightened and "illuminated," as the mystics say. This illumination is realized as intuition, as insight that is imparted to us in a manner of direction. But we use our reason and other faculties to transform such inspiration or impulses into comprehensible, workable ideas. This inspiration or attunement through our own faculties and our own efforts shapes the design and destiny of our life.

This must not be construed to mean that there exists in the Cosmos a detailed pattern for each life which we are bound to follow and which comes to us as inspiration. Rather, during the process of evolving our consciousness (which is a personal obligation), the purpose we give to the cosmic inspiration we receive will become more sophisticated and extensive. We must repeat as we have often said that there is no specific cosmic language; if there were we could not comprehend it. The inspiration we receive, the cosmic touch, uses our own knowledge gained by our personal experience and it must use the language which we understand.

It is for this reason that we must study and learn here so that we can construct a worthy destiny when we have such cosmic awareness, or rather. Cosmic Consciousness. When we are illuminated, our ideas flow into objective consciousness. It is, of course, natural for some to think that the words coming to mind have been spoken to them by a supreme being in their own language. Yet another person of a different race and language will be apt to think the same, except it would be in his language and would use his knowledge to work out the details.

I would like to relate a true story which will perhaps make this better understood. I am reminded of what has been said of a great experience had by George Eastman of the famous Kodak Film Corporation.

Before his time, photographic emulsion was on glass plates out of which the negatives for photographs were made. Such a process was cumbersome, fragile, and costly. Mr. Eastman had long thought of the necessity of an improvement over that method and had labored at trying to find a solution, but without success. The account goes that once he was invited to attend a symphonic concert, though at the time Mr. Eastman was not an especially enthusiastic devotee of classical music. However, while relaxed at the concert and greatly enjoying the occasion, he felt a sense of euphoria, great peace, and general upliftment. Suddenly there flashed into his mind a vision that was a solution to his problem. It was to put the emulsion on paper and film in the form of a roll. This was a revolutionary idea that contributed to the greatness of the Eastman Kodak company.

In gratitude for the inspiration received while listening to the music, Mr. Eastman subsequently established the world renowned Eastman School of Music at Rochester, New York.

In this incident we see that the motivation and the stimulation of the subconscious can bring about a chain of reasoning that will and reason alone had not accomplished in the conscious mind previously. It obviously changed the destiny of George Eastman. It is in this manner that we are cosmically enlightened. The details of the plan, the personal destiny, however, remain our effort and responsibility.

Let us consider the individual's personal concept of life. What value does it have to him? Is life worth living? Our answer depends upon what value we place upon it. The phenomenon of life has its own fundamental values. These are predetermined by Nature itself. They are realized by the organism as *pain and pleasure*. Pain is an indication of a disruption in the innate order of the life force's function. Pleasure is the harmony, the fulfillment of some aspect of life's activity. While living the organism has but one course; it is to avoid pain, the signal of in-harmony of the life processes. Such then provides harmony through the satisfaction of pleasure and the instinctive impulse to pursue such a course.

In humans such organic stability and normalcy is termed *good health*. In lower animals nothing further is sought from life. The

whole motivation of the animal is directed to the gratification of the biological demands of life. In a normal healthy human there is an excess of nervous energy. Inactivity of body and mind eventually produces an irritability or distress. Man's intelligence makes it possible for him to distinguish between that which causes him pain and pleasure. He therefore desires such a state or condition as will counteract any possible disquieting feelings.

No matter how elementary man's introspection may appear, he does know which of life's experiences seem most enjoyable to him. This recognition of preferred sensations is man's first introduction to *personal life values*. These primitive values are the gratification of the appetites and the passions, that is, creature comforts. Once the individual attributes a value to these sensual pleasures, his physical and mental powers are primarily focused upon them.

The appeasement of the appetites has but one accomplishment; it keeps the organism free from perturbation. It permits the life force to fulfill its biological cycle. Succinctly, the being lives then as a well-ordered mechanism. Such bodily urges and their satisfactions are but a means and should not be an end in themselves for man.

Presume that the attention to the bodily requirements results in robust health and a sensual gratification for the individual's entire life. Such a human then is nothing more than a well-nurtured plant. In other words, he is but an excellent example of a living organism. Man, however, is a *conscious entity*. He is not just aware of the components, the integral parts of his being, but rather he is also aware of self as a whole, a thing in its entirety. The perpetuation of only the entity itself seems insufficient. Reason suggests to man that the collective whole, the integrated self, must have function to fulfill as do the parts of which it is composed.

With such thoughts man begins the formation of a higher set of basic life values. The first of these higher values is *purpose*, and this purpose is the application of the self toward an external end. This kind of purpose is one of *creativity*. The self, in other words, desires to use its functions to bring something into existence apart from its own



inherent nature. This is quite distinct from sensual gratifications which provide at the most a preservation of the organic being.

Just as man sees his organic system as serving a function and an apparent purpose, he wonders what purpose there is for the whole of his self. He may presume that such a purpose has been predetermined for him by a supernatural power. Or, on the other hand, he may think it is obligatory for him to establish his own purpose; in other words, that he is to use his own physical and mental powers to serve some self-conceived end. Purpose as a life value is the nearest approach man can make to absolute freedom.

Still another essential life value is understanding. Nothing has reality to us unless it is comprehensible to us. Man may never know the noumenal world—that which actually is—but to his consciousness and mentality every experience must have some comprehensible identity. The unknown isolates man, as he seems to stand apart from what he cannot understand. The effort to understand our experiences provides two vital contributions to our welfare. First, understanding reveals whatever intrinsic value a thing may appear to have to the self. Second, understanding gives us a degree of unity to the parts which we perceive. In other words, we can mentally place them into a kind of order acceptable to our intelligence.

How do we acquire understanding? It is not simply an accretion, a development which we have acquired in some manner. Rather, it also possesses an innate quality that is greatly dependent upon the degree of our instinctive curiosity. For example, do we merely accept the existence of what we perceive, or does our curiosity prompt us to inquire and investigate as to how and why it is? The unquestioned acceptance of what we perceive is not an indication of our understanding of it. An individual with a low order of curiosity may only be inclined to inquire as to the nature of that which seems to contribute to his sensual needs. Understanding is a minor life value to such a person; he would do little to expand his world of reality. The mind of such a person shapes few new images of knowledge from the experiences he has in life.

There are myriads of impressions we receive through our receptor senses as we go about our daily affairs. It is impossible for us to give

our full attention to each of those of which we are conscious. But a depth of understanding can be gained by cultivating the desire to increase our knowledge of that which draws our observation and which is not yet explicable to us.

Another life value that elevates man is the *relationship* of self. This begins not so much with the question, "What am I?" but "Why am I?" This we have also discussed in Chapter 1. Is man simply a link in a chain of vitalism, or rather, a phenomenon moving upward from simple living cells to the *Homo sapiens*, the rational being? If so, there is then no assurance that man is the ultimate end of such a biological process. In time he might go through a transition to become a different kind of being than that from which he has descended.

On the other hand, no matter what similarity man finds between his physical nature and other animate things, there is also an immanent awareness of his dissimilarity. The *self-awareness* is always a distinct entity. It is: "I am that I am." Regardless of the efficacy of all that self perceives, the self is never submerged by such impressions. It always remains in an independent state in comparison to all else it realizes.

This common belief that self has a distinct quality of its own has caused man to ponder *why*. What is self's relation to all other reality? Man can look out upon the phenomenal world and see apparent order and causation in it. If the human self can do this, is there then a *higher self* that has implanted such an order and causation in reality? In other words, is there a higher self-awareness of which man's awareness is but a lesser extension?

It is this life value—that is, pondering the relationship of self—that has given rise to magic, religion, metaphysics, and philosophy. Of all the higher life values, it is the greatest stimulus of human creativity.

In natural sequence to the relationship of self is the life value of evaluation. If we define the good as the pleasurable and the painful as bad or evil, then the state of our physical being is easy to determine. This assertion of what is good or bad in our physical sense is, however, a secondary determination. In other words, we must first experience the sensation of pleasure or irritability before we can decide whether

their cause is to be preferred or not. For instance, after being burned by an open flame, I then decide whether the flame is a condition to be avoided.

But the higher life values bring forth ideas, states of mind which are abstract and not first related to sensation. They are mental images or concepts, results of the thought which we have given to the life values—for example, what we may have conceived as the function or purpose of reality; our particular understanding of some phenomenon; or the relation of self to our organic being. When, therefore, these ideas are conceived conclusively by becoming self evident to us, we find them satisfying. In other words, they have then acquired the quality of goodness to us.

It is at this point that the life value of evaluation begins. Succinctly, the life values which we have established become for us categories of our states of consciousness. We have grouped our thoughts into certain general divisions. From each we have evaluated certain particular experiences as being representative of them. These, then, become the specific good of each life value. The particulars may vary with individuals, but these higher life values are in themselves universal in their essence.

For further example, an understanding of your personal existence has the importance of a life value to you. It is then essential and the highest good for you. The different notions men have as to what such a life value embraces are evanescent. To use another example, for centuries thoughtful men conferred a life value upon the relation of Self. To them reflecting upon such an idea constituted a good. But the concepts of just what the self is like and how it originated have been myriad. Such differences, however, have never demeaned or detracted from the basic good of the life value of *contemplating the self*.

A *behavioral code* is a climactic life value. Life values are not supernatural or otherwise predetermined for man. They are human creations. They are primarily ideological and abstract ideals. However, the elements of which they are composed make demands upon the individual. If, for further example, my evaluation of self is to conceive it as being a divine essence, then rationally I am obliged to have self act in away that

I believe conforms to that divine quality. However, to sustain that state of mind, I would then find it necessary to adopt a behavioral code that would apply to myself. This would consist of morals and ethics. These are forms of self-discipline that cause us to feel in rapport with the higher life values we established.

The moral or ethical codes are not universal, as are the fundamental life values themselves. They are dependent upon the particular good which the individual comes to associate personally with different life values. As a further example, if one believes that study is a good associated with the life value of understanding, then his behavioral pattern will make study obligatory for him.

The importance of a behavioral code as a life value is the conscious direction in life it provides man. It makes man not a fatalist but rather a potential master of his fate.

## Chapter 6

# THINGS THAT SHAPE OUR LIVES

**T**WO GENERAL FACTORS influence our lives according to biologists and anthropologists. Biologists refer to our *genetic inheritance* which consists of certain qualities which are transmitted to us in our genes from parental lines. These qualities determine our physical appearance, intelligence, and susceptibility to certain diseases. It also theorized that we may inherit mental characteristics from our genes.

Anthropologists say that the other great factor in shaping our lives is *environment*. Environment is a broad term. It includes many conditions, geographic locations, climate, food, association, customs, and beliefs. These are all environmental. However, we are all not necessarily unconsciously or unwittingly shaped by these things. Often we are responsible for the effects that customs, beliefs, and ideas have upon us. Most of these things are not hostile to us. Our wrong conception of them is often the cause of their seeming adversity.

Let us look at a few of the major customs and traditions that one confronts in adulthood. During this period one stands at an intellectual crossroad. Shall he retain just on faith all that has been taught him by parents and teachers during childhood? Or shall he personally reappraise them as to their worth and continued acceptance?

The first great traditional influence to be scrutinized is *religion*. Religion has always been a first in the appeal to the emotions and the human mind. The religious impulse is related to the basic instinct of self-preservation. The futility of man's mortal existence is all too apparent to him. The urge to live, therefore, seeks some comforting reassurance. The belief in man's duality seems to provide the necessary

assurance. Man was conceived as body and soul or spirit. It could not be denied that the body was transient. The spirit or soul was invisible and immaterial. It came and went like the wind, like man's breath. It was relatively simple to hope, to imagine, that man survived death, that he was immortal.

This began the *positive* side of religious belief and practice. Out of it sprang the belief in supreme beings, beings who prevailed over human life and death. The form, the nature of the supreme being was varied. Polytheism, theism, deism, and pantheism are but some of man's attempts to imagine the supernatural, as we have previously considered elsewhere. The positive aspect of religion brought forth man's desire for divine communication, involving the urge to speak and to appeal to the gods. This evolved into prayer. Afterwards man wanted to be one with his god. Mystical unity was then born.

What demands would the gods make upon him? What compensation must man make for the great reward for life after the death which he expected? From these musings there sprang *moral codes*. Such were thought to be the conduct that the gods exacted from men. They were termed good and the opposite was evil. Morals, ethics, the attempt to regulate human behavior were further positive aspects of religion.

But religion also has its *negative* aspects. Men sought to humanize their god. They transferred upon him their own frailties. The god loved, hated, was jealous; he was said to punish and at times to destroy. All of these things men said in their sacred books. They declared that their dreams and their visions were divine revelations. They said that such were the voice, the commands, the fiat of the Divine. Those who did not accept their interpretations were termed heretics and infidels. To take life, to suppress knowledge, to destroy were sanctioned if such were done in the name of the deity. These, then, are *negative* aspects of religion.

If religion is to have a proper effect in shaping our lives, it cannot be accepted just on blind faith. Each individual must determine what emotions are aroused within him by religion. Does it warp his judgment in regard to other factors in life? Does it require for its loyalty a restriction on his thinking? Does it inculcate hatred, prejudice,

intolerance? Does it lower the concept of the Divine to the level of human values and objectives?

Another traditional influence in life is our *association*. Man is by nature gregarious. He seeks the companionship of his kind, preferring association to isolation. Association, therefore, is instinctive, but an atmosphere of tradition surrounds it. The positive aspect of association is the opportunity for mimicry which it provides. Children and adults are given to mimicry, and a child will especially mimic the habits and behavior of his peers. In theory, goodness and virtue rub off on those whom we contact. Ready-made ideas are dangled before the young. Golden rules are extolled. In other words, this is said to be right and that wrong. The positive theory of this kind of association is simple: It keeps one on the right path in life.

There is, however, also a negative side to this association period in life. One should neither be pushed nor pulled by his associations with other humans. The propulsion in one direction or another in life should always be personal. It should be the consequence of the individual's judgment. There comes a time in life for evaluation of what one has been taught. To do what is right must be an intimate acceptance on our part, not a collective propulsion from others. Many persons have been reared in so-called right associations, yet they have turned radical. Often they do the opposite merely to express their individuality. It is rebellion against the absolute social compulsion.

One should disregard the traditional aura of what is called good association. Rather, it is necessary to inquire why certain habits and behavior are good. How have they been established? Further, are they serving a need today? Are they practical, beneficial, or merely a revered axiom, a doctrine which has been handed down? Men have been burned at the stake because they refused to accept a sanctified but nevertheless false belief. It is said that birds of a feather flock together. But human mutual agreement should first proceed from a personal understanding.

*Education* is receiving the greatest emphasis today as a life shaping factor. The positive advantage of a formal education is, of course, very obvious in that it is the teaching of accumulated knowledge. It can

condense into a few years of study what was laboriously acquired in past centuries. No individual by his personal experiences alone could learn all that education avails him.

Education provides two kinds of knowledge. One is *empirical*, the demonstrable, objective, and factual. The other is *abstract*, the speculative and theoretical. Another possible attribute of education is the cultivation of the particular functions of mind which it provides. It trains memory, requires critical analysis of instruction. It demands the focus of attention, or in other words, concentration. It stimulates the thought processes.

There is also a negative side to the current stress which is being laid upon formal education. Propaganda makes it appear that knowledge or learning is gained only by formal education; in other words, that institutions, schools, colleges, and universities are its only channels. Perception, or objective experiences by means of the peripheral senses, is one channel of knowledge. Abstraction, contemplation, and reason is another source of knowledge. However, neither one of these channels is limited to the classroom.

Unfortunately, many persons never pursue education after their formal schooling. Consequently, they lose the ability to arrive at serious conclusions arising out of their own experiences. There is, therefore, little *self-inquiry*—arriving at a point of knowledge on one's own. The beliefs of such persons, then, are mostly opinions that they have acquired from the mass mind.

Why do people pursue education as a source of knowledge? Francis Bacon (1561-1626), in his renowned work *The Advancement of Learning*, gave the primary reasons. He said that some do so to entertain their minds with vanity. Others do so for refutation and for wit. Most times, Bacon said, men do so for lucre and a profession.

Today education is primarily considered as a tool for one to carve out a livelihood. It is thought of principally in a pragmatic sense. Bacon could have been speaking for today. He said no men seek education “to give a true account of their gift of reason.”



Knowledge is a rich reward in itself regardless of whether it provides any material advantages. The ancient Alexandrian Museum was an excellent example of the love of knowledge and education for its own sake. Established by Ptolemy I in the 3rd century, B.C., it consisted of laboratories of various kinds, rooms for discussion, places for contemplation and meditation. Great minds came there from all over the known world. They sought eternal truths to reveal nature's secrets. They desired to either prove or disprove their original ideas. In their researches and studies they were supported by the state.

Euclid of geometry fame studied there. Archimedes, the physicist, was one of the clan. Eratosthenes, who first measured the diameter of the Earth, did research there. Apollonius, the great mathematician, was one of the museum scholars. From the great abstractions of such men came marvelous discoveries. Even now we now use the results of their thought and mental labors. The Minds of such men were free and open. They sought knowledge first, not for an academic degree or solely to prepare themselves for a profession.

Today pure research for knowledge is often restricted by the opinion of the masses. For example, many object to space exploration simply because they cannot see it providing immediate material benefits. One of the greatest nuclear accelerators has just been constructed in the United States. It will produce electrical charges of hundreds of millions of volts. It cost 250 million dollars! It has, however, no military commitments. Physicists from throughout the world come there. They wish to prove or disprove theories involving the nature of matter. They want to know; they search for truth. What they find out about the universe may never have any commercial value. But because of the investment there is much public hue and cry against it. This is a negative example of modern education.

The theories about society are another element that shapes our lives. Men did not first create society. Rather, the basic conditions of which society consists pressed in upon man. Man was compelled to adjust to them. We considered briefly this subject in Chapter 2. Several persons can generally accomplish what one cannot do alone. This suggests a *collective activity*. Those who are intimately associated are usually more

reliable than strangers. Consequently, it was practical that members of a close relationship, as a family, should cooperate. They united to meet the demands of their environment, such as preservation, shelter, sustenance. This was collective coordination. Such was not an intentional ideal upon their part. Rather, it came about as the result of their labors. They did not set out to form a social unit but, rather, only to accomplish certain objectives.

Not long ago I was in the interior of the island of Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean, in meditation. I had been photographing a neolithic settlement over 10,000 years old. It consisted of a rather large circle of huge stones with a small entrance on one side. Originally there had been a covering, a roof of boughs and bark over a portion of the circle. Inside the large circle there were several smaller ones of stone. They were apparently living quarters, a subterranean burial chamber, and a sacred area. All of this activity showed organization on the part of these primitive peoples. But it was done without any theoretical concepts. In other words, it was done without any theory of state or political ideologies.

From out of the centuries of such primitive living emerged ideas of what society should be like. Such questions come forth as. What is society's higher and ultimate purpose? How should society be attained? Is the state a system of rules, imposed for the equal protection and rights of people? If so, the state is but an abstract entity. It is a power derived from the individuals of which it is composed.

But suppose the state is considered supreme. Its established representatives are alone the ones who can decide what the objectives of mankind should be. And further suppose men are just to serve the end which the state has set for itself. It is then a power transcending men individually and collectively.

Does man serve the state for its greater personal benefit? Or is the state but an instrument by which he shapes his own destiny? All of these ideas and questions which we have considered press in upon us today. Therefore, it is vitally essential that we form a philosophy of life which weighs the value of these influences upon us. Happiness and peace of mind do not descend upon man as a kind of cosmic blessing.

Rather, they are fashioned out of keen observation, dispassionate reasoning, and intuitive self-discipline.

It is said that *common sense* is an excellent foundation for shaping one's life. This term is mostly a cliché; its real meaning is rarely considered. Consequently, its value is lost. But what is common sense? Individuals are complimented for having the particular quality or attribute of common sense. Others are often alluded to as being devoid of it. What is the criterion by which it is determined that one possesses this usually lauded attribute?

There is no uniform human perception or conception. We all perceive and we all form concepts, but our perception of similar experiences are not alike. The ideas which we form come greatly from what is seen or heard by others. Our conception, our rationalization of our experiences also varies. This is due to the individual variation of intelligence, reasoning, and education.

Nevertheless there is a common sense. It is the mass conclusion of experience. In other words, if a majority of people respond alike to certain conditions, or agree upon a response or a reaction to particular circumstances, this then becomes the basis for the claim of a common sense. For example, if a family has an unenclosed swimming pool on their property adjoining their house and leave a door open which leads to the pool, and from which a small child within could readily have access, such an act would be termed a lack of common sense. It is the assumption from common experience that the observations and reasoning of the great majority of persons indicate such a circumstance to be hazardous.

Much of our alleged common sense is but a habitual acceptance, a custom. It is not arrived at by a personal conclusion from any particular set of facts which have been experienced. In other words, we know that this or that should be done because of a common social acceptance. Often, however, if the individual would first analyze the circumstances which enter into so-called common sense, he would find the opportunity to either reject or improve upon them. For further example, in times past it would have been common sense not to leave a window open in the summer if insects were prevalent and could

enter. Nevertheless someone at the time went beyond the bounds of the then prevailing common sense. Simply, he found away to keep the window open and at the same time prevent the insects from entering by the use of screens.

There are things which men in general learn alike, and the conclusions seem so self-evident that it would appear irrational to put them aside. What can we say is the psychological basis for this common sense? It is the seeming inability to conceive a worthwhile contradiction, that is, one which would not produce an undesired result. Simply, we accept a common practice or conclusion because we may not think of doing otherwise without creating a jeopardy of some kind.

Common sense is ordinarily concluded to be the right way in the performance of something. Therefore commonsense action, whether mental or physical, is accepted as right because it appears to provide some benefit to the individual. What is thought not to be common sense is presumed to be detrimental to the one so acting.

Nevertheless common sense can work to our disadvantage as it may obstruct potential opportunities which are not realized at the time. To use another example: A man, we shall say, has been seeking employment by personally calling upon local business establishments. It is now Saturday and his common sense tells him it is not the right day to make such calls as the businesses would be closed. There is, though, the possibility that if this individual persisted, he might contact some office of a shop or industry and find it open. He would then have a greater opportunity for an interview with the employer than upon a regular business day. Consequently the so-called common sense, the general custom or conclusion, is not always absolute and should be individually evaluated before being accepted.

Most often the commonsense action is based upon tradition or obscure customs. To abide by them because they are a common procedure is to deprive one of possible advantages. Many great discoveries have been made by the adventurous-minded. They have dared to violate the "matter of course" view taken by others. For example, it once did not "make sense" to think of having pictures in motion, or to provide illumination by electricity, or fly across the sea,

or to project one's voice or image mechanically to others thousands of miles distant. Nor did it once make sense to teach anything that differed from the writings of Aristotle or which seemed to contradict what was written in the Bible, even if supported by fact.

The true individualist, whenever it is possible, should apply his own observations or reason to circumstances and to incidents rather than to merely accept the current common sense. The *uncommon* is by no means always the wrong thing to do.

## Chapter 7

# THE CULTIVATION OF CIVILIZATION

**W**E CANNOT LIVE alone if we wish to benefit by what the collective activities of man have brought forth. Consequently, the fulfillment of our personal existence depends on others as well as ourselves. When we do this, we are then said to aid in the cultivation of civilization. However, are we civilized, and, furthermore, how is civilization cultivated? Are we failing in contributing to its higher value? Have we made it a real part of our life? Let us refresh our memory on certain facts of civilization's origins.

Before considering the cultivation of civilization, one should have some understanding of the word *civilization*. In the generally accepted sense, civilization is a condition of society as distinguished from barbarism and savagery. The word is derived from the Latin *civilis* meaning "pertaining to a citizen." Civilization, as we have come to think of it, is progress in arts, government, and social cooperation. It is a culture designating man as a member of higher society.

In his most primitive and elementary state, man is primarily animalistic. This is characterized by a notable lack of self-discipline. Little or no restraint of the natural appetites and passions is experienced. With primitive man, two principal motivations are apparent. The first is internal—the physical urges of his own being. These are the need for sustenance, which includes food, clothing, and shelter. These may be summed up as the requirements for physical well-being. The second motivation is external. It is the adjustment to climatic conditions and the seeking out of sources of food. It further consists of a defense against enemies, both animal and human.

