

MENTAL ALCHEMY

By Ralph M. Lewis, F.R.C.



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DEDICATION



To

My Wife

*Whose encouragement and support in
many ways made this work possible.*

R.M.L

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RALPH M. LEWIS

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS LIFE all about? What is the real, which of our thoughts are reality? Our minds ever go through a process of *mental alchemy*. Our experiences are constantly transmuting former ideas into new concepts. But which are the true guides in life, the former beliefs, traditional ideas, or the new conclusions we personally arrive at? In the final analysis our view of life, what we expect of it, is a personal construct. We have a better chance of shaping our existence into a happy state if we do not try to avoid the puzzling questions which life brings forth. How should we confront these *mysteries* of the *self* and its relation to all else which the self confronts?

What we *believe* is as important a motivating factor in the course of our lives as what we know. In fact, many of the thoughts by which we shape our lives are abstract. They are what we believe but which have not yet been experienced and perhaps cannot be. What is presented in the following chapters are those ideas that in some form or manner eventually come to the attention of most everyone. The presentation may not have the reader's acceptance but we hope it will cause him to think seriously about the so-called "mysteries of life." Accepting just the traditional explanations often restricts thought and causes misconceptions leading to pitfalls of error and their adverse consequences. However, is the reliance which we place upon our beliefs always justified? Do we resort to beliefs as the substitution for knowledge? It behooves us to give thought, especially in this day and age, to the *nature* of belief. We should learn of any distinction that may exist between beliefs and points of knowledge. Why do we say, for example, "I believe in life after death," instead of declaring, "I know." In fact, why do we say that we believe anything rather than affirming our knowledge of it?

Belief is an *assumption* of knowledge. Knowledge, in contrast to belief, is experience. Knowledge is empirically realized, that is, it is objectively perceived. If, for example, we hear a pattering noise on the windowpane, we may say, “I believe it is raining.” We say believe because we have not directly perceived the rain. Previous experience tells us that the noise we hear could be from other sources, so we say “believe.” We are thus assuming a knowledge.

Are we then to presume that knowledge is only that which is experienced through our receptor senses? Suppose we have a problem. It consists of several elements. The elements of the problem are facts. They are that which has been experienced. We, therefore, call them points of knowledge. However, it is necessary for us to relate them into a satisfactory and useful order. We turn these ideas over and over in our minds, seeking a solution. We exercise our reason to do so. Finally we arrive at a solution. The problem seems to be solved, so it appears self-evident to us. We have no further doubt about it.

But can we call the solution we arrived at *knowledge*? Or are the conclusions of our reasoning not equal to what we objectively experience? A vast majority of our thoughts, the result of our reasoning, we have come to refer to as *our beliefs*. It is because we come to realize that our private judgments are subjective in nature, in contrast to experience. In other words, we have come to distinguish between the ideas we form on the one hand and our perceptual knowledge—the result of our senses—on the other. The ideas of reason, of course, are something that is known to us. Such ideas exist in consciousness, but they do not have any counterpart, anything that exactly represents them, outside of our minds. Perceptual knowledge, however, is that which can be perceived by the senses of anyone. Anyone may see, hear, feel, taste, or smell that which is perceptual knowledge. It is something that may be realized *immediately* without reasoning about it.

Let us use an analogy for better understanding. For a long time people thought that a heavy object would fall faster than a lighter one. They most assuredly thought that a stone always falls faster than a feather. This idea was accepted as knowledge. It took Galileo to demonstrate that objects fall alike when they are not impeded by air; actually, a

feather and a lead pellet will fall the same in a vacuum. Galileo's demonstration constituted *perceptual* knowledge. It was something that was a matter of common observation that could be proved to all.

I think it is agreed that the value of knowledge is being able to transmit it. By that we mean being able to transmit it either by speech, writing, or gestures to the minds of others. Certainly something that is known to everyone separately and differently would not have any universality. Such a knowledge would have no common good. However, an idea may be cogent. It may be quite comprehensible to one person, and yet he may not make another understand it by communicating it. The imagination and reasoning of individuals vary. An idea that one arrives at may have absolutely no meaning to the mind of another—it may not be knowledge at all to other persons. Therefore, our ideas, to become knowledge that will be universally accepted, must be *objectified*. They must be given an existence outside of mind. We must be able to establish conditions and things which the receptor senses of other persons can individually experience.