If civilization is distinguished from barbarism and primitive living, there must be certain factors by which it is recognized. Since civilization is considered superior, it must be an evolution or refinement of barbarism. There are two factors that portray this refinement which constitutes civilization. One is man's gradual control over the forces and conditions of his environment. The second factor is the awakening of a new sense of power and inclination within the individual himself.

We must not think that this sense of personal power and inclination only results in a kind of restraint. It is more than the restraining or inhibiting of anger, for example, or the suppressing of the appetites. A civilized person is characterized by more than a meek, mild, or passive temperament. A civilized person can be as dynamic and aggressive as a savage, but the distinction exists in that the channel of personal force and action takes a different direction.

Consequently, in civilized man there emerge other human qualities that must be cultivated. The newly expressed or aroused qualities do not replace the natural animal or physical impulses. They do, however, refine and subordinate them to the intellect and the more subtle sentiments. But if the refinement of the environment and of self is the substance of civilization, what contributes to that refinement? Or if such refinement is inchoate in man, what brings it into action?

There are three basic conditions which lay the groundwork for civilization. One we may term the *physical*; another, the *sociological*; and the third, the *psychological*.

The physical condition concerns environment, particularly geographical and climatic conditions. Anthropologists have divided the Stone Age into three sections. The Early Stone Age probably began in preglacial times, estimated to be at least 500,000 years ago. The Middle Stone Age was approximately 50,000 years ago. The Late Stone Age was from 10,000 to 8,000 years before Christ. The first two ages, the Early and Middle Stone Ages, are called paleolithic; the latter is called neolithic or New Stone Age.

Growing out of the Stone Age, human civilization arose. Its early languages were lost because men can no longer read or speak them.

From 4000 to 3000 B.C., man slowly built up a high civilization. Egypt and Sumeria may rightly be called the cradles of this civilization.

The Nile River cuts a deep trench in a valley between the heights of the plateau of the Sahara Desert. This trench of the Nile River is thirty miles wide, while the strip of fertile soil on either side is scarcely more than ten miles in width. The heights of the Sahara on the west of the Nile were once well watered. Trees and bushes existed where there is now a desert. Early Stone Age hunters dwelt here, and their tools have been found on the surface of the desert plateau. These people we may call the *proto-Egyptians*. They came before the first Egyptian period of culture. Constant drought and the disappearance of vegetation eventually caused them to descend to the valley floor where they made a gradual transition from cattle raising to agriculture by reclaiming the jungles of the Nile River trench. At this time Europe was still a barbarous place in the throes of the Stone Age. The fertile soil of Egypt, the plenitude of sunshine, the constant water supply, and isolation from hostile conditions nurtured civilization.

Another geographical area that aided in the cultivation of civilization is the region of the Aegean Sea. This sea is like a giant lake encircled by surrounding lands. For example, to the north is the mainland of Europe; to the east, Asia Minor. The sea itself is dotted with islands. The coast is deeply indented with bays and harbors. It has been stated that the sea and islands form a coherent economic unit. We can interpret this as meaning that people living there could be self-sufficient.

The earliest recorded race in this region was the Aegeans, who dwelt there about 3000 B.C. They lived in the area for centuries before the coming of the race known as the Greeks. The island of Crete, south of the Aegean, was the leader of this civilization. It was influenced by the culture and products of Egypt. In fact, the Minoan civilization of Crete has been called the third great civilization.

Greek colonial expansion was from the west to the east across the Aegean Sea. The first of these migratory Greek tribes to arrive were the Achaeans. Afterward, the Dorian tribe pushed across the Aegean to the Anatolian shores, that is, to the coast of Asia Minor. They



settled on a narrow strip of coast known as Ionia. These migratory people mingled with the remnants of the decaying Minoan civilization. The composite nature of the population, the pleasing climate, the rich soil, and the favorable harbors were a boon to these people. As a result, the Ionians were for centuries the most brilliant and versatile of the Greeks. Their principal city of Miletus became the illustrious center of commerce, industry, and intellectual life. Such noted philosophers as Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes were from Miletus.

After living there so long on islands or sections of isolated coastlines, these people developed individual habits and customs. They became intensely devoted to their own city and way of living. There was no inclination to unite into larger political units or a nation. They acquired a sense of freedom, independence, and self-sufficiency which became the spirit of the Greek civilization.

As we said, the second condition which lays the groundwork for civilization is *sociological*. This is indicated by aggregation, that is, a concentration of peoples. It also included the formation of political units, and the appointment and acceptance of group leadership. The people formed villages, composed at first of an *ethnos*. Ethnoses are groups which are related by blood. The villages were small, separated, and unwallled. Gradually, however, neighboring villages, regardless of blood ties, joined for protection. Together they formed cantons, fortified cities, on the hilltops.

Under favorable conditions, the civilization advanced into a *polis*, a city-state or sovereign state. The first rulers were kings. They acted primarily in defense against foreign enemies and domestic rebellion. They also compelled respect upon the part of the people to the gods. The kings ruled by divine sanction—that is, their judgment was thought to be received from such gods as Zeus or Apollo. Eventually there was a transition of power from the kings to the aristocrats or nobles. The king then became only a high priest, a figurehead.

The earliest government of the Hellenic peoples, after the overthrow of the kings, came from the warrior class. At first this class was principally the cavalry. Only those who could provide horses and

equipment belonged to this powerful class. Later, when infantry was needed, more men participated in the wars. From such a larger group representing the people, there was a gradual expansion to democracy.

In the ancient state, the economic fabric of society rested on the basis of slavery. The slaves were mainly prisoners of war. For example, in Attica, an ancient region of Greece, there were 100,000 slaves at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. However, the total population was only 300,000. The outward policy of the ancient state became, because of the necessity of survival, military conquest. Other peoples had to be conquered, subjugated, so that a nation might survive economically. Therefore, the right of conquest was an inherent principle in the life of an ancient military state. Today, in most civilized states, the military is advocated principally as a defense rather than a desired way of life. Sociologically, therefore, there is a twofold movement of society—aggregation, organization and stability on one hand and, on the other hand, a movement toward culture and efficiency.

Let us now consider the *psychological* condition influencing that refinement which is civilization. If an individual is not engaged in the demands of life every waking moment, he has what is termed leisure. Leisure provides relaxation. Such is the suspension or withdrawal from activities called labor. However, a human being cannot remain for long in a semi-physical and mental state of inertia. The vital impulse demands action, as the consciousness is aggravated by ennui, inactivity.

In all leisure a very definite inclination is experienced involving something more enjoyable in contrast to customary labors. Therefore, the individual does something quite different or more extensively physical than before. Since leisure is done by his own compulsion, man may at times give himself to it more fully than to daily labors. By this means he expresses himself to a greater extent emotionally and mentally.

However, leisure does not mean just engaging in a pleasant and different physical activity. The consciousness in leisure may also be introverted, being occupied inwardly. It may, while the body is relaxed, find pleasure in reflection. There may arise to the fore of the consciousness the recollection of certain feelings that were experienced

previously. They may involve sensations that were had during some past experience. There are also thoughts that the individual does not ordinarily dwell on during the hours of labor.

The recollection of certain experiences causes one to think about the particular emotional states which were associated with them. Why, for example, was one angry or happy in a certain circumstance? What causes fear in one event and arouses curiosity in another? In leisure, then, self-appraisal becomes possible. Man began to associate objectives, definite activities, with desires he had. He was no longer motivated by instinct alone but by a specific *purpose* as well. With this self-appraisal, there arose a personal pride of accomplishment. Man compared his own ability with that of his associates. He learned in what he excelled and also in what he was deficient. Thus began the more intensive cultivation of awakened talents. It stimulated the creative sense by which the individual extended himself through an act of creative expression. Man was refining self and his environment.

From a study of primitive culture, we know that leisure contributed greatly to the religious sense and moral behavior. Man had a greater opportunity in leisure to observe and to contemplate the wonders of nature. He gazed with questioning thoughts at the starlit heavens. He wondered about the Sun traversing the sky and the change of seasons. He was awed by the mystery of life and death. He sought a reassuring solution to these things. He endeavored to explain the unknown, and he strove to find his relationship with it.

With such religious and philosophical reflection, the social conscience deepened. There was no longer just the thought of the individual self alone but of mankind as well. It was realized that humans are a group, a kind, and they are subordinate to some transcendent power, such as a god or goddess. The relationship of all men to the gods must be the same. Certain behavior would be offensive and other acts would please the gods. Thus there developed a moral code, a *social conscience*.

This was a society with common obligations, duties, and restraints. So, the higher form of society, which we call civilization, really begins with a growing *self-consciousness* and an attempt to have it discipline the whole of human behavior.

We would like to quote the very apt words of Robert Millikan, a world-renowned physicist: "The change from the individual life of the animal to the group life of civilized man would obviously be impossible unless the individual learned in ever increasing measure to subordinate his impulses and interests to the furtherance of the group life."

In considering civilization and its idealistic attainment, we are confronted with the phrase the *brotherhood of man*. It is a common phrase, but in a highly materialistic world, and one of great personal self-aggression, is such a brotherhood possible?

It seems appropriate when speaking of moral and spiritual values to say that the brotherhood of man should universally unite in an application and understanding of these qualities. However, just how extensive is this brotherhood of humanity? Biologically all men are of the family *Hominoidea*, that is, the two-legged primates to which man is said to be related. It is quite obvious that this united physical brotherhood does not embrace the whole nature of man. There is no universal personality, mentality, or emotional state to be found among men.

As to the brotherhood of man's spiritual disposition, this concept arises from the construction which religion places upon its traditions and theologies. Most all the fundamental religious sects who expound the doctrine of the human soul do not attribute to that soul an equality in all men, that is, in spiritual content or evolutionary status. These religions in various ways delineate the deficiencies of the human soul in certain men and the need for its salvation and purification. This implies a difference of spiritual attainment and soul quality in mankind. There is also then a hiatus in the spiritual brotherhood of mankind. Consequently, brotherhood established upon the sameness of humanity is nonexistent and not possible.

To have a brotherhood which suggests a uniform relationship in some factor manifested by all men and which is inescapable would defeat the very spirit of individual attainment and achievement to which most men aspire. It would necessitate a regimentation of all men to conform to an arbitrary standard established as a brotherhood.

It is inappropriate, of course, to state that we are all imbued with life and, therefore, that factor makes us brothers. Life is not just limited to mankind, for all living things are permeated with its force. Furthermore, such partial biological sameness does not alter the fact that in every other respect men are quite divergent.

Men do not think alike and no intelligent person would want a race of robots whose similar thoughts would prompt identical actions. Such a condition would produce unendurable ennui. However, human experience accumulated over the centuries of recorded history does show that the need for survival and the opportunity for mental and cultural advance requires certain standards of human conduct if these things are to be realized.

Nature impels a pursuit of that which will satisfy the appetites and sustain life. Life, however, is evaluated by man not exclusively in a sensuous sense, that is, by a satisfaction of the appetites. There are also emotional responses which he desires from life and certain ideals to which he wishes to apply his life. The individual who is content just to be free from physical perturbation and irritation has not advanced very far beyond lower animal types and is hardly worthy of being called a rational man.

It is therefore the varying ends which man attributes to life—that is, what he expects or thinks it should be—that accounts for the great lack of brotherhood existing in the objectives held by mankind. Two principal factors contribute to the separation of men—namely, *religion* and *politics*. In a broad sense religion may be defined as that subjective expression of the spiritual or moral motivation in man by which he aspires to a life he believes to have been designed for him by a divine being. Such a design is believed to have been revealed to a human prophet or messiah who thereafter formulated it to become a sacred law which required men to conform to it as a spiritual code.

Human interpretation by these different messiahs and their priesthood and clergy frequently deviated from each other to the extent that they often lacked a common description of God or what is thought He demanded of man. This causes both confusion and

conflict not only in belief but in man's social relationship as well. It is only necessary for one to refer to the current news about wars and revolutionary conditions prevailing throughout the world to see at the bottom of most the ugly hatred bred out of misconceived religious zeal and theological differences.

What is the objective of *politics*? Again in the broad sense we may say that it is an ideology, which advocates a state approaching those conditions which men conceive as a kind of utopia or a way leading to it. Fundamentally, these utopias have certain similar elements of human desire. For example, they include freedom, sustenance, protection, and the pursuit of happiness. It is a safe proposition to say that most all men are in accord with these principles or ideals. But are they all in agreement as to the methods and procedures by which such are to be attained? Further, just what the different terms of this ideal state mean, such as freedom and happiness, for example, are in themselves eristic. Philosophers for centuries have sought a common ground for them, an absolute definition, which would be acceptable to all men, but without success.

Therefore, in the political realm also the word *brotherhood* fails to have any universality. The extremes of these opposing opinions and beliefs, and the actions which follow from them, can be mitigated by a sincere desire on the part of men to understand them. There are both religious and political precepts that are damned by some persons merely because they seem contrary to their own concepts. It is an egotistic human tendency to evaluate one's own belief as the *good*. This good is often defined as the absolute, the perfect, and the only true one. Consequently, such an attitude logically places all other thought in the category of being false.

This unfortunate condition is heightened by the provincialism existing today. We are told of the great amalgamation of peoples due to a compressing of the world by increased population and the close ties provided by modern transportation and communication. However, this provincialism or the endemic beliefs and customs that people persist in harboring to the exclusion of all else makes a mutual understanding not possible.

To some extent television and radio have bridged this tendency of communal isolation and the perpetuating of only one's own ways and traditions. But television and radio have also to a great extent had to bow and submit to the prejudices and biases of the country or the community or interests which supports them.

It is amazing that as one travels about the modern world he finds that great numbers of people look upon certain customs they hear about or may have seen on television, and which are different than their own, as being necessarily inferior, incorrect, or improper. Due to such prejudices, born out of ignorance, derision and hate will ultimately arise.

How many religionists, devout in their own faith, have ever read even a synopsis of the history and doctrines of another faith? It is common for many Christians to speak of, for example, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam in a derogatory sense. It is as though non-Christian believers were deficient in conscience and spiritual attributes. Further, how many religionists have ever read an authoritative definition of *mysticism* or *metaphysics*? Yet, many are ready to condemn these subjects solely upon the ground they are not of their faith.

Before we wholeheartedly support a political ideological system, we should understand a little more of its terminology. The human needs and inherent desires are the nearest things to equality in human nature. How different is one political system in attaining such ends from another? The political ideologies today, as they have long ago, speak of the *liberty* and *freedom* of the individual. Yet this liberty is often so construed that the word *tyranny* would perhaps better define it. In some current political theories the state is made to appear to be the ultimate attainment of man. It is presented in a paternal sense as the benefactor of the individual. The freedom of the individual, then, is only that which is to be bestowed upon him by the state. Individual choice outside the mandatory requirements of the state is greatly restricted. On the other hand, other systems under various names, in their political philosophy, stress individual freedom to the extent of its being almost absolute and a form of permissiveness. Consequently, such a system offers no binding factor which would compose a state.

In subscribing to a political philosophy one should first make a study of the semantics of the basic principles which it expounds. What, for example, do such words in their doctrines actually mean? Further, do such fundamental meanings harmonize with the manner in which the word is used in the political ideology? We hear and read of the atrocities dictators imposed upon their people. Such inhumanities, such crimes against humanity, have been authoritatively substantiated. But how many persons, aside from reading the emotional outpourings against such acts, have ever sought to investigate, in the historical sources available, what made it possible for such individuals to ever gain the power they had? The lack of knowledge of such history by most persons makes them susceptible to all kinds of propaganda, much of which is false and harmful to them.

Provincialism also often causes persons not to know or care about economic conditions prevailing elsewhere than in their own area or country. It is such indifference to conditions and circumstances, other than in their own community, which often prevents men from taking necessary measures for their own welfare. If, for instance, one knows something of the natural resources of countries and exports upon which they depend for a livelihood, he would be adverse to imposing severe tariffs upon their products.

We hear, for further example, of the flood of exports from Japan. The provincialist will exhort his legislators to impose severe tariffs upon such products. In doing so he does not realize that Japan actually buys from some other countries raw materials and machinery having greater monetary value than the products she sells to them. A restrictive tariff placed upon her could result in economic retaliation that would be a greater economic hardship upon the citizen than the influx of Japanese goods.

During the Vietnam War many demonstrators marched about with placards protesting against their government's involvement. In questioning a number of them it was found that some of the most vociferous could not even point out on the map just where North Vietnam was located. They were perhaps justified in their protests but they were grossly ignorant of some of the basic facts of the subject.



## THROUGH THE MIND'S EYE

We could never be a brother in *every respect* to all other humans, nor should we try to be. But it is necessary to understand our differences, which makes for a greater degree of tolerance and less susceptibility to those who would manipulate our ignorance to their advantage.

## Chapter 8

# WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

UNFORTUNATELY, THE TERM *spirituality* has been commonly associated with devout followers of established religions, the implication being that unless one is an adherent of a religious sect, he cannot possess or exhibit those qualities which are accepted as spiritual. Succinctly, this could be construed as meaning that religious affiliation is a secular symbol of one's spiritual endowment. One who does not attend church is often regarded as having failed to pay homage to what are accepted as divine decrees.

A distinction must be made between spirituality, on the one hand, as an innate moral impulse, and, on the other hand, participation in formalized religious customs and rites by institutions designed for such purposes. Spiritual motivation, however, existed long before the adoption of practices to express and symbolize it objectively. We touched upon this subject in previous chapters.

Just when man fully became aware of the finite nature of the self, in comparison to the magnitude of the external world and its phenomena, is not known. But the early hominid, far back in the Paleolithic Period—the early Stone Age—left indications that he was aware of a transcendent power. The beliefs held by early man are technically known as *hylozoism*. All matter is conceived to be alive, imbued with life. On the walls of caves these early humans created pictures and designs of what appear to be celestial objects—such as the sun, stars, moon, etc. Beneath them, and of smaller size, are crude images of humans. Their size was probably to emphasize their finiteness in comparison to the magnitude of the celestial bodies. The pictures, though of crude design, show these human figures with arms upraised pointing toward the astronomical symbols, strongly suggesting an act of adoration and supplication to what were thought to be superior powers.

With the passing of the centuries, this belief in hylozoism evolved into what is known in primitive religion as *animism*. This tremendous ascent in concept reflected the belief that all things were imbued with life. In other words, things were not just alive, but they were also apotheosized by man; that is, they were deified. They were thought to possess *spirit*, or a dual quality which made such "living" objects gods or superior entities. This was the first recognition of a duality in living things. This spirit was thought to be an indwelling, invisible force or being. Man had thus arrived at an awareness of certain innate sensations of his being which were quite converse to the realization of his physical self. We can presume that spirit seemed to talk to him. It caused him to fear, love, hate, and to have those feelings take form in his dreams.

We can gather from these early cave paintings and records that no distinction was made between spirit, which man presumed dwelt within him, and that which was thought to dwell within the gods. In other words, he attributed the same emotions which he possessed to all those things which were thought to be imbued with spirit. However, since these gods were physically uncontrollable, it was assumed that their powers exceeded those of man.

This assumed indwelling entity, this intangible spirit, was eventually related to breath. This notion was mostly engendered by the obvious fact that life began with breath and departed with it at death. Breath was air, and air was invisible, existed everywhere, and its nature was always the same to human perception. Therefore, it was believed to be infinite and powerful. With the cessation of breath and coming of death, the spirit departed and the awareness of self disappeared, even though the material body remained. It would seem, from records and artifacts left by ancient man, that this phenomenon gave rise to many questions.

Where did this godly essence which gave life and spirit abide? If the gods in the sky had the same spirit quality as man, then the heavens must be the source of the spirit essence in man. Later, the habitat of the spirit was also thought to be beneath the Earth as death: this was a belief held by the Egyptians of a certain period and also by such Semitic races as the Babylonians and the Assyrians.

Magic preceded religion. From what we can ascertain from archaeological studies of early paintings and other artifacts, primitive man mostly feared his gods. Later, when polytheism—the belief in many gods—prevailed, some gods were feared more than others because of the powers they seemed to exert. At first, such natural phenomena as thunder, rain, lightning, volcanic eruptions, etc., were considered gods. Simply, they were thought to be deities and the forces were of them. They could ravage man by their powers if they were angered. It was therefore necessary for man to placate them, to appease them in some way so as to avoid rousing their displeasure. Here began the birth of elementary religion. However, because primitive religion was preceded by magic and long related to it, scholars have called this the period of *magico-religion*.

As we have noted heretofore, magic consists of a belief in supernatural powers that can be directed and controlled by man to do his bidding. These powers are often inverse to the forces of nature, as the latter can be opposed and controlled by magic. Specific rites were used to command the magical forces to restrain the gods and cause them to act in man's favor. Psychologically, in using magic, man recognizes his own finiteness and weakness in contrast to the supernatural entities he imagines exist; he seeks to enlist these magical forces as allies to avert any undesired acts on the part of nature.

Archaeological research and historical records show that a great transition occurred in man's magico-religious practices. He no longer attempted to command and compel the supernatural powers, but rather tried to plead with them and placate them with gifts. Magical rites eventually became acts of *supplication*, *prayer*, and *sacrifice*. Since the gods were assumed to have human attributes, they loved fine food and drink, such as nectar and ambrosia. Therefore, meats, fruits, flowers, and drink were offered to the gods. Animal sacrifices were made at an altar, and in an earlier period of the transition of rites, humans were immolated. Incense was also offered, not as a symbol, but so that its fragrance might be wafted to the gods and incline them to favor the prayers being offered.

The elaboration of these rites is specifically presented in the texts of primitive and comparative religions. Examples of such works are *The Golden Bough* by J. G. Frazer, *Primitive Culture* by Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Religion* by Paul Radin, and a host of more recent works by eminent authorities.

Another advance in religion, even while man was deeply involved in magical rites, was the belief in the immortality of the "spirit," the inner entity. The ancient Egyptians differentiated between spirit and what is now accepted as soul. The word *Ka* was given various definitions through the dynasties. In general, we may say that the *Ka* was thought to be a duplicate of the physical body in form, although intangible. It was more like the personality; that is, it exhibited the traits of the physical self. It followed the soul into an afterworld, just as modern religions think of the personality surviving death.

*Ba* was the name given by ancient Egyptians to a kind of dream-soul. *Ba*, too, was explained in many ways. In the early *Book of the Dead*—a collection of liturgies and prayers for the benefit of the deceased—the soul of the dead, the *Ba*, was depicted as a falcon and its shape was in the form of a bird. But even in the early dynasties, the soul was considered immortal.

To early man, as to most persons today, life was a mystery associated with the supernatural, as it was considered to be of a divine source. In most religions, *life* and *soul* were thought to have an affinity. Therefore, the ancients naturally assumed that this phenomenon termed *soul*, like life, would return to its mysterious source after death.

Still another advance in religion was the doctrine of *salvation*. Its basic principle was that the necessary moral purification of the individual must take place before entering a divine state after death, and that he might be eligible to reside with a god or gods. It would appear that the early concept of salvation was not so much the aspiration to acquire a personal sanctity as it was an atonement for any offenses that one may have caused the deity.

Among the earliest beliefs in salvation were those of the Assyrians and Babylonians. The Babylonians, whose principal deity was Marduk,

had a belief in a "Merciful God." The Babylonians included others in their pantheon, however, from whom undoubtedly they also sought salvation. They apparently had no belief in an "original sin." Their sins were mostly involuntary ones committed on Earth, the doing of some forbidden thing. The expiation for the sins was to be done in this world and was to be accomplished by liturgies and prayers intended to excite the Divine Being to commensurate and pardon. When pardoned, the sin turned to a good. If the sinner was saved in this world, no saving power needed to be involved in his behalf in the next.

*Spirituality* is a synthesis of these various notions that gradually dawned upon man as his consciousness of self expanded. However, it is not entirely free of the dogma and practices of magic, in which religion had its ancient roots. We propose to give an outline of those emotions and ideations which constitute the foundation of true spirituality.

- A. Spirituality is the recognition of an eternal *transcendancy*, that is, the existence of an omnipotent and omniscient power.
- B. The transcendent essence is not dual; there is only a *monism*. Particulars and forms are but expressions of this One.
- C. Since this transcendency is the totality of *all* it is therefore *perfect*, for there is naught to excel it. For the same reason, it is conceived as *good*, for the perfection of anything implies its goodness.
- D. Since man, as all things, is of the *Transcendent One*, he too is perfect in essence. But man must acquire an awareness of his immanent perfection.
- E. There is no universal moral code of the transcendent (divine) *perfection* and *good* that all men accept. Each, therefore, must subscribe to a code that conforms to his own innate sense of the divine perfection and good.
- F. No man is born with a greater endowment of transcendent perfection than another. No man, in essence, is closer to the Transcendental One than another. Therefore, no man who seeks

this union with the *One* needs another man or an institution to serve as an intermediary for him.

G. Sins are of two kinds:

a. Violation of traditional moral codes which are said to be divine revelations.

b. Violation of one's conscience—a *true* sin because it profanes one's personal sense of goodness.

H. Spirituality, therefore, is a sense of personal relationship with the *Transcendent One*, by whatever name or mental image appears to best express it. It is also an abidance by the motivation of one's higher sentiments and those codes of morality that conform to such personal feelings and thoughts.

I. As the mystics know and teach, spirituality is not the mere acquisition of formalized creeds and rites. These only symbolize traditional ideals to be attained and merely point a way that is said best to travel for attaining the Supreme Illumination.

Is virtue a prerequisite for spirituality? Are all virtues moral in content? Is virtue innate, or is it acquired? Are we born with the qualities of virtue, or do we learn them from the current prevailing traditions and customs? Furthermore, just what is meant by "virtue?" It could be a form of self-discipline, a self-imposed restraint, as against the temptations of immorality and malevolent social behavior. Here it is assumed that virtue opposes immorality or evil.

In the Middle Ages, however, it was commendably virtuous to oppose certain behavior, much of which is now acceptable. For example, virtue was not thought to be absolute; its appraisal was relative to what was denounced at the time as immoral. The question then arises: Should virtue have a positive unchangeable quality of its own, unaffected by the variable moral wrongs? In other words, should virtue always oppose certain actions, regardless of whether they are generally accepted as evil or amoral?

Let us consider the other concept of virtue, specifically, that which is genetically based—we are born with it. This would mean that virtue is an evolved ideal, a subconscious motivation transformed into an intellectual standard of personal behavior. This conception, however, attributes *duality* to virtue. On the one hand, it is an immanent, formless impulse of the subconscious; on the other hand, it is a product of thought, of reason, and the formation of an ideal.

If virtue is dual, its only positive absolute quality would be its inherent subconscious motivation—a *feeling* without any thought directly related to it. More simply, it would be the impulse to act virtuously, yet not expressed intellectually as an idea. The other aspect of this assumed duality of virtue would be to relate it objectively to the particulars of behavior; in other words, to select certain behavior arbitrarily as participating in or as being related to the sense of virtue which one inwardly experiences as a feeling.

From the above point of view, any perpetually accepted virtues would not be possible. Each person experiencing the virtuous inclination would interpret it according to his understanding of those things which virtue should oppose. Yet we do find that there are historically accepted virtues. The impulse of virtue, if we may call it that, has been intellectually related to specific types of behavior.

The so-called cardinal virtues proclaimed by the ancient Greek philosophers were *justice*, *prudence*, *fortitude*, and *temperance*. Later, the theological virtues of *faith*, *hope*, and *charity* were accepted. But why were these particular concepts chosen as virtues? What were the criteria that made them conform to man's ideal of virtue? Here we return to the question: What is this innate feeling of virtue like, or how is it intellectually defined? The great thinkers of the past struggled with these questions.

Socrates taught that virtue was a natural endowment, an innate propensity. It was not an artificial habit, that is, something acquired through education. Yet Socrates asserted that virtue could be taught, but only in accord with the natural propensity of the soul. The soul retains, he said, a divine wisdom. This self-knowledge could be awakened and was perfect. Self-knowledge, or knowing one's self, was



the beginning of one's personal existence. This awakened knowledge of the soul defined for man the nature of virtue. Therefore, Socrates declared that "virtue is knowledge." This knowledge of the soul reveals to man "what is truly best." All virtues, Socrates further asserted, are one, for underlying them is the knowledge of their good quality, that is, that they are best for man.

Plato differed with his teacher Socrates. He taught that there is no unified principle of goodness underlying the virtues. All the virtues, he contended, imply an opposite of ignorance. In other words, virtue is knowledge of a better kind of action. For example, one is prudent not because it arises from an innate sense of good, but rather knowledge shows it to be the *best way*.

This knowledge of virtue cannot be taught from without by artificial precepts. Plato's point was that rules or moral codes are artificial methods of teaching true virtue. Such are transient and not all men experience the good that such rules are meant to teach. The knowledge of which virtue consists, said Plato, must be a revelation of the soul. It must be an awakening of the *soul's innate knowledge*. This means, as we understand it, a response to one's innate sense of value, a true nature of what is best for man. It is the good learned from within.

Aristotle declared that virtue, like evil, is personally defined. There are extremes in human behavior; those which are declared to be good, and the opposite, evil. Between these extremes is the middle course, which Aristotle called the *golden mean*. Evil is that which is not according to the golden mean. Our decision as to just what this mean is constitutes our personal ideal of virtue. It is a process of carefully judging our action and applying reason as a guide to our actions.

Is, however, the golden mean the same for everyone? Do all people place the same limit on good and also the same point of beginning for evil? Wouldn't the golden mean of some people fall partially into what others might think to be evil? This is the problem which society has always confronted—that is, a disagreement on what is absolute virtue. Yet reason suggests a dependable virtue for all men to follow, which we shall later consider.

The ancient *Stoics* were critical of man's attempt to seek virtue. The attempt to arrive at the nature of virtue was to give way to the emotions and to sensibility. Man must act indifferently and not give way to his feelings. Man's strength, they held, was in denying the sentiments and emotions. A person who thought of something as just, kind, loving was captivated by the feelings, thus indicating a weakness of the will. Nevertheless, the Stoics later submitted to the necessity of certain obligations of man toward others. Zeno, the founder of the school of Stoic philosophy, said, "that which comes on one's way to (do)."

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) wrote that there is no relationship between virtue and happiness. He points out that experience reveals that the righteous are often cast down and the wicked flourish. More succinctly, he states that the virtuous are not always happy and neither are those happy always virtuous. However, Kant admits that though virtuous behavior may at times be disagreeable, it often engenders a feeling of self-respect and self-approbation. In other words, it is difficult to achieve but is a task we take pride in having done.

Kant tells us that following conscience, the Divine Will provides an experience of bliss. But to do this, one must believe that a Divine Entity or God exists. It is from such an entity, Kant asserts, that Divine Will is personally experienced as a moral law.

Just where do we stand in regard to these concepts of virtue? Is virtue entirely innate? Are we born with it, or is it a matter of keenly judging what is the best of our actions? Is there a common point of agreement between the concepts of the great philosophers we have briefly quoted?

Every man has the innate, instinctive desire to do good. But good for whom or what? It is what is good for the self. Everything which man does is to satisfy some aspect of his nature. Even so-called impersonal, charitable acts are done, if not by compulsion, then because they gratify a sensibility, a sentiment, or emotion. It may seem inconsistent to assign what are ordinarily considered as unselfish acts to the same category of feeling as those which are referred to as selfish. Yet,

instinctively man always does what he thinks is best for himself, that is, what he feels to be personally satisfying.

This is not degrading man nor implying that he is never truly virtuous. There are gradations of self-service. For example, the satisfaction of the appetites is primarily limited to the physical self. The lowest order of self-service is when the self alone is gratified by acts which it performs. Where, however, the self-service includes others in its beneficence, it is of a higher order. Furthermore, when one is just in his actions, not only does he experience a personal sense of rectitude, but he also brings benefit others. The virtue of fortitude may result in another's welfare.

True virtue exists not only in one's own sense of good, but also in the good that one's acts may confer upon others. Simply, virtue is the sympathetic extension of one's personal good towards others.

This empathy, or extension of feeling, however, cannot be based on emotion alone. It must be guided by reason. It must be pragmatic. What is the good that we should recognize as having other than just a limited personal value? True virtue must conceive as good that which reaches out beyond the immediate self. In this regard, *truth*, *honesty*, and *temperance* are examples of true virtue. *Truth* is not a virtue because it is an acquired habit or that which has been taught as a code of righteousness. It is reason that tells us that the opposite of truth, falsehood, is detrimental to human relations. Truth, therefore, is *practical* because it is necessary.

The same can be said of temperance and honesty. Knowledge points out their practical necessity, for to resort to intemperance or dishonesty is to encourage similar actions directed against one's self.

We may summarize by saying that virtue is that innate sense of self-good which reason shows the necessity of extending beyond one's immediate self.

## Chapter 9

# WHEN SHOULD WE BELIEVE?

**W**HAT RELIANCE SHOULD be placed upon belief? Can we accept belief as knowledge? Our sense experiences are our most common source of knowledge. They cause sensations from which mental images or ideas arise. To *know*, then, is to give identity to experience, but this knowledge must be communicable to have a pragmatic and social value. If it is locked in one's mind and cannot be related to another, or if it is inscrutable to others, its value is then limited. Therefore, knowledge is intelligence which is capable of being transferred to other minds and can be comprehended.

Belief is a personal conviction. But a belief is not the result of a corresponding direct sense experience. There is nothing material in a belief that will cause everyone to arrive at the same idea. For example, one may believe that the Earth is a hollow sphere, but no objective experience supports such an idea.

Nevertheless, belief is an idea conceived by the mind. It is *conceptual* knowledge that arises from the judgment of reason and imagination. Beliefs are the conclusions we draw from the elements of interrelated previous experiences. They are then reformed by our reason, or are synthesized by the process of imagination. Therefore, the substance of belief is essentially *a priori*—that is, it draws most of its material from previously acquired ideas. In other words, no direct objective experience in its entirety corresponds to a belief. If this were not so, we would always say “I know,” and never say “I believe.” If belief is not wholly the result of direct sense experience, what value has it to us? There are many things we do not experience directly from our peripheral senses, yet they do have the substance of knowledge. For example, we cannot see a thing which in itself is two of something. We can only experience

a numeral which symbolizes two. When we experience two separate things, we can then conceive them to be combined, and we form a symbol, a numeral which we term *two* to represent them. More simply, we say that we know two of something, but actually we only *believe* the existence of two. For two is not something visually perceived in itself. It is an idea for which we have formed a sign, a numeral, to represent the quantity of two.

Belief is *derivative* knowledge, that is, it has no reality outside the mind of the believer. There is no externality, no particular which corresponds to one's belief. For instance, the ancient Greeks believed that Mount Olympus was the home of the gods. This was a conception, not a perception, for no one had actually seen the gods residing on Mount Olympus. For further example, the heart was thought by certain ancients to be the center of man's divine nature. This was but *belief*, an assumption that could not be substantiated by sense experience.

A distinction must be made between illusion—a false knowledge—and belief. It is commonly known that our senses can deceive us; that not all knowledge from sense experience is absolute. For instance, one may think that a distant object he sees in a field is a grazing cow. Upon closer approach, he sees it is only a small stack of grain. But if the observer had never come closer to the object, the experience to him would be *knowing*, that is, he would visually *know* it to be a grazing animal. So much of our peripheral knowledge is, therefore, relative only to the validity of our receptor senses. Such illusions constitute knowledge until proven to be deceptions. Perhaps much of our knowledge derived from the senses will at some time be disproved. Though it is transitory, we must continue to accept such knowledge until it is refuted.

Beliefs, as derivative or assumed knowledge, are of two kinds. First are the *eclectic* beliefs, borrowed from tradition or accepted on faith, that is, their authority is implied. Traditions that have longtime social acceptance are rarely questioned as to their authenticity or validity. We are inclined to believe traditions because of their persistence and the credibility implied by their numerous believers. It is assumed that the tradition has some evidential grounds for its existence. For example, many persons' acceptance of a political ideology as having

a superior merit is mere belief. They have not personally investigated or thoroughly studied the system. Consequently, their acceptance of it is founded upon belief, not a knowledge borne out of analytical experience.

A great number of our beliefs are, again, only a construct of faith. Religion is the most prominent example. Theologians imply that the doctrines of their religion are of a divine source. This source is usually the revelations of an individual who is traditionally accepted as having been divinely illuminated. Obviously such beliefs have no foundation in the personal sensory experience of the sect's followers.

*Rationalization*, logical abstraction, is the second kind of belief. They are conclusions arrived at by the reason which appear self-evident. They are self-evident because neither experience nor reason can contradict them at the time. Mathematics is such an example. There are many abstractions that have a logical probability. To the mind, they have a positive quality. Objective experience, though it may not confirm them, also cannot refute them. Because some self-evident abstractions may not be universally accepted does not detract from the belief, the assumed knowledge, they may have to the believer.

The following are examples of beliefs or abstract knowledge held by many persons: Being, the Cosmos, never had a beginning; natural phenomena are not purposely caused; the so-called finite is as limitless as the infinite; there is no ultimate goal in nature, just a flux from simplicity to complexity, and return; the Cosmos cannot be dual in its nature, as there cannot be a mind independent of it.

Such beliefs are truths to the individual holding them. But these beliefs or self-evident truths, as abstract knowledge, must be held open to challenge. One must not assume that what appears indubitable to him is likewise to others. Whatever objective experience can prove universally must take precedence over assumed, abstract knowledge. Superstitions are beliefs founded on unsupported traditions or the insertion of meanings for unknown causes of phenomena.

The human mind is not content to accept an unknown. Man will not accept such a condition as a hiatus, that is, a *gap in reality*. Everything

must in some way become explicable to him, because the unknown, in its uncertainty, is almost always a cause of fear. If man cannot explain something by direct experience, he then forms a belief, an abstract knowledge about it. As long as it cannot be refuted, however, it serves as a relative truth to the believer.

Therefore, filling in gaps of the unknown with personal beliefs can result in superstition if there is not a profundity and perspicuity of thinking applied to their subject. In its reflective conclusions, the superstitious mind resorts to supernaturalism as a substitute for natural phenomena, whereas the thinking mind tries to find a solution to the unknown by a rational connection with what is known and which has an accepted reality. No man 's thought that tries to seek an understanding where none otherwise exists is unworthy. Certainly experience is related to our beliefs. The bases of many of our beliefs are the result of an experience, but experiences are of varied kinds. Are we certain of just what we mean by experience?

The word *experience* is one in common usage. However, this word has far greater depth of meaning than we ordinarily attribute to it. We are made aware of this when endeavoring to define just what experience is. Our first conclusion might be that experience is a state of realization, or an awareness of something. But let us look at that notion more critically. It is generally conceived that the phenomenon of consciousness is awareness and realization. Are consciousness and experience then identical? For example, would we say the sensation of warmth is an experience? Is an itch an experience? Every waking moment we are having such sense impressions as sights, sounds, and feelings. Do we ordinarily consider all of these as experiences?

Actually, however, when we refer to an experience we are concerned with differentiated states of consciousness, consisting of one or more impressions we have singled out from all else. By separating these sensations or ideas from others, we give them a distinct identity. Those sensations or ideas which we call experiences are, however, no different in essence than any other state of consciousness. But they possess a definite intimacy, a very different relationship. These experiences may produce a specific emotional response such as love, fear, hatred, compassion; or they produce an intellectual stimulus, causing a chain

of contemplation and reasoning. These effects cause us to single out certain impressions from the whole stream of consciousness as an experience.

An experience, then, has other values to the self than just the sensations which are perceived. For example, in itself the sensation of cold is not an experience. But by relating cold to an event connected with cold—that is, time, place, and the thoughts and emotions had—these elements make it an experience. Consequently, the experience is not a single sensation one has perceived, but part of a chain of thoughts aroused by sensations which then become an integral part of the experience.

Action that is predetermined or purposeful may cause a series of sensations and perceptions to combine in a way that may be termed *experience*. For instance, assume that one plans an adventure, a hazardous journey. Everything occurring within the time, space, and thought frame of that event, and thus related to it, composes an experience. In other words, a *central idea* must attach itself to other ideas for it to be termed an experience.

The central idea may either precede or follow the elements of sensation and perception which become attached to it. For example, let us say a person is a public health inspector assigned to investigate alleged unsanitary conditions in a public building. The initial purpose of his activity—the central idea—is the investigation of alleged unsanitary conditions. Whatever the inspector eventually exposes, what he finds, is related to his initial purpose—the central idea which motivated him. The central idea, therefore, expands by accretion to become an experience.

Conversely, one may have a number of perceptions that are quite diverse yet so related in time, place, and thought as to engender a central idea which represents them. This also constitutes an experience. To further clarify, let us assume that a manufacturer experiences a number of cancellations of orders for his products and there is also a large return of shipments which he has made. Let us further assume that no explanation accompanied such occurrences. The idea arising from these circumstances is that something is seriously at fault with his



product. This belief, whether right or wrong, becomes the central idea which has arisen out of a combination of elements.

Most of what we term experiences are but adventitious, haphazard occurrences. In other words, there is no predetermined or willed order by which the happenings are made to fall into place. One is, therefore, not the direct cause of such impressions entering his consciousness. From such dissimilar, unexpected impressions the individual may try to form a central idea, to piece them together into an understandable whole. However, the central idea arrived at in such an occurrence can be erroneous. This is especially detrimental if the central idea is used as a basis for future desired experiences.

Let us use another simple example to clarify this point. A number of unanticipated events may in their entirety be realized as pleasurable. From them one may develop a central idea as to how the events contributed to the pleasure. Actually, however, the central idea may be quite unrelated to the events, and if it is used to cause similar pleasant experiences, it can result in failure.

We often hear the expressions *learn from experience* and *profit by experience*. This immediately suggests that such experiences have a central idea. The individual, it is presumed, goes forth in the world to draw conclusions from phenomena and events which he encounters. He then learns that these occurrences were either beneficial or detrimental to him, and from such he forms a central idea that becomes experience.

A *planned experience* has far greater probability of becoming profitable in the sense of the personal satisfaction it may provide. In this instance the individual begins with a central point—that which is to be attained. The idea has never been objectified, but the individual hopes to substantiate it and have it become reality to him. The central idea he has established suggests to him possible elements, things, or conditions, which will bring it into existence as a reality. By having such a planned central idea, he is then more conscious of those things which obviously would be unrelated to his goal or would obstruct it. Nevertheless, beginning a search for “profitable” experience with a central idea is no assurance that adverse, unexpected occurrences may not arise, thus causing failure.

Many things learned from experience, though personally not harmful, are likewise of no great value in attaining intellectual or economic success, or happiness. This is especially so if one does not at first proceed with a central idea. Many events are realized which bring about a seeming good in terms of essential or less basic satisfactions. However, they contribute little to the formation of a central idea that would qualify them as a “worthy, fruitful experience.”

In connection with the subject of mysticism, there is common reference to the *mystical experience*. Does the mystical aspirant have a central idea of specific phenomena that he desires to realize? Or are those things he perceives during his state of meditation to be just accepted as a mystical experience?

The mystical aspirant, if he has studied the basic principles of mysticism, would only have acquired an idea of what the experience in general should consist. For example, he may know that it should transcend any objective or common subjective state of consciousness. He may also expect it to be an unusual, emotional, and intellectual stimulus.

However, the mystical aspirant will have no previous idea as to the *actual particulars* that the hoped-for experience would reveal. Therefore, the experience is incomplete until impressions are realized which are thought to be related to the central idea of what the experience should consist. However, many attempting a mystical experience are often deluded by natural phenomena in their meditations. If, for example, they are staring fixedly at a bright light and then turn their eyes away, they may see complementary bright colors. This, however, is the visual phenomenon of afterimages—a phenomenon *not* caused psychically. Intense concentration (which should not occur during meditation), if sustained for a long period of time, can cause a nervous reaction such as twitching of the muscles. This too is often mistakenly construed as an aspect of mystical experience.

For one who enters meditation with the purpose of having a mystical experience, what should be his guide as to its authenticity? The particular elements about the phenomenon vary with the individual.

However, if these elements constitute a true mystical experience, they will fall into a certain general category which is accepted as a mystical state of consciousness.

The following is a simple guide to the reliability of such impressions—helping one to determine whether they are the true elements of mystical experience. These elements are *beauty*, *tranquility*, and *illumination*. These three elements should compose the central idea of the mystical experience. But they should not be preconceived as particulars, in other words, imagined as specific things. One should not, for example, have in mind a definite image of mystical beauty. It should not consist of a particular form or of colors. Rather, the idea of beauty should be abstract. It should be harmony of the senses—the visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory. Such abstraction is like experiencing the totality of impressions composing a magnificent scenic vista. It is a coalescence of the many particulars making up the whole sensation of the beautiful.

The element of tranquility in meditation should not be represented by any one thing or sensation. Mystical tranquility, in fact, should be a falling away of all individual things as the singleness of feelings or sensations. It is a state of absolute *imperturbability* of both body and mind, a kind of inexplicable bliss.

The third guide in the mystical experience, as said, is illumination. This is realized as a distant clarity of the intellect. All doubt disappears; there is an effusion of confidence that whatever is to be encountered intellectually, the mind will be capable of coping with it. Subsequently, following the mystical experience the illumination may be objectified. It may take a noetic form, as a great influx of intuitive ideas and knowledge. This may be, perhaps, a clarification of what was once thought perplexing to the mind.

In conclusion, only when the elements of time, place, and the impressions of perception and conception are related to a central idea, do they become an experience.

## Chapter 10

# WHAT IS HUMAN HARMONY?

**D**O WE ALWAYS understand the words we use? There are words which by custom may seem appropriate, and therefore we habitually use them. However, the semantics of these words—what the words in themselves may mean—are often not understood. One such commonly used word is *harmony*. It may seem correct to use phrases such as, “They are not in harmony,” or “Let us work in harmony.” But just what is this thing or condition to which we apply this term?

The word *harmony* has a specific meaning in music and in physics. To comprehend the word, it is necessary to determine whether such definitions also apply to its common usage.

When a wire is vibrating as a whole, it gives out what is called its, *fundamental*, or lowest note. The wire, when it is vibrating as a whole, may at the same time be vibrating in segments as if it were divided in the middle. Such a secondary vibration gives an overtone. This is twice the frequency of the fundamental and is an octave higher. This is called the *first overtone*.

Higher overtones, related to the fundamental vibration, are called *harmonics*. The quality of a tone is determined by the prominence and number of overtones blended with the fundamental. We will note the word *blended* indicates that harmony, in this sense, is a transfer of energy united with others, out of which arise vibrations which are in accord with each other.

In physics, we find the nature of harmony explained under the heading of mechanical resonance. There are simple laboratory

demonstrations which illustrate the laws underlying resonance. First, we see how a tuning fork, as an example, transmits vibrations. We place a tuning fork up right on top of a hollow box. We then take a string and fasten to one end a small glass bubble (or pith ball). The tuning fork is then given a sharp blow by a hard substance such as a pencil or a screwdriver. If we then hold the string so that the pith ball at its end touches the tuning fork, it will be set in violent motion by the vibrations from the tuning fork. We will note the transferred energy from the tuning fork to the pith ball on the string.

Two objects having the same vibratory frequency will vibrate in sympathy with each other. For further example, if we suspend two weights on the ends of strings of equal length, hanging them from a rubber tubing, they will act as pendulums. If we then set one pendulum swinging, the other begins to swing too. We will also note that the first pendulum dies down in its swinging as energy flows across to the other. This, of course, will only happen if the pendulums are of the same length and of the same frequency of vibrations.

By *frequency* we mean the number of complete vibrations (to and fro) per second. For example, the frequency of a certain tuning fork is 440 vibrations per second. Resonance, then, is this condition of a *sympathetic transfer of energy*.

If we place two tuning forks of the same vibratory frequency upright on a hollow box and strike one, causing it to vibrate, we will observe, by holding a pith ball on a string against the other tuning fork, that it will be set in motion. This indicates a sympathetic relationship between the two forks; in other words, that there is a transfer of energy from one to the other. They are in *harmony* with each other.

Just as with tuning forks, a condition of resonance or sympathetic relationship must exist for there to be a state of harmony between humans. There must be possible a transference of a stimulus that produces an agreeable emotional response in another individual. Each person must have a certain quality or characteristic of his or her being that will engender an agreeable emotional response in the other individual.

What, then, are those conditions which must produce in each person a similar response so that they may be said to be in harmony? There are three different conditions that contribute to harmonious human relationships. The first factor is *physical*. This is principally noted in sexual opposites. If one individual has a mental image of what constitutes the ideal physical characteristics of the other sex, that constitutes an attraction. If the opposite sex experiences a similar attraction, then there is a sympathetic bond, a harmonious relationship of a lower order.