Let us return to the analogy of Galileo: He could never have made his knowledge of falling objects acceptable to all persons if it had remained an idea to him. Talking, lecturing about it would never have disabused people of the common notion generally held about falling objects. He had to demonstrate it. He had to set up experiments that persons could observe. It then became to them intimate perceptual knowledge. It was then established as something objective, quite apart from the reasoning of Galileo—from the subjective process.

Does this mean then that we are to rely entirely upon what is objectively perceived? Through experience we have all learned that our senses can deceive us. What once appeared as a reality might perhaps be later revealed to us as false. How do we learn that a sense experience is false? It is only by another subsequent experience which, at a later time, appears to be a more consistent reality than the previous one.

There is another and very vital reason why all we conceive to be knowledge must eventually be transformed into what the senses can discern. We live in a physical universe. We exist in a virtual sea of energy and mass, or matter. We cannot deny the existence of this

physical universe because our physical organism is a part of it. We are obliged to relate ourselves to it, that is, adjust to the influences which it has upon us. In fact, that is why we have developed the five receptor senses. These five senses are necessary for us to determine in our surroundings what we need from them.

One may now be thinking: What about our *psychic* impressions or what we call the intuitive and spiritual impressions? As inner impressions, as sensations, the psychic may be as definite an experience as anything that we realize externally. Certainly the mystic's feeling of his union with the Absolute has reality to him. The religionist's union with God is as forceful an experience to him as anything he has objectively perceived. But can we rely upon such experiences? Can we call them a knowledge equivalent to what we objectively experience?

There is a test as to whether our interpretation is right. The test makes it possible for us to determine whether a psychic experience has the substance of knowledge. Simply, the test is this: Can the psychic experience be made pragmatic? Can it be reduced to a practical application to our lives? Can we transform the inner experience we have to some condition of an objective nature? Now this does not mean that the experience must necessarily be reduced to a material thing such as an object. But it must produce such secondary effects as can be perceived by others, to become knowledge to them.

Let us take, for example, the lives of some of the great religious founders, such as Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed. They had intense psychic and emotional experiences. To them the experience contained a positive goodness. But were they a real knowledge of moral value leading to the goodness they felt, or only a belief? They first had to be transformed into a moral code. This had to be expanded into a form of instruction that other men could perceive with their ears and their eyes. If eventually other men came to have the same spiritual feeling from that moral code which they read or heard and which the original founders had, then it became true knowledge.

It has often been said that an experience which is had on one plane of consciousness cannot be proved on another plane. Such a statement, however, is verisimilitude—a half truth. It is true, of

course, that we cannot take such a thing as an emotion and place it under a microscope, for example. Neither can we weigh a sentiment on a scale. Nevertheless an experience of a plane of consciousness, if it is personally comprehended, would be capable of being transformed to another plane. When transformed, the experience should be as vivid on that particular plane of consciousness, as realistic, as it was on the original plane.

A plane of consciousness should be able to establish, above or below itself, a symbol that can be realized with similar meaning. We cannot, for example, convey to another the intimate subjective notion of beauty that we have. We cannot tell in words our particular feeling of beauty so that another may be conscious of exactly the same sensation. We can, however, often create a physical symbol that will adequately represent to another our idea of beauty. The symbol objectively perceived in a visual or auditory form will arouse another's aesthetic sense.

To understand better this transformation of experience, think of an experience on a plane of consciousness as being like a musical note. Every musical note, we know, has harmonics either on a higher or lower octave. Likewise each experience of our psychic self can manifest either on a higher or lower plane of consciousness. The form in which it is manifest, however, may be quite different. We cannot expect psychic phenomena to have a similar objective character. But we can relate the psychic to some behavior, to some condition which will symbolize it objectively. For example, think of the things you perceive in the world of your daily events that cause you to have such feelings as love, compassion, reverence, and humility. They are caused by a transformation of your sense experience—something you have seen or heard perhaps—into the higher emotions and sentiments that follow from them.