A physical state of harmony can easily be disturbed by other factors that arise from a more intimate relationship. Extreme differences in habits which become irritating to one person may completely annul the former sense of a harmonious relationship.

The second factor in human harmony is the *intellectual*. If an individual finds great emotional satisfaction in cultural and intellectual pursuits, any activity upon the part of another which complements it results in a common bond of harmony. It can be said there is, in fact, a unified gratification arising out of similar interests. However, such an intellectual harmony can endure only if it is of sufficient intensity to surmount other variable states which may exist between the individuals.

The third factor of importance in establishing a harmonious relationship is the *psychical*. This factor is more subtle in that it cannot be defined by any particulars such as can be done with the physical and the intellectual. The psychical is sensed as an emotional feeling, yet the emotion cannot be directly attributed to any single action or words by the other person. The individual toward whom one may be psychically drawn may not have similar interests or be physically attractive.

There is, in such individuals, a psychical radiation that constitutes their personality. It stems from the depth of their psychic sensitivity. There is evoked in the other person an awareness of what he or she thinks as being the virtues and nobility of character of the human being. In other words, there is a concord of the finer sentiments that are psychically experienced, even if there is nothing objective or symbolical to express them. Two persons having a psychical relationship are apt to say of it: "There is something about his (or her) personality that I

find most agreeable.” This psychical effect may have a greater transfer of its nature by one person than by the other. It may, however, induce in the other a relatively similar state of feeling. There is the customary phrase heard that this other individual has a strong magnetic attraction upon one. This effusion can arouse a psychical state which causes the other person to be attracted sympathetically; in other words, to feel in harmony with the individual.

Such human harmony is not necessarily a permanent state. It can be disturbed by external and internal factors. For example, let us go back to a tuning fork. Two tuning forks, we have noted, having the same vibratory frequency, are in resonance. One will sympathetically respond to the other when it is set in motion. However, if we change the frequency, the number of vibrations, of one of the tuning forks, they are no longer in resonance or harmony. Also, two or more persons who are intellectually or psychically in harmony can lose that state of accord if one person's qualities come to deviate greatly from what was previously the case. For example, if because of association with others an individual who was formerly inclined to the fine arts becomes coarse and given to interests and activities diversely opposed to his former interests, the bond of sympathetic relationship is then destroyed.

Likewise, personality changes can affect what was formerly a harmonious personal relationship between individuals—for example, if one becomes morose, continually depressed, excessively pessimistic, and given to violent outbursts of temper. The harmony between people collectively, as in groups, depends as well upon discovery or creating a common denominator. To use a legal phrase, there must be a necessary *meeting of the minds*. This is, of course, on the intellectual level. Most in-harmony among groups of people is not due principally to psychic differences but rather variations in their concepts and experience. Accord, at times, is not possible between people because the intellectual and moral precepts of one faction may be so much a part of the self that they offend the self of others.

A society or culture reflects the basic moral and ethical beliefs of a people. Every society exhibits a lack of what others may term

ethics and morals, at least to some degree. If we measure the behavior of a people by the standard we may consider as moral or ethical, it may appear to be quite deficient. However, such people, speaking collectively, are acting in accordance with a concept, a philosophy of life, if you will, that is desired by them. Succinctly then, volitional conduct is always that which is personally preferred. In other words, no individual intentionally and of normal mentality acts against his best interests, whether physical, mental, or social.

Nevertheless, there has been, and there is, a great discrepancy between the goals in life which persons have sought or expressed and that which is exhibited in their behavior. We can only measure one social order against another for determining the good, not in terms of moral codes, but rather in the results they produce. For example, if a culture adopts a way of living that results in the degeneracy of art, literature, philosophy, and those other attainments which have exalted man in the past, we can then rightly term it wrong.

A code of living is not necessarily commendable or one to be emulated just because it has been expounded by a religious sect or is a fiat or mandate traditionally descended from some alleged sacred source. The test of its value must be pragmatic; in other words, what is its practical benefit to mankind, what does it do to advance him higher as a *Homo sapiens*?

History relates the decline of the Roman Empire, particularly as it was graphically related by the classic historian, Edward Gibbon. But what constituted that decline was not just that the Romans did not accept the early Christian moral code. They might have rejected Christianity and yet have been considered by the modern world as moral by following religions other than Christianity. However, the stigma which is attached to that period in history was that man was abusing himself. He was falling from the higher estate which he had laboriously attained in his climb upward from savagery.

There are millions of persons who do not subscribe to any particular traditional moral or ethical code. Yet in their behavior the summum bonum of their conduct is equal to the most conscientious follower of any religious code. Simply, one can be honest, truthful, just, temperate,



and a devout lover of cosmic phenomena without pledging allegiance to any system or code of circumspect conduct.

*Reincarnation* to most persons' minds constitutes a religious concept rather than a philosophical doctrine. Since they think of reincarnation as a religious preachment many religionists are apt to reject it only because it is possibly contrary to the doctrines of their faith. In fact, many persons would not even read an authoritative explanation of reincarnation because of their deeply rooted prejudice of what they consider to be exclusively religiously oriented.

The specific question is, What is there about reincarnation that might induce an individual to make a greater contribution toward an advanced culture in every sense of that word? Considering reincarnation in its most traditional sense, it consists of the belief in the return of the soul and its personality to occupy once again a body in another mortal life. More simply, it is the incarnation in physical human form again of a previous soul that has passed through transition. To use a popular term, *man lives again*.

In just what way does such a concept inspire a human, and how can it provide a greater satisfaction than any other beliefs which man may hold regarding the soul and an afterlife?

Men are conscious of the errors they commit and which they may seriously regret and lament whether they will admit that fact to others or not. Many such individuals will confess to themselves or others, when referring to their lives, "If I had to do it again, I would do it this way instead." They relate how they would try to compensate and to avoid committing acts which they think are wrong. But the notion of an afterlife in the traditional Christian, Judaic, or Muslim heaven does not provide for such an adjustment or correction for errors that are made in this life.

It would then seem that another life on Earth would make it possible for men to emancipate themselves from the kind of behavior of the past which they now regret. Such persons believe that they could aspire in another life to acts of benevolence and humanitarianism about which they learned too late in this existence.

Actually associated, of course, with the traditional belief in reincarnation is the mystical doctrine of *karma*. This was originally an Eastern doctrine expounded in the ancient Vedas and having today many modern variations. It advocates a law of cause and effect and compensation relating to every human thought and act committed or omitted during man's mortal existence. Each life then, according to the doctrine of reincarnation, suggests the establishment of causes from which effects may follow not only immediately or in this lifetime, but in a future life here on Earth. Consequently the believer in reincarnation may assume that he can build here a meritorious chain of virtuous conduct with corresponding effects for a future earthly life.

In this sense those who are advocates of reincarnation or who seek to conduct their lives accordingly would be rewarded by a personal advancement in another mortal life. We presume they would have a quickened consciousness, better enlightenment, and judgment and greater compassion, all of which would contribute to the improvement of a future society.

However, along with the belief in the doctrines of reincarnation there needs to be an ideal concept established for society. Simply, what is meant by an improved society? Does it just mean a stable government, full employment, personal security and economic welfare? Without some agreed-upon ideal having the concurrence of the majority of the population, reincarnation as a personal belief would have little effect upon the social and cultural improvement.

Unfortunately many of the multitude who profess to be devotees of the doctrines of reincarnation consider it principally as a means of material advantage to be gained by them in a future mortal existence. Few think of it as an obligation to contribute to the welfare of mankind.

Let us look at the subject in this way. One wants to live again as a human on this Earth plane. Now the pertinent question is, What is the motive behind this wish? What does he wish of this rebirth? The replies given to such questions would reveal to what extent a belief in reincarnation would improve human relations at a future time if he lived again.

## Chapter 11

# ADJUSTMENT TO THE NEW AGE

**W**HEN WE SPEAK of a certain age we refer to a definite period of time—usually a period designated by some specific development. These ages are of two general kinds. One is the geological age, such as the Archeozoic and the Proterozoic, etc. These indicate great changes in the Earth and the life upon it.

The other kind of age is the cultural one. Cultural ages refer to definite periods of time during which certain human activities have greatly influenced mankind. For example, there was the Copper Age, featuring the first use of metal. Then there was the Bronze Age, a great improvement over the use of copper, which lasted several thousand years. These ages were followed by the so-called Iron Age. Subsequently there came the Industrial Revolution as an age and similar division of time. Our present period has received such designations as the Atomic Age and the Space Age.

The importance of these ages is the effect which they had upon man's living and thinking. With the first metal tools man's method of building was revolutionized. Metal ushered in architecture on a grand scale. The metal tools resulted in the erection of huge pyramids of masonry and stone. Metal likewise had an impact on art, as in sculpture. Even religion became more expressive with the craftsmanship made possible with metal tools.

The Industrial Age was the consequence of machinery. For example, the invention of the cotton gin and the steam engine brought about production and transportation on an accelerated and vaster scale. It was the beginning of freedom for man from much grueling labor. Man's thinking was likewise drastically affected; a new spirit of individualism

arose. Skilled labor organized itself. New ideas regarding the nature and purpose of society were expounded.

We are conscious of great scientific and technical changes in our time. These stand out from all other periods of history. The momentum of these achievements is tremendous. We feel ourselves being swept along with them. How will they affect our thinking, our beliefs, and our concept of truth tomorrow? What changes must we make in our outlook toward life and society?

The first adjustment man must make is in his cosmic relationship. This means the formation of a new *ontology*, a new metaphysics and psychology. Man can no longer take refuge in the idea that he is a divinely favored being. He will come to realize that mankind is not the focal point of life. Man must know that there is not a cosmically ordained plan for him. As our knowledge of the greater universe grows, the less important as a particular, a thing, we become in relation to it. However, the greater becomes the generality of which man is a part. The form is always less important than its essence. A single species, or kind, is less important than the phenomenon of life which gives it expression.

Even at this time we are becoming aware that our galaxy, the Milky Way, is composed of billions of stars. Many of these stars are far larger than our Sun. Billions of planets rotate around such suns. Our solar system is but one of millions of similar systems in our galaxy. Beyond our Milky Way are billions of other galaxies, each with myriads of solar systems. Many of these galaxies are not visible to man. We know them only through the energy which they emit as radio waves.

Presume that statistically, mathematically, only one percent of such bodies are the habitat of intelligent beings. This would amount to millions of inhabited worlds! Some of such intelligent beings may have become extinct millions of years before our Earth was born. Still other beings, now in existence, have probably exceeded man in intelligence for aeons of time.

Thus all living things, everywhere, share alike in that combination of cosmic energies which are called life. It is presumed that life force

in everything is the same. The protozoa and the metazoa, the single and multiple cells, have the same basic qualities. Life is not a planned, determined phenomenon as we considered in an earlier chapter. Rather, it comes about out of necessity, of what the Cosmic is. Martin Heidegger, the philosopher and exponent of existentialism, said: "Reality, the Cosmic, is no thing." He meant that it is not any of the particular things which we perceive.

But, in its nature, the Cosmic has a whole spectrum of different kinds of phenomena. Life as we know it is but one of them. Life will occur whenever certain phases of cosmic phenomena manifest together. When we bring together the primary colors of visible light we then produce white. But white is not predetermined by nature to be such. It is part of the whole reality of which it consists. So, too, life is part of the myriad phenomena of the Cosmic.

The Cosmic does not consciously create things. But the Cosmic is apparently conscious of itself. The Cosmic is a self-activated being. What is self-activated must therefore realize, or be conscious of, its own nature. The Cosmic confers upon itself its own nature. Therefore, we can say the Cosmic is *self-conscious*.

The consciousness possessed by living things is of the same fundamental nature as the consciousness of the Cosmic. All living things express an affinity, that is, a unity of two phenomena of the Cosmic. One is what we call *matter*. The other is that *energy* which infuses matter and makes it animate or living. From the unity of these two phenomena there arises a third. This condition is the internal sensitivity which the living thing has to its own nature. This sensitivity functions as a continuous adjustment between matter and that energy which vitalizes it. We call this function, this sensitivity and responsivity, the *consciousness of life*.

At first the consciousness of living things is simple. It reacts to and rejects that which disturbs the living organism. It likewise responds to and attracts that which preserves life's unity. As the organism develops, the consciousness expands. Consciousness becomes capable of forming images, an idea of the things to which it responds. In other words, it gives them identity. More importantly, the consciousness

forms an image, an idea of its own organism. In man this internal image we call the *self*.

The great problem of human existence begins with this realization of self. This problem is related to the idea of separateness which self brings about. In conferring the idea of self upon man, consciousness has created the notion of a great duality. It is the idea of self on one hand; on the other hand there is the Cosmic and all else.

Because of this notion of detachment from the Cosmic, man has thought it necessary to relate himself to it. Most all religions and many philosophies are devoted primarily to the goal of uniting self with the Cosmic. These teachings retain the idea of the separateness of self and yet try to explain the influence of the Cosmic over that self. The things that satisfy self they call *good*. This good they attribute to the Cosmic, or that which they call God or the Divine. That which causes man distress and pain by contrast they call evil. Man has always found it difficult to explain how this evil came into existence. If the Cosmic is all, or if it creates all, then how or why did it permit the existence of a so-called evil? In trying to explain this paradox man involves himself in moral belief systems.

There will, however, come about an adapted revolution of thought. It will expound that there is no evil in the Cosmic. Evil is an arbitrary value which man confers upon experiences which are unpleasant to the self. He may find it necessary to reject such experiences, but they are not intrinsically evil. For example, things are either constructive or destructive—only as we come to relate them to ourselves and our purposes. In the Cosmic, however, no things are less or more important. Nothing is inferior or superior. There is no final end or purpose toward which the cosmic phenomena are being directed. As we considered in the subject of causality, a so-called end of one phenomenon, as perceived by man, is in reality just the beginning of another. It is a rhythmic change of the substance of which the Cosmic, the One, consists.

The new metaphysics will expound that there is no purpose in the Cosmic as man thinks of that term. For, if there were, then man may

imagine that such a purpose is yet unfulfilled, that it is incomplete. Or, if there was a cosmic purpose and it is fulfilled, then all that man has thought, or thinks to be evil, would seem to be a part of it. Purpose is a motivation toward some goal or end. That which is self-sufficient, as is the Cosmic, can have no purpose. Only beings like man are purposeful. Man wants to enlarge self. He desires to increase his satisfactions, realizations, and expressions. This is the sum of human purpose.

From all of this a new moral system will evolve wherein man will recognize two general kinds of good. The first will include those basic things that further physical existence in that they sustain life and preserve the consciousness of self. This will also include those things which further society. As the philosopher Hegel said, man is not fully himself until he concerns himself with the welfare of society because such is a greater good than just a concern for the individual, alone. It is an expansion or enlargement of self which makes the self more inclusive.

The second kind of good is for man to identify himself with the Cosmic as a whole. This can only come about with a greater knowledge of the various functions of the self. The more man learns about all cosmic phenomena, the less detached he feels. Science is revealing these things and we may use what is revealed. But we must also understand that such phenomena were not cosmically ordained for man, nor were they intended for any intelligent being. Rather, they came about as the result of interacting cosmic forces. It is just as life, itself, is an interaction of cosmic phenomena. We must come to realize ourselves as *being one with all else*. There is no true division between the self and all else.

This kind of new ontology, metaphysics, and psychology, with many ramifications, will create in the coming age a new idealism. It will make happiness and personal power not a reward to be conferred upon man from on high or even a right that he is to expect. Rather, happiness and personal power will be solely a responsibility of man. An ancient Hindu mystic once wrote: The doctrine of the mystic "recognizes an unknowable, timeless, and unnameable behind and above all things and not seizeable by the studious pursuit of the mind."

To adjust to the New Age the subject of truth must be reevaluated by most men. The traditional truths must be reconsidered as to whether they still have reality to us. Sentiment must not be a preserver of truth. What shall be the criteria of truth for determining its value? Truth has been an intellectual goal of man ever since he has sought realities in reference to life. The realities he hoped to find would explain the mystery of his own existence and its transient state as well as what cause may lie behind all phenomena. To know these things as having a positive ground constitutes truth to man. Therefore, no matter whether man thinks of truth as being spiritual, moral qualities or as empirical material ones, they are nevertheless that which the intellect aspires to.

The search for truth implies that there is a matrix, a die out of which has been stamped certain realities which are unchangeable and which eternally govern certain conditions in the Cosmos. In knowing them there is then the further implication that man has a dependable guide to certain phenomena to his advantage. To know something which appears positive suggests its dependability in serving human welfare in some manner. Consequently, the search for such absolutism for most men would mean to rob truth of its substance.

Nevertheless there has not been established a universality of the truth. In fact there are few experiences, points of knowledge, that men agree upon to the extent of conferring upon them the designation of *absolute truth*. Should the search for truth in this adjustment to the New Age be abandoned, or is there an alternative guide for human thought? Just how do men conclude that an idea, a concept, an experience, is truth? Men speak of having knowledge of truth—what is it that they so designate?

Opinions, beliefs, and percepts have all been declared by men to be truth, yet these states of mind are not identical. An opinion is not an exhaustive conclusion of the reason. Opinion is a preference for an idea that is pleasing to the past experience of the individual. The opinion may be about something that is newly presented but bears a relationship to the memory of some acceptable or non-acceptable experience of the past. For analogy, the opinion of the average person regarding UFO's is founded upon the imagination, religious beliefs,



and whether or not the individual is inclined toward skepticism. Such is not the result of mature judgment and personal observation. Nor is it the rationalization of all facts and theories pertaining to the subject.

Opinion, then, is principally devoid of perception, the result of actual experience, and it is not a final judgment after the extensive evaluation of an idea. Obviously, such ideas as opinions could not be considered truths in the sense of having a uniform nature.

Belief has a more personal dependability as a kind of knowledge than does opinion, but it can hardly be justified as truth. Belief, as stated in a previous chapter, implies a personal conviction concerning an idea. Real belief is the consequence of judgment. We believe something because, to the best of our reason, it is the most acceptable idea. One does not actually believe something unless he has made a comparison with related or opposing ideas. It has to him a certain quality of being indubitable. Belief is therefore distinguished from opinion in that it does take recourse to reason.

Where active perception, that is, examination by the senses, is possible in determining the nature of a thing, and such examination could alter the concept but it is not done, such then is not a belief. A belief is a substitute knowledge where knowledge acquired through the senses is not possible. An example of real belief is the idea of God had by an individual. An objective experience leading to such a conclusion is impossible. The idea of God must be *subjective*. Such an idea stands as knowledge only until it is refuted.

A belief cannot be truth, that is, an *absolute* truth, since it is neither perceived or conceived alike by all men. Just what truth is has resulted in many definitions by thinkers down through the centuries. The search for its meaning still continues and varies in the opinions of men. Plato said that reason must arrange thought, that is, images of what we perceive, into an organized whole. Only then can we have a reliance on truth. Simply, we take our various experiences and ideas and have the reason give them a logical continuity. When something is fully understood by us, it has, according to Plato, that reality which we call truth. Plato held that opinion is only relative but, on the other hand, the individual reason also makes a truth relative to the individual

thinking it. Another person may so organize his thoughts so as to give truth an entirely different form or substance to him.

The early Cynics and Cyrenaics of ancient Greece thought that truth is perception—in other words, what to the individual seems real at the moment is truth to him. If what we perceive has to us a definite reality—form, substance, or quality—then that is its nature, the truth of what it is. The reasoning behind this would seem to say it is immaterial how what I perceive may appear to others if to me it can be nothing else; that then is truth to me and upon that I must rely. Of course, this conception confers no absolute nature upon truth. Rather, it makes it wholly individualistic.

In the 5th century B.C. the Sophists (the Wise Ones) expounded that truth is solely relative to time, circumstances, and the intelligence of the individual. They declared that there cannot be an absolute truth because each individual's truth is in variance with the truth of others. Further, truth varies with changing times. Many concepts and ideas held as truth in the past are not accepted as such by men today. In the lifetime of each individual there are circumstances which arise which, by the impact they have upon former experience, compel us to reject older truths and adopt new ones. Even the Sophists further contended that truths of the past that may seem unchanged at present are no assurance that they are eternal. It is perhaps because the intelligence and powers of perception cannot yet transcend the truth of the past, which may make them seem eternal. For example, for centuries men thought that the Earth was the center of the universe. This remained as a belief only because men were incapable of knowledge to disprove it at the time.

In this regard the Sophists said that the criterion of truth to man is what appears as *self-evident* to him. If it cannot be disproved and if man has no doubt about same, it then serves him as a truth. However, this is the equivalent of looking into a dark room and presuming that nothing is there just because you cannot see it.

To the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) truth is the joining or separating, or signs as they agree or disagree with each other. This implies that as we bring together our various ideas about

something in a manner that is in agreement or disagreement about a specific thing, that relationship is then truth to us. This suggests that what is comprehensible to us, insofar as we individually are concerned, is truth to us because the idea has to us the substance of reality. Locke further states that we should not trouble ourselves about absolute truths because they are not possible. We live by our convictions, that is, what has the quality or substance of reality to us. We never have a certainty about so-called truth unless it meets this qualification of personal acceptance.

According to Locke's definition of truth we can, however, set up all our own rules as to individual truths. Men do in fact set up as so-called universal truths moral laws and the propositions of mathematics. But it is man who has set up these absolute truths. They are not independent of the human intellect.

Coming down to more recent times in continuing to show the elusive search for truth, we must touch upon the views of the American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910). To James, truth is that which seems to anticipate a desired and satisfying experience. The truth, he contends, must be rationally accepted and it needs to be in accord with our ideals and what we want to believe. James was a *pragmatist*. A thing to be true, in other words, must *work*. It cannot be something which is just merely a pleasing experience. It must be practical; it must be that which can be applied and used by us in some manner. Succinctly, as long as it works it has reality, and having that it is truth to us.

We may accept as truth that which has a pragmatic value to us even if it does not conform to some traditional definition of what truth is. If what is traditionally expounded as truth cannot be put to the test of demonstrability in some manner, it then never has the conviction for us of being self-evident.

The American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952 ) has a conception of truth which is similar to that of his contemporary, William James. Whatever *works now* is truth. If it has a practical, useful

value to us, it has reality as of the now and it is truth to that extent *now*. The past has no truth unless it continues the reality of work and satisfaction to us. Dewey points out that we must avoid becoming dogmatic, that is, accepting traditional truth just as a heritage. Such truths must first prove themselves, they must work for and satisfy us. If that reality is gone, then so is their virtue as truth.

Are the peripheral receptor senses, the reason and the emotions the only truth, that is, the only grounds for it? There are certain things which to us humans do have the character of absolute truth; they seem not to be evanescent. Certain phenomena are so repetitious to human experience that we call them *cosmic law* or *natural order*. Having this reality to our minds, they seem *absolute*. They are workable and therefore we call them truths. But even these phenomena can be deceptive with changing human understanding. With increased technology the worth and nature of certain phenomena of yesterday, insofar as their being always dependable and universal, can be questioned today.

Other truths are contingent upon changing times, varying human perception and understanding. Man's search for truth, in this adjustment to the New Age, must be for those things which have a useful reality to him mentally, physically, intellectually. Where such can be applied with some degree of practicality and satisfaction, they can become a relative truth to society. They are, of course, ultimately subject to the changing conditions of human mentality and the restructuring of society in the future.

No attempt should be made to bind man indefinitely to truths unless their reality remains as acceptable as when they were first so designated.

## Chapter 12

# IS THE WORLD WORSENING?

**A**DVANCEMENT, PROGRESS, IS relative to ends sought or values determined. Consequently, anything which falls short of these standards is seen as being relatively adverse. The degree of failure is arrived at by the extent of the difference between the ideals sought and the actual results attained. Therefore, there are several points of view as to whether progress has been made over the centuries or whether there is now a general decline.

One standard by which determination of progress is often made is that of material benefits to the individual. In general this includes not only sufficient food, but also shelter against the rigors of the elements and providing of security for the family relationship. Archaeology, as we have previously noted, has disclosed that in the ancient world most centers of culture provided little more than the very essentials of living for the great masses of population. There were, of course, magnificent palaces with every comfort then known for the heads of society—kings, queens, and their appointed executive aides. But lying just beyond these sprawling palaces are now seen the ruins of housing—the homes of the masses which were mostly virtual hovels of crude mud bricks with earthen floors. In most of these hovels a small aperture in one wall served as a window, while another opening in the roof, which consisted of reeds coated with mud, allowed the escape of smoke from a simple hearth.

A casual observer of our modern megalopolitan centers, with their towering, glittering skyscrapers, luxury apartments, hotels, and the streams of motor vehicles passing by, would be apt to make a comparison in favor of our modern society. Here, at least in most modern urban areas, are no mud huts, no thatched roofs, no earthen floors.

But what about the masses who live in these congested urban areas, either because of availability of jobs in the local industry or for the convenience to welfare? Do they enjoy an improved lifestyle? Many thousands in these congested urban areas dwell in dingy dwellings—perhaps shabby remnants of once fine stone structures. The neighborhood has deteriorated. The facilities, once sufficient, are now but a mockery of a past time. Many persons in these dwellings crowd into a room, or rooms, meant for less than half their number. Yet the personal comfort, even the health of the individual, is more assured to dwellers in our urban areas than to those persons who lived in the ancient cultures of the Near East.

The tyranny of absolute monarchy, such as found in ancient Egypt, Sumeria, Babylonia, and Assyria, nevertheless assured the personal safety of its respected subjects in their civil life to a higher degree than the modern citizen can expect in our crime-ridden urban areas today.

History, except for an occasional interval, gives little example of the freedom of the individual or what may be termed a spirit of democracy. Class distinction was dominant. Kings were thought to be vested with divine power. As in Egypt and Mesopotamia, rulers were thought to be sons of a god or goddess. Only by birth could the individual rise to such an eminent rank. The conqueror who usurped power was never accepted as a true king, even by his victims, unless he came from a lineage of royalty.

In the lesser levels of ancient society, class distinction also prevailed. The nobility had their eminence conferred upon them by their appointment to the king, as ministers and special aides. Rarely was there a marriage with any person beneath one's class. A nobleman might have concubines, but offspring resulting from such a union would not be recognized by elevation to the status of nobility. At the bottom strata of society were the agriculture workers, and above them were the craftsmen and scribes. One of the most prominent classes was the priesthood. Their eminence was conferred upon them because the priests were accepted as intermediaries between the gods and men. Their individual freedom was confined to whatever rewards or compensations which the regulations and restrictions of their social class permitted.

Upon a cursory examination of our times it may seem that our social freedom exceeds that of the ancient past and therefore would indicate movement toward an ideal. But how universal is the freedom of the individual which democracy is said to exemplify? Nations which restrict the exercise of the political freedom of their citizenry are growing in number. People living in these nations have little or no voice either in the legislation or the administration of the laws which directly affect their personal lives.

There are increasing examples of governments that exercise an absolute power over the lives of their citizenry, which in many instances is a parallel to the cruel tyranny of the despots of centuries ago. Even in those nations whose constitutions advocate a democratic state, the freedom proclaimed is gradually decreasing.

To a great extent, this is due to a philosophical misinterpretation of the concept of social freedom. In other words, those individuals who advocate absolute freedom consider the will and desires of the individual as being almost sacrosanct, that is, a kind of divine heritage. Any restraint upon such persons by organized society is considered a violation of their conceived right.

It should be obvious that a society must function as a *unit*. In other words, there must be an agreement on what is best for the greatest number. However, this concept of what is best may not be acceptable to every individual. Yet each person's own interest, if without concern for its effects upon society, reduces society to a state of chaos in which all people suffer. Common sense then requires that there be certain reasonable prohibitions and restrictions on individual acts which might work to the detriment of the majority. Absolute freedom is an irrational impossibility. To equate it with true democracy is not only logically wrong but dangerous when attempts are made to put it into practice.

Today we do not have universal democracy in the world. In fact, until relatively recent times slavery existed, differing little from the time of ancient civilizations. But today, though men's bodies may not be enslaved, their minds can be and often are enslaved. There are governments which, though not wholly theocracies, dominate the populace in the same manner as organized religion, that is, a

state religion. In such extreme cases, a restriction of the freedom of religion, outside the scope of the state religion, results in either an absolute suppression or the restriction of other faiths to assemble or to propagate their faith.

There also exists today the *suppression of knowledge*, the right of men to know. The news media, the press, may be completely politically polarized in such a way that any diverse opinions are deleted and false news is disseminated by the media. Modern concepts of science which conflict with traditional and often obsolete ideas are refused public dissemination by such government-controlled media. Furthermore, books are often condemned because of a difference of opinion with the existing religious or political authorities and are removed from library shelves and often destroyed.

There is also a unique kind of enslavement in the commercial world of today. In the modern world of technology, specialization is often a two-edged sword. A man trained in a highly technical field can command a position with a good remuneration far more easily than one who is not technically trained. But this specialization often constitutes a limit to the advancement of the individual. He may reach the limit of that specialty to which he has been confined. He is then often prohibited from advancing further, regardless of his intelligence, simply because he is not familiar with another specialty in which he might be successful and which would be more remunerative to him.

Experience, which has long been extolled as a virtue, has seemingly lost its efficacy and its appeal in our present era. After the age of forty, experience is all too often depreciated. Generally speaking, youth is preferred to experience for a variety of reasons. The young college graduate is familiar with more recent technical data. Further, the young man will not retire in perhaps just twenty years, and thus he will not be eligible for a pension for a considerable time. Therefore, so far as the technical era and employment is concerned, many today know it to be a kind of two-edged sword, giving advantages on the one side and taking them away on the other.

The ancient and medieval worlds were ravaged with plagues for which there was little or no remedy. Even the causes of such epidemics



were not known. Modern science has controlled several such scourges of the past such as yellow fever, smallpox, and polio. At least their curative and remedial effects are known. However, other diseases have taken their places in menacing human life. Cancer, according to examination of mummified bodies of antiquity, apparently existed even in times of ancient Egypt, but to what extent is not known. Today this ravager of human life appears to be on the increase, and we have mostly theories as to its cause. Certain habits, such as smoking, have been proclaimed as causing cancer.

A hypothesis concerning cancer often voiced in medical circles is that environmental influences and certain processed foods of our "advanced society" are causes. Further, malnutrition, which is accelerated in some countries of the Orient and of Central and South America having enormous populations, make the populace more susceptible even to those diseases for which cures are known. It is not possible to inoculate all the masses of people. Further, thousands of people are illiterate and cannot be easily informed and admonished as to the dangers existing in improper hygiene and sanitation.

Have we made great strides in world peace? Does barbarism, such as the internecine slaughter of whole peoples as was common in the "civilizations" of past ages, exist today? We can recite the ruthlessness of such warlords and kings as Sargon I, Ashurnasirpal, Nebuchadnezzar, Shalmaneser, and Tiglathpileser, to name but a few, who lived centuries before Christ.

These warlords justified their ruthless conquest on the grounds that they were their god's vicar, that is, representative on Earth. The reasoning put forth was that no god would be acclaimed superior to the one which they worshiped. By this reasoning, then, all other gods were false and should be destroyed. Does this not have a familiarity to certain religious intolerance extant even in our day?

Tiglathpileser, an Assyrian ruler (c. 1115-1037 B.C.) inscribed the following on a tablet after one of his conquests:

I marched against Kar-Duniash . . . I captured the places of Babylonia belonging to Marduk-Nadin-Ahhe, King of Kar-Duniash. I burned them with fire. The possessions of his palace I carried off. The second time, I drew up a line of battle chariots against Marduk-Nadin-Ahhe, King of Kar-Duniash and I smote him.

This is an excellent example of lust for power and pride, in its exercise, regardless of the consequences of human suffering. Can comparisons be found in the acts of certain “warlords” of today?

The Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and took the Hebrews into captivity. In the Psalms we find the following song of lamentation by these Hebrew exiles:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept,  
when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst  
thereof . . . .

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

Has the world of today abandoned religious persecution? Do we exile peoples of a religious sect to a land distant from the center of their faith? Or do we prohibit them from returning to the land of their faith? Our daily press gives affirmative answers to these questions showing that such persecution still exists today.

The following are questions which we must ask ourselves. Are the material benefits arising from the technical advances of our present time, and which a portion of the world's peoples enjoy, offset by the calamitous circumstances that also occur? Will the uncontrolled population expansion slowly bring about a devastating famine? Will the by-products of huge industries that increasingly pollute our water, air, and soil, and from which new maladies arise, eventually replace those that have been brought under control? Will some nations be further denied the necessary resources for the industries that provide their livelihood? Will such acts bring about an internecine war resulting in a complete destruction of civilization as we know it?

Finally, is the world advancing or are we deceiving ourselves because of the gadgetry of our technical age which may seem to lessen labor and provide benefits of an evanescent nature? Let us consider these subjects further.

What constitutes progress? Ordinarily, we determine the progress of mankind by comparison of its achievements in different periods of history. Philosophically, however, the nature of progress goes far beyond, for example, just the comparison of the artifacts of the ancients with modern products. One must have an understanding of what progress consists. Mere substitution of other words for *progress*, such as *advance*, *going forward*, *development*, is not a sufficient explanation. One must approach the subject from the semantic point of view. What, in other words, gave rise to the idea of *progress*? Which of man's experiences relate to the word progress? In what category must human thought and action fall to be declared progress?

To begin an analysis of progress, let us propose a simple definition. We shall say that progress is the *attaining of a desired end*. Thus any movement in thought and action from an existing thing or circumstance to one that is conceived as an improvement would seem to conform to this definition. The definition we have proposed refers to a "desired end." Let us suppose that an individual has a book whose cover is easily soiled, and he desires to remedy that situation. Eventually he conceives of a plastic cover which proves to be satisfactory. This, then, would be progress. Another example: round bottles in refrigerators waste essential space, so a solution is desired. Square bottles are devised, and the improvement satisfies the desire for a solution. These are examples of attaining the desired end, the assumed content of progress.

We observe, however, that in attaining a desired end, another condition always prevails. Our action appears to be almost always unidirectional, that is, considered as being *relatively upward*. There is a movement from what is conceived to be an inferior or lesser quality or state to a superior or higher one. The movement from our present status to a lesser one is never said to be progress because of one factor, namely, *desire*. In other words, one never desires the deterioration, or retrogression of his present status. No one strives for a goal of lesser

quality. Consequently, if a condition is eventually experienced which is thought to be inferior, it is never progress because it is not desired.

Progress must always be first an individual attainment before it can be a collective or group attainment. An individual must arrive at a personal conclusion as to which direction movement in thought and action is taking. Is this movement relatively up or down? There is no progress for an individual unless such conforms to some conceived superior end which he desires to attain.

For further example, let us presume that a person believes in individual free enterprise. His philosophy is that one must make his way in life primarily by his own initiative. However, this individual finds himself being swept along on the tide of socialistic state policies. The state guarantees his welfare and that of others without regard for the individual's ability and effort. No matter what changes the state may make for the betterment of that individual, he has actually made no personal progress. This is because he has not moved in the direction which he conceives to be a superior end.

Another similar example confirms this principle. A California village, a renowned artists' colony, was selected by the artists because of its scenic and inspirational location. The local authorities are artists of various kinds. It is their desire that the village retain its rustic appearance of wooden sidewalks, unpaved streets and picturesque gas lamps. The county and state officials oppose this view; they insist on modernization with all that the term includes. But such modernization is not considered progress by the village artists. It is not progress because it does not constitute moving in the direction that they conceived to be a superior end.

What if one accepts a condition or thing as being progress which he neither conceived of or anticipated? Let us suppose that a device is invented which is subsequently claimed by many persons to be a sign of progress. How did those who accepted this invention determine it to be progress? The thing or condition which they eventually heralded as progress is not a product of their own minds.

Such persons found it necessary to make comparisons between the new device and what preceded it in terms of advantage. We shall say, for instance, that "A" is what has been and that "B," by contrast, is the new, the different. Which is the superior of the two in point of advantage? Is it "A," the old, or is it "B," the new? If it is "B," the new, then obviously there is a progression. It is a movement upward, relatively speaking, from the previous and comparatively inferior status to the new or superior one. Now, in this sense, one's subsequent perception and realization of an advantage is the equivalent of previously perceiving it and moving to attain it. In other words, whether one conceives an advantage and then attains it, or subsequently recognizes and accepts it, in either case he has displayed progress.

The major progress of civilization is of this kind. It is the subsequent acceptance of advantages. Most men have not formulated ideals or objectives which transcend the past and toward which all their physical or mental effort has been directed. The judgment of most men has been of an *a posteriori* kind; that is, the *subsequent* acceptance of conditions or ideas as being progress.

If progress is the movement from an inferior to a superior status or thing, what gives rise to the qualitative difference? What is it that causes one experience to appear to have a superior value to another and thus be designated progress? The answer lies in self-interest. All value is related to this *self-interest*. We all act for what we think will be most gratifying and pleasurable in some respect to us. However, not all such satisfaction is sensuous; there is moral or mental satisfaction as well. Therefore, every determined action is designed to enhance the personal interest, thus making such action more satisfying to us.

The action of which progress consists can be either *positive* or *negative*. The negative aspect of action consists of ridding ourselves of the unwanted, the irritating, or the unpleasant. In the negative instance, the individual is anticipating an end toward which to move—an end that will provide him freedom from such distraction. The negative action of progress may also consist of supplanting an existing condition by another condition that would provide greater pleasure or happiness.

An example is the desire for health. The ill person has an ideal of health which consists of freedom from pain and discomfort. Consequently, any movement of thought or action in such a direction is, to that individual, progress. Again, one who endeavors to attain liberation from the abuse of tyranny is taking a negative approach to progress. It is the elimination of an undesired state for what is considered to be a superior objective. It is this moving to a conceived superior status by which progress is determined.

The positive approach to progress is the multiplying, the increasing, of the nature of one's self-interest. One may find satisfaction with the quality or kind of self-interest he has. But the quantity of interest may be insufficient. The desired greater satisfaction, the enlargement of it, becomes the ideal, the objective to be attained. When it is finally realized, such then is conceived by the individual as progress. Wealth is such an example. Progress is experienced when the quantity exceeds the present amount possessed. Knowledge is still another example of the positive approach to progress. The scholar wants to add new knowledge to his thirst for learning. He desires to increase his intellectual satisfaction.

We have not used the phrase, "negative approach to progress" in a derogatory sense for, patently, the removal of something to gain an advantage is equal in its effectiveness with the increasing of an advantage already had.

Let us reduce these last principles we have considered to some simple factors:

- A. All experience is to be evaluated in terms of personal satisfaction.
- B. All satisfaction falls into two general categories: quality and quantity.
- C. The method to attain this satisfaction is either negative or positive.
- D. The negative method rejects an undesired quality or reduces the undesired quantity.

E. The positive way to the satisfaction of progress is to acquire a new quality or to increase a particular one already had.

It must be apparent that dissatisfaction with one's present status, things, or conditions related to self, is the motivating cause of progress. As stated, it is immaterial whether one personally conceives of the superior factor or whether he accepts it when it is introduced to him by another. The man, however, who would remain satisfied with relatively unchanging affairs and experiences in life would be making no progress. Such a man would be a dullard. Even the individual who desires nothing more than personal peace—that is, the avoidance of distraction—is establishing for himself an end which if attained, is progress.

Life is not inherently quiescent; rather, it is dynamic. Life cares nothing for the sensibilities and the particular values which man has established. By life, we mean the factors of our environment and nature generally. These factors are rudely pushing against and pressing in on all of us. To seek peace is to resist the undesirable and to court the favorable. But this again is *quality* and *quantity* in both the negative and positive aspects; the one who acts to attain the ideal of peace is moving progressively from the undesired state of turmoil.

The question now arises: Can mankind make false progress? *Absolute progress* is the attainment of a desired end conceived to be superior. As we have previously stated, if the end attained eventually proves not be superior, then there has actually been no progress. To explain further, let us suppose we possess something which we call "A," but we desire "B" instead. We believe that "B" will provide us with greater happiness. We successfully move toward and finally acquire "B." However, we then discover that "B" is not what we anticipated. It is devoid of the quality desired. Therefore, even though we have attained "B," we have not progressed. We have not experienced that transcendent state we anticipated. We have not moved upward beyond our present status of satisfaction.

There are various kinds of progress. Men set goals for themselves. They attain them; their desires are fulfilled. The ends which they have achieved have transcended their former status. But which different

kinds of progress are the greatest? Is there an *absolute standard*, one that is inherently best by which all things may be judged? Of course, in terms of quantity, some types of progress obviously exceed others. Suppose, for example, wealth, power, or fame are the ends which are sought. It is apparent that those having achieved these ends to the greatest degree would have made, in such categories, the greatest progress.

Quality, as we have said, also has reference to the personal satisfaction one derives from the nature of a thing or condition. Quality is often quite individual. It is relevant to the variations of desires and inclinations of the individual. Each of us has his favorite colors, musical selections, and scents. These preferences are the result of slight organic differences in our nature and varying environmental influences. Yet there is sufficient similarity in our physical, mental, and emotional natures to cause us to respond alike to certain factors. Specifically, there are things whose quality or quantity, when attained, we all more or less accept alike as being indicative of progress.

Let us consider another example: In the period of the great glaciations, when the arctic ice masses descended, prehistoric men migrated southward en masse to escape the increasingly bitter cold. These men alike sought a preferred warmer climate. To reach such a climate was conceived as progress by all alike. Then, again, primitive men, far removed from each other on the surface of the Earth, finally came to consider alike that grinding was a superior method for shaping flints in comparison with percussion or the chipping of flints. Other men in remote areas of the world also came to learn and accept as progress the plow over the hoe.

Society, too, has conditioned man to accept certain acts and customs as being signs of progress. When the individual conforms to or enlarges upon such practices, he believes he has made progress. Religion also expounds particular mandates of conduct which it declares to be divinely inspired. Those who accept these mandates or enforce them, as against other desires, are extolled as making progress. For further example, to abide by the cardinal virtues, such as truth, justice, temperance, and fortitude, is held to be a superior mode of living. It is thus a movement upward from an opposite conduct.



Society has likewise recognized the lessening of labor and the increase of pleasure, which does not endanger individual life, as qualities for the determination of progress. The increase of knowledge so as to expand man's concept of reality and to provide a greater efficiency of living is another quality which society heralds as progress. It is an accepted element by which progress is measured.

A civilization may pursue one of these qualities to such an extent that, in comparison with other peoples, it will seem to have made great progress. For example, ancient Egypt excelled other contemporary lands in her cultivation of the aesthetic and love of the beautiful. This was particularly expressed in her art, architecture, literature, and religion. Greece excelled intellectually; her progress was in philosophy and idealism. Rome progressed more than any other civilization in attaining government efficiency and military prowess. India made tremendous moral and religious progress in comparison with contemporary lands.

The perspective of time, however, has shown the faults of each of these civilizations, it has revealed concentration on one general quality to the neglect and abuse of others. Progress must be an extension and refinement of all the powers and attributes of the human. If physical development is good, for example, then great health and strength are, of course, progress. If intellectual growth is an advantage, then obviously increased wisdom is progress. If personal peace and happiness are virtues, then their evolvment is progress also. To omit one of these is not to further man's full potential.

If all men were permitted to pursue these qualities of their nature unrestricted they might make great personal progress, but the unrestricted pursuit of their own inclinations would bring them into conflict with each other. The objectifications of pleasures are different. What one man does to bring him happiness may cause distress to another. Not all men are equal to the fulfillment of their desires. The weak will suffer at the hands of the unrestricted strong. However, this unrestricted pursuit of our inclinations is innate; it is part of the organic nature of man.

Man has evolved, as well, into a social animal. He has created society as an instrument to help him progress. It makes possible accomplishments and enjoyments beyond the capabilities of the individual. Therefore, society has a virtue, a quality in itself which men of intelligence recognize. Without sustaining this quality, without maintaining society, there can be no true progress. This true quality of society is the assurance that all men will express to a degree the varied attributes of their beings. It is like wise the assurance that this degree may be increased as long as no other individual is deprived of a similar right.

This, then, must be the ideal of the true society: to monitor the powers and faculties of men that each may come to realize the wholeness of his being. The civilization that does this is actually progressing. One civilization can be said to have progressed beyond another only to the extent that its people have collectively and harmoniously advanced their whole selves beyond those of others.

## Chapter 13

# IS PEACE ON EARTH POSSIBLE?

PEACE ON EARTH has been an appeal that has rung down through the centuries. Generally it has referred to a state or condition in which all men participate. But just what is peace to the individual? What is its substance or nature? Is peace a physical entity or a mental state? Do we personally see or feel this thing called peace? Simply, how does the individual experience peace?

If we approach the subject psychologically, we find that peace has more of a negative quality than positive. In other words, we arrive at a better understanding of peace by knowing what it is not. Emotional stress, anxiety, aggravation are immediately accepted as being opposites to peace. Therefore, one word can sum up the personal experience of peace, namely, *imperturbability*. Peace, then, is the negation of that which perturbs man.

If this be so, peace is something which cannot be sought in itself. Peace is entirely abstract, that is, subjective. It is the *absence of the undesired*. Consequently, peace is but an effect. In other words, we can experience peace only by the effects which follow the removal of perturbation.

In ancient Greece several schools of philosophy espoused Hedonism. To them the summum bonum, the highest good in life, was pleasure. Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaics, one of the Hedonist schools, said that “nothing in itself is disgraceful.” He taught that there are no higher or lower pleasures. All pleasure exacts a personal satisfaction. The ideal in life, according to the Hedonist, was to fill each moment with pleasure.

Some pleasures, however, are evanescent; they pass away. We eventually become satiated with them. Further, some pleasures are first preceded by an irritation before being realized. For example, we must itch before we can enjoy scratching. Religion, the first to proselyte for the need of peace, laid down specific rules for the attainment of this state. But in most instances religion was only concerned with the individual, not with society as a whole. Let us consider briefly some of these concepts and doctrines for peace that have been expounded.

Gautama Buddha, in the 5th century B.C., taught that *Nirvana* is the ultimate attainment of man. In the Sanskrit language the word *Nirvana* means "extinguished." At Bodh Gaya, India, Buddha delivered his first sermon to his disciples. He said that our whole sentient existence is a "burning." Life is but a burning energy; it goes through a combustion and a perfect change. Buddha further said that if man extinguishes, or at least controls, his burning desires, he will experience *Nirvana*. Man will then have risen above the tormenting flames and will then abide in the eternal peace of *Nirvana*.

The Stoics of ancient Greece also conceived peace as being a negative effect. To them, personal peace was the absence of disturbing desires and passions. The Stoic philosophy taught that the soul of man has to be emptied of desires and passions. They proclaimed that "an emotion is a disturbance of the mind." Seneca, a Roman statesman and Stoic philosopher, said, "I am seeking to find what is good for man, not for his belly. Why, cattle and whales have larger ones than he."

In Judaism and Christianity we find that the blessings of peace are related in terms of negating the adversities which man experiences. They are said to be principally freedom from anxiety and from cares, and a foreboding about the future. Once again peace has no positive quality of its own as it derives its identity from the absence of unwanted particulars.

When man began to think of society and of social order, peace acquired a new meaning. A specific quality was given to it. In the 4th century, B.C., Mo Ti, a Chinese Confucian, assigned a positive

substance to peace. He said that all strife among mankind is due to a lack of mutual love. What is needed is love as a universal mutual virtue.

In this sense, love was being declared the principal element of peace. However, the weakness of this idealism must be apparent. First, love is but one of the human emotions. Further, not all men are capable of loving the same object or with the same intensity. Plato, in his dialogue entitled *The Republic*, set forth a code of human behavior for the members of society. It challenged the human instincts and well-established customs. But it lacked the imperturbability which is necessary for a peaceful society.

In the famous book *The City of God*, St. Augustine (A.D. 354-430) proclaimed "a spiritual society of the predestined faithful." In other words, those who are faithful to the Christian creed would thereafter live in a theocratic society—a city divinely organized and ruled. Here was a positive quality, yet also a dogmatic moral code. Such could not provide any universal peace on Earth, simply because not all men would submit their intellect or faith to a single moral interpretation. We need not mention the other examples of the utopias that have been presented. Those of Sir Thomas More in the 16th century and Karl Marx in the 19th century are representative. Their doctrines of peace on Earth failed the necessary universal acceptance by men.

Peace on Earth, therefore, is something which cannot be sought. Peace is an abstract thing. It has an existence only when its opposites are removed. What are these principal obstructions to universal peace? They arise out of man's misunderstanding of both himself and of his cosmic relationship.

Man is not a chosen being. He is no closer to a godhead than any other self-conscious being that may exist elsewhere in the greater universe. No man is more divinely endowed than any other. The flame of cosmic enlightenment burns within every human breast. In some men, it is fanned into a personal illumination. In others, it never penetrates the shadows of the mind. It is a false concept to say that all men are equal. Not all men share the same biological inheritance nor do they share the same environmental influence. However, the

insistence on supremacy of race or of religious precepts are obstacles to peace.

The Cosmos, nature, is neither good nor is it bad as humans think of it. If it were good, it would then have to be separate and apart from that called evil. Such would then imply that the Absolute, the Cosmos, is divided against itself. These terms, good and evil, are but concepts arising out of human values. What man experiences as stress in nature is not something that has been imposed upon him. Rather, it is the function of the necessary evolutionary and devolutionary processes of nature. Death is not a disorder; it is a change in the phenomenon of the living organism.

Satisfaction of the bodily appetites and passions is not sufficient for the self. It does not confer any prominence upon the self. To attain a sense of prominence the self resorts to its basic roots of aggression—possessions, power, and fame. In the quantity of things or possessions that self accumulates, it acquires distinction. In resisting and suppressing the ego thrust of others, the self asserts power. Power compels a recognition of the self. Fame is the insatiable urge of self for distinction and recognition.

It is by these drives that man has slowly altered his environment. But these fundamental instincts and aggressions of self are ruthless. Their principal motivation is for the prominence of the person, the ego, the self.

Gradually another impulse of self awakened in man that was more subtle than the aggressions and drives. This was a sense of affinity, a bond with the self of others. It was a sympathetic extension of one's own feelings under similar circumstances.

This was the *dawn of conscience*. Pragmatically, conscience is a sense of guilt. We adjudge certain acts and thoughts as being harmful to the self, and therefore we have a sense of guilt if we cause them. Guilt demeans the status of the self; it lessens its sense of personal esteem. Thus, the conscience slowly began to have a restrictive influence on man's aggressions and drives. Unfortunately, this moral sense in most humans has far less efficacy than the primitive urges of self.

Peace on Earth, then, revolves about a basic conflict between two key aspects of self. On the one hand is the personal compulsion of the ego. On the other hand is a sense of righteousness that includes the well-being of others. There can be no peace on Earth where the possessions, power, and fame of the individual remain as unlimited rights. Peace begins with acts of elimination, not just the acquisition and expounding of poetic idealism.

But what about the current stressing of dynamic individualism? A slogan adopted by many of the youth today as an incentive for freedom of the personality is "Let Yourself Go!" For example, at a local high school on the occasion of its recent graduation ceremonies a banner bearing this phrase was hung from the side wall of the auditorium where the event was held.

The purpose behind the term implies the necessity to liberate the ego, the personality, from repressions and inhibitions which may have resulted from the impositions of society. More succinctly, however, the words suggest being yourself in the sense of giving vent to whatever way you feel so inclined. To restrict or inhibit such impulses is to negate the self, to not live one's life rightly.

If we construe this tendency in the way it is phrased, each individual satisfies his urges and impulses in whatever manner appears to him to be the most appropriate. Psychologically this constitutes an atavistic attitude, that is, a reverting to a very primitive status. Self-discipline then is no longer mandatory. There is no reason for imposing self-restraint.

One becomes by this means the sole interpreter of what is best for himself without regard for the effects of his behavior on others. Even the early family units out of which grew tribes and clans in past centuries, and which constituted a most elementary civilization in the broadest sense of that term, was nevertheless endued with a code of taboos proscribing certain behavior as being adverse to their society. One was not permitted to pursue his personal motivations free of their consequences to others.

If we think of man as having made any ascent down through the ages, as we have considered in Chapter 11, it is to be found in certain abstentions in his behavior, either self-imposed or compelled by the society of which he is a part. In fact, a notable distinction of man from the lower animals is the evaluation which he makes of his behavior in not just letting himself go.

Any society is an entity in itself. Its elements are the humans who compose it. The society, then, as an artificial being has certain values, certain objectives or ends to which it aspires and which it believes are necessary for its existence. Basically the theory behind society is the securing of the existence and well-being of the individuals of which it is composed. Though admittedly such is at times governed, it falls far short of its fundamental purpose. However, without society existing in some form man would not have advanced as far as he has.

A minority of people in society formulate its essential ideals and the structure by which such are to be realized. It is also a minority who voluntarily try to regulate their lives so as to conform to the decreed elements of their society, that is, its laws and customs. In most societies insofar as the majority are concerned, their personal behavior is the result of enforced compulsion to "the law of the land."

The permissiveness which we experience today under the guise of liberation of the individual is a deterioration of self-discipline. Man cannot live alone. He can not live in a world just of his own concepts and desires exclusively. Even the recluse who lives in a remote area of the world isolated from other men, in just expressing his interpretation of his own desires, sacrifices the advantages of communal thought and action.

To "Let Yourself Go" is to contravene moral and ethical standards. In morality there is private and public conscience. *Private conscience* is the personal conception of what constitutes the good in personal and social behavior. By association and individual evaluation of his own behavior and that of others, man arrives at certain personal values for governing his life. This personal morality may, of course, be influenced by religious affiliations or wholly by the self-analysis of one's conduct in relation to the vicissitudes of life. Conscience is not a



divine endowment. It is a construction of certain impulses which the individual conceives as being righteous in terms of his environment, education, and associations.

*Public conscience* consists of the codes of behavior which in theory society has collectively agreed upon and enforces through its laws upon the citizen. These public morals are thought to be for the general benefit of all members of society. It is believed that their violation is more than a moral wrongdoing in the sense of deviating from a religious code, in that the individual himself and others in his society are harmed. Simply, such behavior, for example, as murder, rape, theft, perjury, are destructive to the very core of society regardless of any religious interdiction against them. Consequently private conscience often does not agree with the collective good of the public conscience.

We are confronted today with an increasing wave of crime. Actually, the criminal is one who psychologically is "Letting Himself Go." He acts in a way to benefit himself personally without regard for the impact of such acts upon society. To really "Let Yourself Go," you cannot avoid committing a criminal act. To give full vent to one's passions and desires will cause one to run counter to that discipline which society expects and demands from its members for their collective benefit.

For example, if you want something and you let yourself go in the unqualified meaning of that term, you may have to appropriate another's property illegally to obtain it. In this act you have given yourself the absolute license to do as you desire and as you are motivated. On the other hand, if you restrain yourself on the grounds that such would be theft and morally and legally wrong, you would then not actually be letting yourself go.

The popular misconception of freedom has contributed to the contemporary permissiveness paraphrased as "Let Yourself Go." The conflict between the different ideologies today has brought the word *freedom* into a confused prominence. A basically wrong connotation has become associated with the word. It is commonly assumed that absolute freedom is a possibility for the individual, an ideal to be aspired to. There is, in fact, no absolute freedom in nature. Everything is inherently bound by the very laws which give it its existence. Any

extreme deviation from such laws means the cessation of that thing. It is true that nothing is constant in nature as "Everything is becoming," but then there is no freedom whatsoever from this law of change.

Man cannot free himself from the biological and physiological phenomena by which he lives if he wants to continue to do so. Our instincts are a fundamental fabric of our lives. They impel us to act in certain ways as does the compulsion of our emotions. We may at times exercise our will to oppose them and we seem to free ourselves from them only to be caught up in the inescapable mesh of death: and this is a law, a phenomenon against which no man has permanently exercised the freedom of his will. If each human were to attempt absolute freedom of will and desire society would disintegrate, and as those attempting this have discovered, the same freedom of others would suppress their own.

A form of freedom which we can exercise comes not just in acts of commission but also in acts of omission. In other words, what should one choose not to do as well as to do? The person who puts rational restraint upon his acts in dealing with other humans is ultimately protecting his own rights and expressions of self.

We know how disastrous it would be to allow a small child to let itself go in response to every stimulus it had. Only through restraint is the child protected against destroying itself. It is not permitted for its own well-being, for example, to eat, drink, go, or do whatever may appeal to it. Neither can man have such liberty because he is first bound to the laws of nature, and next, at least, to those laws of society which are obviously apparent for the benefit of mankind as well. No man is self-sufficient. We are dependent to some degree upon each other. We are therefore obligated to respect the rights of others so that we may have them respect ours. To "Let Yourself Go" is to trespass upon the rights of those upon whom you depend.

Peace on Earth begins with human constraint in relation to the essential welfare of others.

## Chapter 14

# ON INTELLIGENCE AND EDUCATION

**D**OES EDUCATION NECESSARILY imply a high degree of intelligence? Of what advantage is formal education to an acute native intelligence? The definitions of intelligence are numerous and diverse. They are given from the biological, psychological, and philosophical points of view—none of which, however, is completely comprehensive in embracing all those aspects of mental behavior which are commonly accepted as being indicative of intelligence.

What are these common characteristics of the human which are popularly recognized as a display of intelligence? Further, what importance does society associate with intelligence? To the ancients, certain displays of human behavior were said to represent the highest virtue. To the Greeks, the highest virtue was to be *good and beautiful*. To the Persians, it was to be *true and courageous*. The Teutons declared the outstanding virtue was to be *faithful*. To modern man, to be intelligent is the exalted virtue.

For intelligence to have such prominence in our age implies that it has considerable pragmatic value. Certainly intelligence is not recognized merely because of some admirable quality of the human mind. The word *intelligence* is derived from the Latin *intellegere*, meaning “to gather from between.” One of the most common examples of intelligence we shall term *adaptability*. This may be explained as perceiving and conceiving a causal connection between certain things or events which are newly experienced. More succinctly, it is the integrating of ideas or thoughts so that there appears to be to the mind a causal continuity—that is, a comprehensive relationship—between these ideas. When, for example, a person has a new experience, but lacks an immediate

understanding, intelligence resorts to putting it analytically into an order that gives the experience meaning and identity.

Every self-arrived-at explanation, every assumed cause of an experience, may not always be true. Subsequently it could be empirically and objectively proven false. Some of the most primitive superstitions were the result of attempting to explain phenomena; however, the fact that they were later proven not to be factual is no evidence of a deficiency in intelligence.

Another basic factor of intelligence is what we may term *integration*. This consists of uniting things or events which are comprehensible to us, for the purpose of extracting from them a meaning that is applied to what is not understood. A classic example of this involves experimentation with apes, such as the chimpanzee. A banana was placed in the cage of the animal and beyond his reach. In the cage there was also placed a large wooden box. After several attempts to reach the banana in the usual manner of climbing, the ape eventually turned to the box beneath it. He then climbed upon the box and obtained the banana. Here, the previous knowledge of climbing to reach the banana was combined with the knowledge that ascending the box would sufficiently elevate him to accomplish his goal.

Another aspect of intelligence is *segregation*. This consists of separating the elements of an uncomprehended experience so as to try determining which parts may be understandable. The next procedure, then, is to determine what relationship such parts may have to the whole—which is not understandable. In this process, the whole idea, thing, or event is not dismissed from the mind as incomprehensible, and there is less possibility of an immediate wrong conception about it. These rather common displays of intelligence are not necessarily consciously performed, that is, the technique employed is often an unconscious process.

There are said to be three basic categories of *intelligence*: *abstract*, *mechanical*, and *social* intelligence. The first, abstract, is primarily conceptual; it does not arise directly out of immediate perception, or something which is experienced. For instance, let us take the metaphysical subject of *ontology*, which states that there is such a thing

as Absolute Being which is self-generated, eternal, and of which all reality is a part. It may be further stated that such Being had no beginning and therefore cannot have an end, for what it is, is all there is, and therefore there cannot be anything which is not.

Other examples of abstract subjects are the nature of beauty and justice. Certain symbols represent these ideas, but in themselves they have no specific objective reality; simply, no one thing in itself stands for beauty, nor does any other thing in itself stand for justice. In abstraction the mind works with known ideas which in themselves have no relationship to the abstract thought, but when combined with other ideas are used for building the structure of the abstract idea. In abstraction, the mind is principally introverted in its own processes rather than being devoted to probing the things of objective experience.

The mechanical quality of this theorized basis of intelligence presumes a kind of mechanical causality to be found in all things. In other words, the presumption is that everything in nature is linked together in a chain of relationships—that is, by *cause* and *effect*. Find the cause of anything or of any event, and from it can be deduced effects and in turn other causes which will give the whole a meaning. To use a common example, if I find a chain suspended from a rafter with a hook fastened at the lower end, I must conclude that this chain and the hook are for lifting or lowering some object. The mechanical intelligence would not ordinarily seek any further for an understanding of the experience. The experience would presume a cause and subsequent effect.

The school of philosophical thought known as the Vitalist assumes that the vital force of life does not necessarily conform to the mechanical laws of causality as seen in inanimate matter. Therefore, life force, from this point of view, may have its own chain of causes that is quite distinct from that of matter. Consequently, from the Vitalists' reasoning the mechanical theory of intelligence does not always apply to living organisms.

The theory of social intelligence is quite controversial. No matter what relevant explanation may be offered, there will be a critical rejection of it by those who have different conceptions. Briefly,

however, this concept involves the impact of environment upon intelligence. It expounds the theory—which is currently disputatious among psychologists—that hereditary, or native, intelligence of the individual is greatly affected by his associations in society. This, of course, involves the assumption that exposure to that which challenges inquiry and stimulates thinking develops the intelligence. We do not believe it to be polemic, that is, open to controversy, to state that learning is greatly enhanced by exposure to diversified experiences; simply, the more we see, the more potential there is to acquire new and different ideas. To learn by observation does not, however, necessarily imply corresponding comprehension of what is experienced.

Scientific investigation indicates that there is no necessary relationship between thinking and knowledge. Thinking includes reasoning logically, critically, and creatively. Many persons have a remarkable memory; they register experiences well and can recall them easily. Knowledge, on the other hand, is an accumulation of recalled experiences which we can relate to time and place, or put them into a general relationship. But all who possess knowledge—and every conscious human does to some extent—are not necessarily thinkers. A thinker is one who cogitates upon a point of knowledge, a thing that he has perceived or which he conceives. He reasons, analyzes, and may enlarge—that is, resort to accretion by adding other ideas—and by imagination even project the whole conception as a reality in the future.

Thus to *think* and to *know* do not always parallel one another. It is unfortunate that there are not as many persons who think as there are those who merely profess to know and whose knowledge is most often not the consequence of the conclusions of their own thoughts.

There are several intelligence tests given by universities, military forces, and private organizations, commonly known as the I.Q. (intelligence quotient). The value of such tests, however, is questionable in determining the full extent of the individual's intelligence. It has been said that the I.Q. only determines how one's intelligence compares with that of the population as a whole—in other words, how the individual's intelligence rates in comparison with the *norm* of the

society of which he is a member. For instance, an I.Q. test of a person during the Middle Ages might have rated him high in comparison with that of his fellows of that period; however, the I.Q. might be below the average of today's population. No dividing line has been found between so-called normalcy and genius. In an advanced society the normal level of intelligence can gradually approach what was once the intelligence of a genius.

What is *education*? Down through the centuries—from the classical age to the times of our modern educators, philosophers, and psychologists—this question has not been answered with universal agreement. We quote below two typical examples of differing opinions concerning the subject: “The function of education is to mold the child, not leave it to its own devices.” The opposing view is: “Restrictions cramp, distort the untrained, unspoiled, unperverted human nature which is frank, honest, and direct. Parents, nurses, tutors instill undesirable inhibitions, fears, distorted ideas and shield one from realizing artificiality.”

From a broad philosophical point of view, the function of education is to impart to the individual the acquired learning of the past. It is presumed to be that knowledge which is found to be true and demonstrable. Consequently, its purpose would appear to be to eliminate ignorance and such false knowledge as superstition, which can inhibit thought and create unnecessary fears. Education, however, is intended to do more than stimulate the intelligence and prompt it to seek knowledge; it is also meant to have pragmatic value. It desires to train one in the skills and professions providing for a better economical standard of living. Its social contribution, in theory, is intended to make an individual capable of becoming a more useful citizen for the welfare of society as a whole.

It has been said by the English philosopher Alfred Whitehead (1861-1947) “Professional training is only one side of education. The object is the immediate apprehension. There is, however, a difference between the gross specialized values of the more practical man and the thin specialized values of a mere scholar.” “Man,” Whitehead continues, “may learn all about the sun, atmosphere and rotation of the earth, and still may miss the radiance of the sunset.”

It is notable that many persons with an excellent education in a specialized field may show only an elementary intelligence in an approach to abstract subjects outside of their specific training. *Creativity* and *imagination* are fundamentals of intelligence, and these should not be forfeited for an accumulation of specific ideas. A person with alert native intelligence has often been able to adapt to a new experience with a more immediate comprehension than one with an academic degree in a specialized knowledge. An excellent knowledge can often be but the result of rote memory and not an example of profound intelligence. Fortunately educators are today more aware of the need of cultivating the aesthetic sense, the intuition, and the mental faculty of abstraction, besides merely stacking the memory with facts.

The Nuclear and Space Age has Hooded man with a vast new technology; its potentiality for the future challenges the imagination. Many persons with an academic degree in the humanities, the so-called classics, are finding it difficult to obtain employment. In other words, in just what way will space travel and its resultant discoveries affect man? To many persons the search for the possibility of other forms of life in outer space appears as nothing more than an adventure in fantasy. Its possible pragmatic value is lost upon such persons. In a wholly limited and personal way the finding of evidence of intelligent life elsewhere than planet Earth will seem to not be rewarding to earthlings.

However, a discovery of the existence of intelligent beings elsewhere in the universe would put a final rest to another myth which man has long harbored. In other words, it would indicate that the Earth was not selected from the myriad of other cosmic worlds to be the exclusive habitat of man. It would likewise reveal that man has not been chosen to be the supreme form of life in the Cosmos as has been taught in most of the sacred hagiographies of the ancients.

But aside from a biological triumph—namely, that man as a highly developed organism does not stand alone in the universe—there are other more direct benefits to be discovered from such a finding. Such intelligent life would possibly have advanced to its present state over a much longer period than have the humans to theirs. Such beings may have evolved out of an environment in many respects quite different



from that of Earth's. How then did they master their environment? What lessons did they learn that contribute to a state which possibly far exceeds our own in culture?

Have such intelligent entities contrived ways of mastering disease? Have they found a way of lengthening life without experiencing the depletions of old age? If such knowledge has been attained by other beings in other worlds, what a tremendous benefit for mankind! It would remove a considerable burden from humanity.

Then again, what of sociological affairs? What type of government exists in such a presumed progressive culture? Are its citizens able to compensate for or make an adjustment for such basic emotions that result in excessive aggression and greed? Do they have racial problems? If so, how do they meet them with their vast and greater experience as a higher civilization?

We are inclined, too, to ask the question, "How did such beings solve the problem of the depletion of their basic resources, one with which man is being confronted?" Also, are they confronted with the aggravating demographic problem of excessive population? Is there an equalizing of wealth among their inhabitants or is material gain unlimited for the individual if the acquisition of it does not transgress certain laws of the state? In what manner is the problem of old age dealt with by them? Does society assure security for those unable to support themselves and must the employed contribute to a fund that meets this ultimate contingency?

Presume that no contact shall ever be made with superior intelligences elsewhere in the universe. Then what gains are there to earthlings from the series of space probes that have been launched, and which may be launched in the future? Certainly such sciences as astronomy, geology, and cosmology, for example, will be greatly advanced. With future stationary satellites or "space islands" equipped with sophisticated instrumentation we shall have the means of penetrating more deeply into the greater universe. We shall undoubtedly learn to a greater extent how worlds are born and how our own universe and its planets came into existence. From such we will probably come to a final conclusion as to whether the Cosmos is continually expanding; or whether there

was originally just one great “bang” and that in time there will be a contraction, and expansion will cease—at least for an interval.

Such knowledge may not be of any immediate benefit to the average person, but all knowledge has usefulness in our mental expansion or inner growth if not in material gain and affluence. Ignorance and misconception lead to superstition, and superstition eventually results in fears—which in turn restrain intellectual progress.

We need only refer to the Dark and Middle Ages of our own Earth to see how ignorance of certain fundamentals of nature, the truth of which has slowly become known, caused to come about beliefs and customs that resulted in religious intolerance and social chaos.

How did our particular little world, relatively speaking, come into existence? There are many theories extant that postulate answers to such a question. The space probes providing a closer look at other bodies in space may provide the final, indubitable answer. Such probes may also disclose what may be expected of our world in the aeons ahead and how those living upon the Earth may face such a catastrophe.

Even in recent years space age research has aided our everyday living. Many of our improved electronic devices, both for home and business, utilize parts and substances that have grown out of research demands for launching rockets and spaceships. It has resulted in the discovery of new heat-resisting substances and chemical compounds that accomplish far more than previous ones in the manufacture of necessary commodities. Medical science has also learned how to overcome certain limitations that are often imposed upon the human organism. New medications have evolved as a result of “space medicine” that play a prominent part in a cure of old maladies.

In centuries past men sought new areas on the Earth's surface to replenish exhausted resources. It was their search for new lands in past centuries and what they might offer that came to add to man's natural wealth. But man's extravagance and greed, plus exhaustive wars, are depleting the sources of those things upon which modern culture depends. Our energy crisis is the common example brought to the attention of most nations of the world. Yet there are others equally

critical, as the growing shortage of water, that will have an impact upon man in the future.

An analysis of the findings of space spectroscopy reveal the spectra of important minerals of which we are in need and which exist on other planets. Even now there is serious consideration as to how such material may be mined in space and transported to Earth. At the present, it may seem that regardless of the abundance, for example, of such minerals and other resources, the cost of mining and transporting them at such great distances would be prohibitive. Nevertheless, the idea is no more fantastic than the thought of man walking upon the Moon would have been a century ago.

In the relatively near future space probes will undoubtedly make a major contribution to the solution of the Earth's energy problem. The nuclear production of energy on Earth by atomic fusion will probably precede it. However, the harnessing of solar energy by stations on space islands which is then transmitted to Earth will be a factor that will be removed from theory to practical ends.

Such explorative adventures as will be undertaken in future space projects will unquestionably be extremely costly. Admittedly much money will be wasted in trial experiments and, unfortunately, by exploitation. However, all great technical advancements that have ultimately benefited man have gone through such trials. But the net gain in its perpetuity has justified it.

## Chapter 15

# WHAT IS MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT?

THE WORD *ENLIGHTENMENT* commonly alludes to a symbolic goal for intellectual advancement. The association of the word *light* with knowledge and understanding goes back to man's earliest observations. Our common visual experience depends upon light. Our sense of sight is the greatest of all our receptor senses as it reveals more of the external world to us. Therefore, light is sight's agent.

Knowledge is primarily what we perceive. Light, therefore, symbolically depicts that which can be perceived and known. Darkness, the opposite of light, also differs from it symbolically. This difference is likewise associated with early human experience. Where there is darkness, there is obscurity and concealment. What could not be seen was therefore the *unknown*.

The unknown has always had a dual effect upon man. On the one hand, it challenges him to penetrate its veil. Man sought to discover what may lie hidden there. On the other hand, the unknown and the mental darkness which it causes engender *fear*. When we have the knowledge of something, we then have the chance of coping with it. We can either master it or, if necessary, defend ourselves against it. The unknown can also suggest danger, the threat of the uncontrollable. It can become the substance out of which the imagination builds fearful distortions.

True enlightenment is more than perceiving. In other words, it is more than knowing that something is. For something to be actually known to us, we must know *what* and *why* it is. Simply, to truly know something is to relate it to ourselves. It must have meaning to us and it

must fit into the comprehensive plan of our life or what we call nature. Enlightenment, then, means *understanding*.

Understanding, which is attained through empiricism, that is, through objectivity, is limited. Much in life escapes our attention. Further, not all that we experience is understood by us. It may be that we have neither the time nor the mental capacity to analyze each thing we experience as to its nature and function. Consequently, life consists of a series of hiatuses—that is, gaps of the unknown—to all of us. It is like walking a lane of alternating light and impenetrable darkness. For this reason, it is difficult to establish a philosophy of life that is self-assuring. We are often caused to feel isolated, lost in a worldly sea of uncertainties. This is the reason why so many persons resort to prophecy. They want to know what the unknown may reveal. They wish to alter their lives according to what may be revealed. Yet, whatever may be predicted from such prophecies often leaves a lingering doubt as to its accuracy.

For peace of mind in life, there must be a chain of continuity. Nothing should seem to stand completely apart from man and, conversely, man apart from it. Simply, such diverse things as the Cosmos, life, death, past, present, and future should fall into a harmonious order of personal understanding to us. They should not remain distant mysteries. However, the intelligence alone cannot provide a uniting of such mysteries and understanding. How, then, is perfect understanding, enlightenment, to be attained?

It is the mystic who can experience this true enlightenment. He does this by transcending the finite and embracing the infinite. It must be realized that there is not actually a finite world of which we speak as a distinctive thing in itself. The so-called finite world constitutes the limits of man's objective senses, being that part of the infinite about which man's senses and their limitations have constructed a mental wall. But the consciousness which mystics can attain is possible of penetrating this wall. It is then that man experiences the infinite as one. A mystic-philosopher once said, "Mystical experience of the real is like a vast formless reservoir of life-giving substance."

The revelation that man has of the infinite, the special enlightenment he experiences, is called *illumination*. With such illumination, the mystery

of being is revealed to man. He sees inwardly the divine existing in all things. He sees not just particulars or separateness of objects, but rather experiences the essence of which All consists. This illumination consists of three stages. The first is the awakening of the self to the divine. This means man's realization that he is not just bound to the body; in other words, that the self can experience pleasure, states of awareness that are far beyond those provided by the appetites and passions. For analogy, if man were to continually look at his reflection in a mirror, it would seem to him to be his only self. Yet, when he turns away from the mirror and closes his eyes, he then awakens to the reality of another Self; it is the one that is sensed from within.

The second stage of illumination is the realization of the variations of the nature of the self. Actually, what we call *self* consists of unseparated states of consciousness. These are the physical, the mental, and the ecstatic. The last is the sublime pleasure that seems to have an immaterial cause or nature. In this second stage, the mystic realizes how he formerly was restricting, though unwittingly, his potential growth of self-awareness.

The final stage of illumination goes beyond the realization that there is an absolute reality. The mystic now feels that he is actually immersed in this One. He experiences a mystical unity. This is realized as being of all things and all things being of you. The mystic learns it is not necessary to oscillate, to alternate his consciousness back and forth through various stages. He can at will attain ultimate illumination, or Cosmic Consciousness.

However, this is only possible when the mystic has perfected the technique of the three stages briefly touched upon here. Illumination is a transition from bodily knowledge—the strictly intellectual—to *psychic knowledge*. The mystic gradually transforms many of the former unknowns into personal understanding. However, the aspirant must learn that purgation and illumination are related. In other words, the mystic must purge himself of that which his conscience tells him is unworthy.

We have said that the consciousness of mystics can penetrate the wall of the finite. This implies that consciousness can go beyond the

limits of which we are ordinarily aware. Is this simply fantasy? Let us now consider this related subject, a deeper penetration into the phenomena of consciousness.

Is consciousness body bound? Is it confined entirely within the physical organism, or can it reach out infinitely beyond the self? Further, is consciousness a thing, a substance and attribute, or a function?

Consciousness has an indirect reality to us. We do not know it in itself. It has no quality such as the things we perceive with our receptor senses. In other words, consciousness has no space, dimension, weight, color, scent, or sound. We may think of consciousness as sensation, yet we cannot identify any sensation as singularly being consciousness.

Down through the centuries the search for the nature of consciousness has been elusive. But the phenomenon being sought was not always known by that name. Epicurus, a Greek philosopher (341-270 B.C.), said: "Where we are, death is not yet; and where death comes, there we are not." Substitute the word *we* for *self-consciousness*, and you have man's realization that the reality of himself and of the external world depends upon an intangible innate quality.

To several intangible phenomena, man has given a more or less common relationship as soul, mind, and self. If they were not all accepted as one, then it was believed that one of them was the fundamental cause of the others.

The French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) said that soul, body, and mind were separate but that they interacted upon each other. The point of interaction was the *pineal gland*. The soul enters and influences the mechanical action of the body. Descartes said that the soul, then, "moves the body, and consciousness is a result."

Descartes further stated that though consciousness is in the body, it nevertheless occupies no space within it. He called consciousness an unextended substance; in other words, that consciousness was not measurable—it had no physical nature. Consciousness as a phenomenon was being realized but could not be separately identified.

As noted in the work entitled *Unconsciousness* by James A. Miller, we find today a large group of psychologists who insist that consciousness and the unconscious processes may be interpreted in terms of the operation of the nervous systems. One general statement is that the cerebral cortex controls consciousness, and the thalamus (a mass of gray matter at the base of the brain) mediates the *unconscious process*. By unconscious process is meant the unlearned or inherited process.

Thus, psychology generally considers consciousness an attribute of a complex technical, mechanical process. There is, however, no agreement on the details of the process; but there is the unconscious to which they refer as "the unlearned and inherited process." Is consciousness, then, entirely a function derived from the organic activity of living matter? Simple unicellular organisms exhibit a consciousness of their fundamental life activity. This awareness of the simple cell as to what is necessary for its continued existence is apparently unlearned. This consciousness is evident in the cell with the beginning of its life activity, and not something acquired later.

If this is so, it would seem to attribute to consciousness an intelligence, a oneness; that is, having a single state. In other words, the intelligence in the simple cell has an awareness, a consciousness of itself, or that consciousness has its own innate intelligence. More simply, this intelligence in the simple cell does not have to be aroused by any stimulation. It *knows itself*; that is, the intelligence and consciousness being as one.

This abstract rationalization implies that consciousness is not wholly a mechanical effect of the life process in matter. Rather, it would appear that consciousness is an integral part of that energy which infuses inanimate matter and brings forth life.

Can we deduce from this that all the phenomena of the Cosmos have a consciousness of their own particular nature? So far as man's observations and speculation have determined, *change* underlies all manifestations of the Cosmos. "Everything is becoming, nothing is." There is a concatenation of causes and effects. Yet this chain also goes through changes, each effect becoming in turn a cause in relation to other effects. Is then this cosmic function of change a consciousness



of its own necessity? Since the Cosmos, or Being, has to be, there being no alternative state, is this persistence of its nature a self-awareness, a consciousness?

To assume this is to conceive that there is a Universal Consciousness pervading all things—both animate and inanimate. We must think, then, of this Universal Consciousness as being binary, that is, dual in its basic function; one phase of its nature interacting upon another. In a complex living organism, the Universal Consciousness establishes centers having a lower consciousness, as that of the nervous systems and brain. In this way, living forms become a microcosm—a little Cosmos—in them selves. They, too, have the conscious impulse to be, as does the Cosmos as a whole.

There is then a *psychic bridge*, a nexus between every living thing and the Cosmos. Even though we have said that the Universal Consciousness is binary, dual in its activity in living organisms throughout the Cosmos, it may still have functions that are more expansive levels of itself.

Let us use an example to clarify this point. Let us think of the Universal Consciousness of the Cosmos as rungs of a ladder, each ascending rung being a greater apperception of itself. One of these rungs or levels of the Universal Consciousness is, as said, of the nervous systems and cells of living matter. But there lie beyond or above that, relatively speaking, a myriad of other levels of consciousness which are indwelling in all life forms.

Man, then, has within himself the potential of ascending these other rungs, reaching these other more expanded levels of consciousness. If he does, the greater then will be his insight of Cosmic Reality.

This Greater Reality that is experienced is amorphous. It has none of the qualities of our objective perceptions. Such a state of consciousness directly experienced is unlike the other phases of consciousness of which we are normally aware. The sensations of these more expansive levels of consciousness, however, do have a harmonic relationship with our objective sense perceptions. Consequently, one will commonly interpret these exalted states of the Universal Consciousness in terms of dimensions, colors, substance, sounds, and tactile sensations.

Such psychic contacts of the Cosmos, however, are unrealistic as to the mental images which are attributed to them. Their only realism is the experience itself. The objective image aspect is only symbolic. It does, however, have value in aiding people engaged in meditation and visualization to attain once again the same levels of exalted consciousness by preliminary focusing upon the symbol. The symbol that is experienced may also serve as an intellectual stimulus. It can result, by suggestion, in a surge of inspiration, an influx of new ideas, of practicability and greater clarity of thought.

Not only do human minds have the potential of probing into the depths of other levels of the Universal Consciousness pervading their beings, but they also have, by means of this connection, access to all other minds of equal sensitivity.

The technique of projecting one's consciousness beyond the limits of the receptor senses and beyond one's self-awareness is relatively simple to explain in theory. In practice, it is far more complex. As stated, man has two general states of consciousness: first, the Universal Consciousness with its myriad and mostly unknown expanded levels; and secondly, our commonly experienced states of consciousness—the objective and subjective.

It is then obviously necessary to have our realization or awareness transcend the relatively lower stage of consciousness to attain the more expanded levels. The first step is to attempt to suppress all external stimuli. This is the withdrawing of consciousness from the impressions of the sense faculties. Mystically, it is termed *entering the silence*. Not to see, hear, taste, or smell is no easy accomplishment.

Introverting the consciousness, turning it inward to the subjective functions of mind, aids in a release from the objective state. But it is only a transference of consciousness to mental images, or memory impressions, and the processes of imagination, visualization, and reason.

The second step in the procedure is to visualize a single idea. This can be either a place or person. You wish to *actualize* your consciousness—that is, you want to experience self as being at that place or with

that person that you are visualizing. By this we mean that no other impressions are in consciousness except that to which consciousness has projected. Your present surroundings, where you are, must vanish. It is as if physically you are not where you are located but rather where you have projected.

The third step is to cause the image you are visualizing, the person or place, to finally dissolve into a dark spot. You then focus your whole attention upon the spot until it too seems to pass. If successful, you will begin to experience the phenomenon of another level of the hierarchy of the Universal Consciousness. Those who have experienced this phenomenon have stated there is a transition in the nature of the self. The "I Am" continues to exist, that is, *you are*, but without any substance or particular characteristics. It is a state of consciousness that is almost inexplicable. Simply, there is no visualization of your self.

The next step in the phenomenon of projection of consciousness is the realization that you are now only aware of that person or place which you sought to experience. Any analogy offered to explain it is, of course, not adequate. However, we will suggest one version as a help—that is, viewing a motion picture or television screen. In doing so, you see what is occurring on the screen; you hear and see what is transpiring. However, there is this difference: you are not separate from what you experience in the projection of consciousness—*you are actually in it*. (You are not seen as a form but rather just as a sense of being present, as though you were invisibly in the scene being observed.) It is a kind of detached consciousness.

When we close our eyes and shut out all physical impressions of the outer self, we nevertheless do not lose the consciousness of knowing that we are. We do not lose the consciousness of self. It is that kind of consciousness which we have in the projection of consciousness.

During such an experience, there is, of course, no realization of either time or space. When the transference of this state of consciousness is made, it is devoid of a time factor. When one returns to the objective state, to normalcy, it may seem that the time lapse has been considerable, but it has not been. It is like a dream; the event may

seem to have taken minutes or hours in what was experienced, but the actual lapse of time may be merely seconds.

The consciousness in these higher levels may reach that state where all attempts at mental images to try defining it are impossible. There would be no elements by which one could make an objective comparison. It is, as the mystics have said, an *ineffable ecstasy*, that is, a sublime state of euphoria, of well-being, of Peace Profound. Many of the so-called miracles related in the various sacred books were actually the journey of the consciousness of self outward bound.

It must be stated that each of the steps herein related is far more complex than is being given. It requires a careful study of a rational presentation of the subject matter. Projection of consciousness is one of the subjects extensively dealt with in the Rosicrucian teachings, both psychologically and in accordance with authentic mystical precepts.

## Chapter 16

# THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF MYSTICISM

THE EXPERIENCES WE have and which are engendered from our subconscious mind or Inner Self when attuning with the Cosmic will assume the sensations of our physical senses. But they will not use the medium of those peripheral senses. For example, we may have a visual experience when meditating, as a scene, an image, or a harmonious blend of colors. But these will not be images perceived by the physical eyes. In fact, the eyes should be closed when meditating, so as to prevent interference by extraneous objective impressions.

All experiences of meditation must be translated in our objective consciousness into the qualities of our senses. They must have the essence or qualities of what we objectively perceive, or otherwise we could not comprehend the experience. Our whole life is made up in terms of the sensations which we have acquired through our objective senses. If, therefore, we in meditation were to have any experience devoid of sound, feeling, smelling, taste, or sight, it would have no identity to us.

The cosmic impressions, or those extant in our subconscious, are symbolic—perhaps we may say amorphous—impressions of a vibratory rate whose particular frequency we have not as yet discovered. They are then transformed by being reduced down to such octaves, or rates of energy, that they actuate areas of the brain related to our sense impressions. We then see or feel, smell, or taste the result *inwardly*.

Have you ever known a person who has had a psychic experience during meditation that did not have qualities of the experience corresponding to one or more of his receptor senses? If there were not such a relationship to the receptor senses, he could not describe his psychic experience to either you or to himself.

There are meditation experiences that almost transcend our description of them but, of course, not absolutely. You have heard persons relate that they have experienced a state of ecstasy, an almost inexplicable “feeling” of peace or tranquility. Other persons have said that they “saw” the most magnificent harmony of exquisite colors unlike anything else they had ever seen objectively. Yet the experience was *realized as visual*.

We may use the analogy of radio. Hertzian or high frequency waves act as a carrier of electrical impulses which are produced by the voice at the transmitting station. As they pass through the air they are nothing more than electrical waves. At your radio receiver they are detected when it is properly tuned to them. Then they are *stepped down* by transformers so as to produce through your receiver various impulses which, when acting upon the air, become sound once again.

Thus, in meditation, the original impulse may not have been of a visual or auditory nature. It may have been just those vibrations of a higher psychic octave which have a harmonic of correspondence in a lower scale to one of our senses and by which we experience it. If it were not for this harmonic relationship of the subconscious and psychic and the cosmic octaves as a whole, we would never have any experiences but those of our objective sensations. In other words, we would know or realize the material world only.

It is important in meditation that every effort be made to suppress impulses coming through the objective senses—in other words, to try to shut out external stimuli received through the sense organs. Succinctly, try not to see, hear, feel, taste, or smell objectively. We readily grant that this is a most difficult thing to accomplish, and only the person who has attained by will complete control of his states of consciousness can do this. To lose awareness of the external world requires a slowly acquired

technique. But every student practicing meditation can partially reduce the impact of the external world upon himself, which will help him to realize the inner experiences of meditation.

A simple method of subordinating the attention to external stimuli during meditation is to concentrate upon the center of the head. Visualize entering your head through your forehead. This is a form of introspection—that is, a directing of your consciousness *inwardly*. While such an idea is dominant in your mind, any extraneous sounds will disturb you less. After you feel that you have at least partially attained this “mystical silence” you should then no longer concentrate upon your head. Such concentration is objective and prevents you from being receptive to psychic impulses. Therefore, such particular concentration as a method is only a preliminary aid for the reasons we have given.

Of course, you should arrange an ideal environment for meditation. The adept who has attained a certain mastery can induce mystical silence anywhere regardless of the environment. But the neophyte, the learning and developing student, needs to select an environment conducive to what he wishes to do. It should be a place and a time where there is reasonable quiet. There should be no near conversation that can be heard or that will distract. Lighting in the sanctum or room is of equal importance. During the actual meditation lighting should be very dim or just candles used. Why? It is because bright light not only acts upon the eyes, even when the lids are closed, but also in some persons the sensory nerve endings seem to react to strong light. Consequently, such reaction disturbs the meditation.

Needless to say, you must also avoid any interruption by members of the family or friends during a meditation period. If contact is about to be made in meditation and someone enters and talks to you at just that moment, the contact is not only lost then but it might be impossible to resume it again for a considerable time.

The student needs to have the cooperation of his family for his studies and meditation. If this is not possible, then he at least must find some other place to perform the exercises and the meditation.

You can sometimes have excellent success in meditation on a park bench beneath a tree in the surroundings of nature, and where there are no disturbances.

Many persons think of mysticism as wholly abstract and idealistic with little application to the mundane everyday affairs. This opinion is not true. Mysticism does make a useful contribution to the practical side of life. However, it must be understood and properly applied.

Before a consideration of the practical application of mysticism, a brief review of its history and meaning is advisable. The elements of mysticism began with primitive man. Among primitive peoples the word *mana* refers to a spirit which pervades some men. It is related that *mana* makes it possible for man to become momentarily aware of the great spirit—the great universal, supernatural power.

Mystical practices existed in antiquity as far back as ancient Egypt. In other words, man attempted to experience and communicate with the gods. Later, these teachings were further developed by the Dionysiac school of Greece. In fact, the word mysticism is of Greek origin. The Orphic mysteries of Greece were one of the principal sources of *mysticism*, from which descended the primary teachings of mysticism to the Neoplatonic philosophers.

Between the 5th century B.C. and the 19th century A.D., three great waves of mysticism were active at intervals, corresponding to the classical, the medieval, and the Renaissance periods. Mysticism's highest point was reached in the 14th century. Among the great mystics of antiquity were Plotinus, the Neoplatonic philosopher, and Philo and Clement of Alexandria, Egypt. Even Plato has been considered a mystic. In fact, every person who awakens to a consciousness of a reality which transcends the objective senses is a mystic at heart; the relative perfection of his concept of reality is of secondary importance.

How do we define mysticism? What is its meaning? Mysticism is the awakening of the self to a consciousness of a divine reality. The self for the first time becomes aware of cosmic beauty in contrast to its own finite imperfection. The self then attempts to emulate the divine beauty which it experiences. Mysticism is a final and personal experience.



Plotinus, the Neoplatonic philosopher, said that mysticism is “the marriage between soul and God”—in other words, the personal realization of unity with the Absolute, the One. The mystical experience consists of four elements. First is the *ineffable*. This means that the experience is difficult to explain—it is more of a feeling, just as difficult to explain as fine music. The second element of mysticism is the *noetic quality*. This means that the individual experiences a unique new knowledge which consists of an illumination of greater depth than the intellect can provide. The third element is *transcendancy*. This is the inability of the individual to sustain the mystical experience for long. The memory of the experience diminishes with time. The fourth element is *passivity*. One finds that the self is completely passive during the experience. There is no emotional or mental turbulence at the time.

Mysticism is an experience, not just a theory. But it is an inner experience. To apply mysticism, one must first work upon the self and then objectify his experience. Mysticism provides the substance, the material upon which we cogitate and then take action. Mysticism denies that knowledge is limited just to the peripheral, or sense, impressions. The mystical principle of knowledge asserts that man is essentially divine and therefore capable of immediate communications with reality, the One.

It is important that we do not confuse mystical technique with application. There are various Eastern and Western techniques. The technique, whatever it may be, is merely a mechanism. It is not the final objective of mysticism. For analogy, there is an obvious difference between learning to use tools and constructing a building. One must relate the principle of mysticism to an understanding and a use of life.

*Meditation* is one of the basic techniques of mysticism. But it also has a practical application, which we shall consider. The particular importance of meditation is its role in the discovery of the expansion of self. In other words, there is more to our conscious being than we ordinarily realize. Self is more than just one phase of consciousness, as we explained in a previous chapter. For example, electricity is not a phenomenon of a single voltage. Inspiration, insight, and new vistas of reality are the rewards of contact with other levels of consciousness. Some conceive of meditation as being an escape from reality. Meditation

is not just a closing of a door to one kind of perception. Rather, it is entering into different chambers of the psyche.

One of the first great benefits derived from mysticism is a broad view of *ontology*, which concerns the nature of being. "Being" refers to absolute reality, the One, the Cosmos. Ontology is a basic study of metaphysics, but metaphysics approaches ontology only from the speculative and intellectual point of view. Mysticism, however, makes ontology a personal experience.

In ontology, mysticism causes one to sense a union with all reality. One is no longer confused by various theological divisions of the Cosmos. Simply, there no longer exist such subdivisions of reality as heaven, hell, natural, supernatural, or the Absolute, or time and space. Nor does the mystic find so-called matter completely separate and apart from what is called the immaterial world.

The true mystic is also a pantheist. To him the Divine, the Spiritual Essence, pervades all things. Further, the laws by which the Divine functions or manifests are also divine. There can be no distinction between the essence and its laws of manifestation, just as a man's thoughts and deeds are related. Therefore, the pantheist sees divine manifestation in all the phenomena of nature. But he realizes that no one thing, whatever it may be, is completely representative of the Cosmic, the Divine. As Spinoza, the Dutch philosopher said, neither is the totality of nature the whole of the Divine. This is true because the Divine is potential with being more than what already exists.

For this reason the mystical pantheist experiences his concept of God in every natural phenomenon. He endeavors to understand nature. He seeks a personal intimacy with it, resulting in a harmony of the self. The mystical pantheist does not accept the old theological idea that man alone has a spiritual essence. If the soul in man is an emanation of the Divine Consciousness, then all living things have soul, but with a lesser degree of manifestation. The consciousness of life is united, regardless of the form which the organism assumes.

Does such an abstract subject as mystical pantheism have practical value? Yes, because it opposes the many forms of superstition and

ignorance of the past. It causes man to realize the brotherhood of the Cosmic Force pervading all things.

Another practical aspect of mysticism is the concept of equality which it expounds. Philosophically, the word *equality* can appear as a logical paradox, seemingly contradicting itself. For example, a thing which is equal in every respect to another thing loses its own separateness, for such equality would include equality with the other in time and space as well. Therefore, there would be no plurality, because just a singularity of conditions would exist.

From this point of view there is no absolute equality. There is only relative equality, that is, *similarity*. Mysticism shows that there is no absolute equality in mankind except in essence, and this essence is the Vital Life Force pervading all living things. Men vary in their intellect, emotions, and awareness of self. The only equality which we should strive for is the right to know ourselves. However, such a right carries an obligation that *all men* be able to think and express their thoughts. Only in this sense does mysticism accept the idea of equality.

Another practical application of mysticism is its *understanding of value*. The mystic knows that value is primarily a relative term. What one person may accept as value, another may not. Are there then no absolute values toward which all men should strive? The only absolute value is life, for all else depends upon it. Yet, even this value must be qualified. To merely live is not the highest attainment of man. Life can be both used and abused by man. Life force in its pure state is creative, not degenerative. Man's personal value in life should then assume the same order. Each of us has talents, some of which are still dormant, yet to be awakened. They may be mechanical, artistic, or intellectual skills, each varying in its degree of development. It becomes our duty to give value to our life, by creating something worthy or assisting others who strive to do so. To neglect our creative ability, or to influence others to do so, is to place a wrong value upon life.

Mysticism provides techniques for learning one's personal value in life. Intuition, or insight, is one of these techniques. The old mystical phrase, *the economy of life*, instructs that man should not waste life. He

should use it practically, that is, efficiently. He should idealize personal constructive creativity in some form.

Man need not be a genius to add value to his life. A helpful suggestion, a comforting thought, prevention of an ethical wrong are all worthy values. If inspired through mystical study, these values are then examples of the practical application of mysticism.

## Chapter 17

# THE ROOTS OF KARMA

PERHAPS ONE OF the oldest mystical and philosophical concepts is that of *karma*. It is also one of the most misunderstood in ancient teachings. The subject of karma is abstruse and complex in its earliest form, that of the Hindu and Buddhist religions. Subsequently, with the passing of centuries, and the eclecticism of other systems of thought which borrowed and incorporated the topic of karma in their teachings, the confusion as to its nature increased. Today, numerous sects resort to karma in explaining many human actions and tend to make it a primary influence in the course of man's personal life.

The word *karma* is of the Sanskrit language, and literally translated means "to do" or "deed." In general, the doctrine of karma states that the course of human existence is dependent upon certain acts and deeds of the individual's past existence; in other words, that these deeds and their consequences have been transferred from past lives to the present. It is in the specific interpretation of this oversimplified explanation that misconceptions arise.

How, in remote antiquity, did the concept of karma arise? Psychologically, the people of primitive cultures wonder as to why an individual is born afflicted with deformity, mental illness, or ill health. The genetic causation of such conditions is not known or apparent to them. The naturally curious human intellect then enters into supposition; it *imagines* the cause of the individual's misfortune. Since no obvious, perceivable factor accounts for the individual's affliction in this life, it is assumed to be a punishment for sins committed in a former life.

Karma's involvement in the teachings and doctrines of both Hinduism and Buddhism is considerable. The religio-philosophy of

Hinduism fostered the first development of the doctrine of karma from its original primitive form. Buddhism, following Hinduism by many centuries, was deeply affected by its predecessor, yet deviated greatly in some aspects. Consequently, in relating some of these early ideas of karma, we have no specific line drawn between the two systems' treatment of the subject.

In Buddhism, there is no acknowledgment of a soul, or ego, as we find in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It has been asserted that Buddhism does not propound the transmigration of the soul, that is, the passing of the soul at death into another body. Instead, it is expounded that a new being is born and that it inherits its karma. Therefore, what transmigrates is the former person's karma.

Here we see a conflict with the common conception of karma, that no man inherits the good or the evil act of another man. To the Buddhist, there is no soul, but a series of thoughts, sensations, volitions, and material elements. It is further postulated that this "existence" never had a beginning and that this kind of human existence has to eat the fruit of a certain number of acts. Simply, this means that existence goes on as a series, but in each existence this "fruit" must be eaten—an allegorical expression for the retribution of good or bad acts. The *experience* of the acts of this life constitutes another existence at death; however, at death there will still be some fruit to be eaten: acts to be compensated for, both old and new. After death, the series passes into a new existence and lives a new life under new conditions.

What are the acts proclaimed in the early doctrines of karma that are such an important factor in the life of a human and for which retribution can be expected? There are two general kinds, according to the archaic explanation. An act is interpreted as mental and spiritual. Every act is volitional, being that which a person does after willing. Mental acts are ones of excellence inasmuch as there is no action which is not preceded by mental action. We are what we think; we are what we will.

Our existence is determined by two specific qualities of acts, those *pure* and those *impure*. The pure are acts which are free from

passion, desire, and ignorance. The pure acts have no retribution; they do not produce meritorious awards because they do not contribute to a continuation of human existence. Instead, the pure acts prepare the way for *nirvana*. This is a state where no existence, no rebirth is required. It is a condition of spiritual perfection and of absorption into the Absolute.

All other acts are impure; yet they are distinguished as good or bad. Their distinction is based upon retribution. In other words, the pure acts result in a freedom from any sentient experience that would be termed either good or bad. Therefore, the impure are the lesser acts that can result in retribution, whether good or bad. In this sense, retribution, be it a merit or demerit, is an effect from the cause of our acts.

Good acts are said to have three roots by which they are known. These are the absence of lust, of hatred, of error. Therefore, all bad acts are contradictions of the good ones. Good acts of the body, voice, and thought are purification; they arrest either temporarily or finally the passions aroused by bad acts. An infernal existence is one where man has committed murder, theft, adultery, and so on. We are told there is a short life in another mortal existence, or suffering a scarcity of food or property, or an unfaithful spouse, a retribution for such acts.

A period of philosophical speculation began after these archaic concepts. Man, it was said, would need to continue to exist, to be a self-conscious being, as long as his actions were of a kind that lead to the necessity of rebirth. We construe this as meaning that man could not cease being earthbound as long as his actions were of a sensuous and immoral nature. Self-consciousness, rebirth, was considered an indication of one's former misdeeds. The body, the soul, was to be freed from the suffering of physical existence and mental torment only when its actions finally did not require that it be reborn. It was proclaimed that the ultimate aim of religion or philosophy is to free man from rebirth and from a continuation of self-consciousness.

How do we condense and summarize these doctrines of karma that are passed on to us? What is the rationale for the principle of karma?

Philosophically, karma, as a concept, is first founded upon the principle of cause and effect. Every cause, whatever its nature, is followed by an effect. Every act man precipitates as a cause will result in a related effect. Even Isaac Newton (1642-1727), in his third law of the laws of motion, implies such a relationship; "For every act (or force) there is an equal and opposite reaction." Karma is also stated to be the *law of compensation*; that is, each act results in a compensation according to its nature. Nefarious acts will bring hurt to the one who causes them. Beneficent acts, it expounds, bring results in like kind.

Another important part of this more simplified doctrine of karma is its impersonal application. Karma is not the enforcement of retribution or punishment by any divine or supernatural being or power. Further, no purposeful reward or punishment is conferred upon man. Karma, in its impersonal sense, is the invoking of cosmic and natural laws through one's own actions. If one throws an object in the air, the law of gravity is invoked, regardless of where the object falls. It is an impersonal natural law.

It is man himself who produces impersonal karma by the manner in which he uses physical, moral, and ethical laws and principles. One of the primary ways in which karma is caused to bring man ill effects is *ignorance*. Ignorance is a mental and intellectual blindness. When we use laws wrongly, the resulting effects are of a nature neither anticipated nor desired.

The doctrine of karma comments upon *past* karma, *present* karma, and *future* karma. The explanation of past karma can be treated rationally or with a degree of fantasy. The abuse of the body with drugs, excessive alcohol, and other debilitating habits are violations of the natural laws of health. Their effects, then, are the destruction of organs, the pollution of the blood and the reproduction process. Parents may live to see their children suffer from what they transmit to them.

One can be so indifferent to the concern of others, to the necessary rules of society, that later in life he becomes a victim of the very circumstances or conditions which he brought about. These are examples of past karma. But conversely, right living, thinking, acting,



and speech can bring about beneficial future karma for the individual. Its results can be staunch friends, opportunities for responsible positions in life, and most of all, a personal Peace Profound.

There is also the doctrine that wrong acts are cosmically recorded. This implies that the soul of the evildoer must compensate for its wrong deeds in another life. In fact, the compensation may occur over the course of several lives, depending on the actions of the soul personality in each incarnation. It is further said that it is not necessary for one to know that he has a karmic debt of the past to pay. He must, of his own will and desire, live a present life of goodness and circumspection which will mitigate or completely abolish any past karmic debt.

It is not always made logically comprehensible to us as to how these karmic debts or rewards are recorded in the Cosmic; how these violations or worthy acts—an immaterial substance—are so affixed to or retained by the soul personality after death. Since they are not imposed by a supernatural being, they then must be impressed on the consciousness of the soul, which is said to survive death.

The doctrine relates that the superior consciousness of the soul, its innate cosmic intelligence, is aware of the acts committed by man during his mortal existence and their future effects of either merit or demerit. More succinctly, it is said this exalted intelligence is of the soul personality which retains that knowledge and carries it forward to another incarnation, or rebirth. Man may not be objectively aware of this innate knowledge of karmic debts or rewards, but he may prepare himself for them by his acts in his present life.

We have touched upon the concept of past and future karma. In a pragmatic sense, we are all quite aware of much of our present karma. Each day we commit acts that we may regret, and realize that they are a cause from which the results will be detrimental if not counteracted. We likewise know that some of our deeds have brought forth happiness.

A wrong belief commonly held about karma is that of equating it with *fate*. The notion of fate sets forth that there is a predetermined course of life for each individual and that it is inescapable. From such

a view, a person is at the mercy of an unknown series of conditions and causes that direct his life. If this were actually so, it would be futile for us to seek a mastery of life, to strive to attain any volitional end. It would mean that humans are but puppets. We would not know what awaits us, what to avoid. This concept of relating fate to karma is contrary to mysticism. Rosicrucians, mystics, and philosophers do not, in their enlightenment, submit to such erroneous and primitive reasoning.

Karma is not immutable. *It can be changed.* The laws of the Cosmic are immutable, but there are laws whose effects on us, as humans, can be countered. Therefore, by understanding the use of those laws which are in harmony with self and nature, we can offset that which would otherwise be adverse to us. We must understand that no cosmic or natural law is inherently evil or good. All such laws, in their operation, have their place in the Cosmos. It is only as we humans respond to them, and as they personally affect us, that we adjudge them to be good or bad.

For example, we avoid physical contact with fire so that we do not suffer burns. However, we do know that we can use fire to give us the comfort of warmth and to accomplish numerous other things for our welfare. Consequently, the more knowledge we acquire of self, of the world in which we live and our cosmic relationship, the more we will be able to invoke the kind of karma (its cause and effect) we wish.

## Chapter 18

# DOES THE PERSONALITY SURVIVE DEATH?

**I**S IMMORTALITY OF the human personality a vague hope, an element of blind faith? What are the grounds for this age-old belief of man, which still persists so strongly in an era of science and technology? How is the concept of immortality of the soul to be defined? Immanuel Kant defined it as follows: “The immortality of the soul means the infinitely prolonged existence of one and the same rational being.” This can be construed as the realization of self after death in the same rational way as we perceive it in our mortal existence. Further, it implies that man shall have the years of his life on Earth linked together in a conscious rational unity with a continuous existence in a future life.

The dynamical view of reality expounds that to know a thing truly is to *know what it does*. It is not merely to know the existence of a thing, but to conceive it as having a purpose. Therefore, from this point of view immortality would mean not just a state of endlessness but a future growth as well. Succinctly, if life here is a fulfillment of demands and development, then immortality would not be merely existence in infinite time but also a future growth of the personality. There is no coherent universal explanation of the nature of immortality by its varied adherents. One metaphysical concept states that “the only true immortality is our sharing our earthly moment in the infinity of time.” In other words, it is for us to realize our relationship to infinity, to the Cosmic. If we feel contiguous to this *One*—this infinity—while mortals, then we are participating in its immortal nature because in such a state the self is then immortal. Without such a realization, it is stated, we are not immortal. From this point of view the immortality of man begins here on Earth.

Another view is that the inherent faith in immortality arises out of the limited sense of earthly time. Simply, this realization of the brevity of mortal existence suggests a future survival of the whole personality. The personality is considered immutable and therefore it must survive. Since the personality leaves its mortal shell at death, it is thought not to be destroyed but to continue in a future existence.

The philosopher Leibniz stated that reality consists of centers of force which he called *monads*. The world and all phenomena consists of these monads. They compose a hierarchy or scale of manifestations. There is a continuous series of the monads from the lowest to the highest which are called *souls* or *spirits*. All monads in essence are said to be the same, but they are of different grades of development. The soul monads follow their own laws and the body follows its own laws. They agree with each other in a preconceived cosmic harmony, which exists between all monads. Therefore, according to Leibniz, our soul as an independent monad is capable of infinite development to which death is no more than a transition.

There is also the concept that the soul could never have been created because it exists from the infinite past and therefore must continue to the infinite future. This idea implies that we are an infinite particle during our mortal existence and that the so-called afterlife is merely a continuation of this infinite, immortal state. In this afterlife there is only the transition from the former physical existence to another nonphysical existence. This concept assumes that transition is like crossing from one chamber to another and in the process changing one's costume after crossing the threshold. However, it is the same person in both places since there is no difference in the real essence—the soul—whether in this life or after death.

Orthodox science has countered these beliefs and faiths in the immortality of the personality as being without any acceptable evidence. These objections arise from certain scientists who claim that there is no evidence supporting the notion that the human personality can survive bodily death. But it can also be argued philosophically that there is no conclusive evidence that anything man experiences actually exists as he perceives it. We do not directly know the objects of our

perception. All we have is the phenomenal aspect of reality—that is the sensations we experience from the external vibrations which we perceive. What is the noumenal world, or *things in themselves*? The sense organs do not provide the true nature of reality. Consequently, the argument that there is no evidence to support life after death is not very convincing.

It is often claimed that every form of belief in the survival of the human personality after death is invalidated because such belief originated among primitive men in consequence of erroneous interpretations of sleep, dreams, and similar physical phenomena. The earliest religion, animism, undoubtedly did contribute to the concept of duality and to ideas regarding self and an afterlife. The phenomena of sleep, dreams, and of breath suggested a psychic part of man's being. At night this "inner something" went on journeys while the physical body remained asleep. This was the primitive mind's interpretation of the dream. Breath, too, was early associated with life and an internal intangible, ethereal quality. It became *spirit* or *pneuma* to the ancient Greeks.

Life enters with the first breath and departs with the last. Breath and air are one. The air is invisible and therefore ubiquitous and eternal to the primitive mind. It seemed right to primitive reasoning to think of breath as the spirit, the immortal attribute of man's dual nature.

However, it is not correct to say that this primitive and erroneous reasoning is the sole support for the belief in immortality, nor is it correct to say that man's physical and mental states are all that exist. There are other phenomena that man has discovered about himself and which he cannot wholly explain as just constituting a reaction between body, brain, and nervous systems. These also cause belief in what is called *soul*. However, the phenomenon which is accepted as soul cannot be completely disassociated from what is also declared to be the *self*.

Orthodox science takes the position that the mechanical aspect of existence is the fundamental existence. This assumption falls into two classes: First, the elements of matter are changeable but indestructible. This, then, is the principle of the "indestructibility of matter." Second,

there is the “conservation of energy.” This concept implies that the quantity of energy in the universe is constant and can be increased but not permanently diminished. These two principles try to explain immortality as a material, mechanical existence only. However, the theory does not take into consideration *consciousness* in the immortal sense. Consciousness is thought of simply as the result of effects generated by the physical organism.

Consciousness can be conceived as a function arising out of the life force animating matter. There are no indications that consciousness is an actual separate substance. Once it has manifested as the effect of the unity of other phenomena, then its cause is presumed to last only until death. Does that necessarily mean that consciousness also disappears? It can be contended that consciousness is like the sound coming from a musical instrument being played. When the instrument is not played, the music, the function of it, and the player, cease to be.

On the other hand, having once been played and heard, is the music lost if it remains as memory in the consciousness of those who heard it? Does something necessarily have to retain the same form to be immortal?

Mysticism and metaphysics offer varied rebuttals to the contrary views of science on the subject of immortality. The human consciousness, they declare, is purposeful in contrast to mechanical law. The mind can change its goals—completely alter its objectives. The human consciousness is not arrested, that is, confined to certain channels for its operation. If all phenomena were mechanical, the defendants of immortality contend, then everything would be repetitive. History would be identical to the present. The mechanical concept is founded upon the constancy of law. From this point of view the past will repeat itself without variation. On the other hand, the mind can oppose its previous course of activity and resort to diverse ways of thinking. This is construed as proof that immortality, the survival of the personality, is not bound by mechanical law.

Why do humans persist in the belief of the survival of human personality? There must be some pragmatic value—some reason or motive—they wish to associate with a future life. Generally these

are: that personal affection for the things we love may continue; that personal goodness—the sense of righteousness and moral values—may increase; and that our faculties may be realized and exercised to the fullest capacity.

This life is seemingly incomplete and only preparatory. Since man is causative and purposeful, he thinks of a deity or an infinite being—a god—as likewise causative. Thus does man relate his human attributes to what is conceived as a supernatural mind. Therefore, this supernatural mind, it is thought, must likewise have a purpose for man, since man falls short, in his own estimation, in what religious traditions depict as the human ideal. He thinks there must be a time or place where the fullness of life can be completed. The mistakes, the mortal behavior, are thought of as adjustments or tests in preparation for the divine, ultimate, perfect life after death.

It is also difficult for man to conceive that the human personality is transient. The personality is dynamic. It is the dominant aspect of self. All else of man seems to be subordinate to what we are, that is, the expression of our personal being. Therefore, it is often asked, can such a thing as personality not be a substance—a thing in itself which will not waste away as do material things? Personality has persisted throughout the vicissitudes, the trials, and the tribulations of mortal existence. Why should it not then survive death?

Is there such a thing as a cosmic record that refers specifically to such phenomena as personality surviving death? Are these ideas wholly of human origin reduced to the writings in the so-called Sacred Books? What are the Akashic Records—are they an actuality with respect to yet unrevealed future events?

Many words and terms of long usage in Eastern philosophy and mysticism have gradually crept into various esoteric teachings of the West. Some of these terms concern quite abstract subjects. In their adaption to Western methods, which attempt to expound Eastern doctrines, they have as a result become abstruse. This accretion of various interpretations have often made such subjects even more difficult to understand.

One of these terms is the *Akashic Records*. The generally accepted meaning of this term, with some variations, is that the Akashic Records are “the indelible, eternal records of all events and knowledge which are an integral part of the Cosmic Consciousness, the Divine Mind. They contain all things, past, present, and future. They are not material, written accounts, but the Divine Consciousness of past and future events. Consulting the Akashic Records means attuning with Cosmic Consciousness.”

The origin of the word *Akashic* is from the Sanskrit language. The word *akasa*, from which Akashic is taken, is one of the five elements of Sankya philosophy, identified as space, ether, sky. The Sankya is one of the most profound subjects of Hindu philosophy. Space, ether, and sky can be construed metaphysically, not just strictly in material or astronomical terms. In ancient Eastern philosophy they often represent the Cosmos because of their apparent infinity. They, therefore, often symbolize the whole of reality, that is, all manifestation animate and inanimate, as well as infinity of time and space.

In this latter sense any event, any occurrence, was thought to be eternal in the infinity of the Cosmos. Nothing was considered to be ever destroyed. It might go through a transition, but in a rather inexplicable manner it would nevertheless leave an impression of what it was or had been eternally in the Akashic Records.

To use a rather simple example, it would be like a rubber stamp that has certain words on it. The physical structure of the stamp could be destroyed, but the imprint which it had made would remain indefinitely. But, of course, we must reiterate that the term *Akashic Records* does not refer to any material records or accounts.

The metaphysical aspect is that everything coming into existence is the consequence of the great spectrum of cosmic and natural laws. These laws are potential with all things that will ever come into existence. They are the creation of what the human consciousness perceives as existing now, in the present.

However, such laws are only the causes of particulars. They are not the phenomenon itself, that is, the things or events as men realize



them. The question then arises. How are such things retained indelibly and eternally in the Cosmos? This question leads to the relationship of *time* to the Akashic Records. In the Cosmos, time, as a limit of the duration of consciousness, does not exist. There is in this abstract sense no beginning, such as the past, no fixed present, or any division which can be called future.

To understand this, we will attempt another example. Let us consider a sphere, a large globe. What is its beginning or end? It has none. Now suppose, however, that there is a row of different symbols circumventing the entire globe. Whatever symbol you looked upon at that particular moment, and that you were conscious of, would be to you the *present*. Whatever was written on another side of the globe not yet seen by you could be speculatively termed the *future*; or whatever else was written or inscribed on the globe you might arbitrarily call the past. In fact, as you turn the globe to look at other symbols, the ones you previously observed would be to you of the *past*.

Now let us apply this to the Akashic Records. The metaphysical explanation is that we with our consciousness are the ones who form the past, present, and future. If we can embrace in human consciousness certain cycles of the Cosmos, we experience what occurred in them. The impressions exist and we realize them again. Further, if we may project our consciousness into other cycles of this eternity we can see the continuous working of the laws manifesting what is termed the *future*.

Indeed, this is a concept not easily grasped in a strictly empirical, objective way. It seems to oppose our daily experience. In other words, it becomes difficult to realize how a particular expression, in reality, can have an existence before the point in time when it is realized. More simply, how could we experience something before it is? In reply to this, the metaphysician may say that our principal difficulty is trying to make time an actual reality, that is, thinking of the future and past as having an existence.

This sort of reasoning would seem to counter the evolutionary process by which a thing seems to go through a change from simplicity to complexity. To our human perception there appears to be a lapse

of time between a state of simplicity and what we accept as its finality in an evolutionary process. But again the argument is that in the Cosmos there is only One whole picture, the apparent beginning and relative ending, both existing as one, in the instant of our Cosmic Consciousness. This, of course, is an abstract polemic subject which can be reasoned both pro and con.

As to the *reading* of the Akashic Records, this refers to the cosmic contact which the individual has on certain levels of attunement by which he becomes aware of the relative past and future at the present moment of his awareness.

There is a considerable amount of charlatanism in connection with the self-proclaimed “professional psychic readers” who for a fee will read the Akashic Records for another person. If one is to have such knowledge, it is best that it be individually acquired so as to ensure its reliability. There are, of course, those who are more psychically sensitive than others and their predictions can perhaps be termed, in a general sense, a reading of the Akashic Records.

## Chapter 19

# THE MYSTERY OF WHY

A MAJOR DIVERSITY of thought between metaphysics, philosophy, religion, and science exists in three simple words. These are *when*, *how*, and *why*. The first two words are the primary motivation of science. The latter, *why*, is the enigma which has challenged religion, metaphysics, and certain traditional schools of philosophy.

*How* a phenomenon occurs requires an empirical approach. It is the rational, objective search for physical causes. With the acquisition of knowledge, regarding how certain natural events occur, it is also possible to presage, often with dependable accuracy, their re-occurrence. In other words, the *when*, the again, becomes known. The determining of the underlying natural laws which account for the *how* contributes to the learning of *when*, that is, the periodicity of their happening. For example, we are closely approaching the prediction of earthquakes through the science of seismology. Knowledge of their cause makes it possible for us to determine their catastrophic effects.

Science as we know it began in ancient Greece. The first great contributors to it were such philosophers as Thales, Heraclitus, Democritus, and the renowned Aristotle. However, other thinkers of that era also expounded a *why* regarding phenomena which man perceived. Their explanations were related to the prevailing polytheism, a belief in numerous deities. The natural forces had been apothosized, or deified, as gods of thunder, rain, fertility, the seasons and so on. More simply, the question of *why* was conceived to be the result of the determinative act of the mind of a supernatural power. It was believed that these gods gave a *rational purpose* to natural events.

Shall modern thinkers who ponder the mysteries of the physical phenomena of the Cosmos also resort to abstraction and theories as

to the why of it all? In science, in the objective approach, there is the possibility for man to explain and analyze physical phenomena and discover their causes; but to find an abstract underlying *why* is beyond human comprehension. When science discovers the *how* of a phenomenon, it also learns of a particular kind of *why*. But it is not a teleological *why*, that is, a purposive and intentional act.

For example, when something falls to Earth, we know it does so because of the gravitational pull upon its mass. There is not a determinative act involved—a *choosing* that such shall be rather than otherwise. To assume that all natural phenomena are the consequences of a series of planned actions, a predetermined order, implies a manipulating power behind the Cosmos. It further implies that all phenomena are not only individually conceived for their particular function, but that there is also a coordination between them for the attainment of some ultimate objective.

The human mind can investigate particular phenomena and discover what we term their causes and assume that such causes were intended to be as they are perceived. However, to assume also that collectively such causes in the physical universe are for the realization of a conceived objective is beyond man's finite powers. Such concepts enter into the realm of pure metaphysical ontology and the various speculations of theology.

Such speculative concepts imply the existence of an infinite mind as a primary cause of all. With such a notion, man is concerning himself with an omniscience that far transcends the possibility of human comprehension. Man in his theology or metaphysical speculations may find personal satisfaction in the belief of a teleological cause, a specific final cosmic plan. But a personal verifiable knowledge of it is not possible. More succinctly, a divine ultimate cause as the *why* for all cosmic manifestation is not within human intellectual capacity or understanding.

With the advancement of science, man will learn more of *how* the greater universe functions. But as to the *why* there should be a universe, he cannot know. This particular *why* remains a mystery. It is a continuation of the old philosophical queries such as: "How could

there be a universe without a beginning?” and “If something cannot come from nothing, from what and why does this something occur?” Also, “If behind or before the physical universe there was a mind cause, then why such a duality?” In other words, why could this mind need a physical substance such as a universe in contrast to itself? Such mysteries cannot be fathomed.

These questions also relate to the metaphysical and philosophical problem of *causation*. Are there actually causes in nature or is there only a concatenation of changes, that is, a linking together of one phenomenon to another? Are those things which man relates as causes only his percepts of how these variations in cosmic energy result in seemingly different manifestations? Is it possible that cause, to which man refers, is only an attribute of the function of the human mind? That is, in the way in which he perceives nature, does he also attribute a similar function to the Cosmos?

It is not the responsibility or purpose of academic science to find an initial mind cause behind the physical universe. There is no possible instrumentation by which such could be ascertained. A scientist may, as many do, assume that there is a teleological cause behind, or functioning in, the Cosmos. This may be more gratifying than plaguing his mind with an unfathomable mystery.

It is likewise more comforting in that it provides a greater solace when we are confronted with the vicissitudes of life, to think that human existence is not merely a mechanistic production. To think this way provides the human ego with a sense of personal purpose, a feeling of being an element, no matter how finite, in a vast infinite plan. Nevertheless, the human must realize that his concept of this primary plan or its ultimate purpose, in keeping with one of the diversity of religious doctrines, can never be universally accepted. Simply, the varying intelligence of man will generally conceive this transcendent mind behind the Cosmos in terms of an objective and purpose for mankind.

This subject is still another example concerning the nature of *belief*. There is the common acceptance of a belief as *absolute* where empirical sensory knowledge is not possible, as we have related in a previous

chapter. We cannot, of course, actually have absolute knowledge derived from reason and belief alone. We are generally obliged as mortals to accept, or put more reliance on, our objective experiences so long as they are not refuted, for our physical existence depends upon them. In the absence of such perceptual knowledge, beliefs can appease the mind. However, they must always give way to objective proof, for that has a far more universal acceptance than does unsubstantiated belief.

# 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.

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