We have said that our beliefs are like assumptions of knowledge. They are not true knowledge until they can be objectified. Should all beliefs that cannot be brought into objectivity be rejected by us? Or is there a certain type of belief that should always be retained? All beliefs which postulate, that is, set forth a probability, should be

accepted. A belief of probability is a conclusion which is suggested by the knowledge of experience. Another way of saying it is that a belief of probability is a rational supposition closing a gap between actual points of knowledge.

For further analogy, we know that various islands and points of land sink into the sea because of deep subterranean disturbances. This phenomenon is continually being experienced throughout the world. Consequently, it constitutes a point of knowledge. From this point of knowledge there follows the *probable belief* that this submerging process has existed for millions of years. The probability further continues that this has caused cultures to become extinct. For further analogy, science demonstrates that matter and energy are never lost but rather go through a transformation. So, then, it is a belief of probability that the human personality or self is not lost when the body goes through transition.

Such beliefs of probability should be mere temporary stopgaps for us between actual experiences. They should serve only to suggest to us a course of further inquiry. They should never be accepted with finality. John Locke, the English philosopher, has warned against our resting upon beliefs of probability. He says: "When men have found some general propositions that could not be doubted of as soon as understood, it was a short and easy way to conclude them innate. This being once received, it eased the lazy from the pains of search..." A belief of probability should never be confused with a superstition. A probability, though it subsequently be proved to be in error, is always rationally deduced from what is known.

What, one may ask, about *abstract beliefs*? Abstract beliefs include such things as our conceptions of truth, good, evil, and freedom. Also many metaphysical beliefs are abstract. For example, our notions of the nature of being and whether the universe is finite or infinite are abstract. Our abstract beliefs are a personal knowledge to us. However, as ideas, they may be as forceful as anything we have ever objectively experienced. But these abstract beliefs are wholly personal to us. They have no counterpart outside of our own minds. In other words, we have never experienced them in a physical way. Further, such abstract

beliefs are most often the ones which we cannot demonstrate or prove to other persons. For example, we may demonstrate something that all men will readily accept as being true. We cannot, however, show truth in *itself* as pure form. The reason is that truth is but an abstract idea. It is a subjective value within each person's mind. Truth differs with the reasoning of the individual.

These abstract beliefs continually arise in our minds. They are the product of the normal active intelligence and reason. Though they cannot be converted into a knowledge that all men will universally accept, they must not be rejected. Since they are abstract, they are no more to be disproved than proved.

Our abstract beliefs comprise a mental world of great reality. We live in this world of abstract beliefs just as much as we do in the one our senses portray to us. The world we see, hear, feel, and so on leaves much unexplained to us. What we see or hear may be concrete enough. We may recognize its physical qualities. But what is its real value to us as humans? We do not mean value in the material sense. Rather, how can each objective experience confer more reality upon us? We mean how can it cause us to have a more profound awareness of our selves?

The individual experience which we have of this world does not alone satisfy our urge to be part of something greater than this life. There is nothing in this world that gives rise to the idea of perfection that we have. Perfection is an abstract notion by which we come to measure the world's value to us. Our objective experiences have a dual function. They also act upon our psychic selves as well as acquaint us with what seems to be external reality. These experiences arouse a series of inner values of which perfection is one. It is these that account for most of our abstract beliefs. They come to form the structure of our individual psychic world. Though such beliefs remain without substance or meaning to others, they are personally known to each of us.

—Ralph M. Lewis

*Let man, having returned to himself,
consider what he is compared to what is;
let him regard himself as a wanderer into this
remote province of nature; and let him, from this
narrow prison wherein he finds himself dwelling
(I mean the universe), learn to estimate the earth,
kingdoms, cities, and himself, at a proper value.*

—Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

Chapter I

WAS THERE A BEGINNING?

MAN HAS TRANSFERRED many of his objective experiences, the results of the categories of his mind and organism, to the cosmos. For example, he sees himself as *causative*, and, therefore, applies the concept of a final cause, a beginning, to the cosmos, the greater universe itself. Many of the things which man observes and which appear to him as having a *beginning* are, in fact, only a transition from an earlier state. We often cannot perceive the connecting link between one series of phenomena and another. One kind of manifestation seems to break off completely and another begin. Actually, one state has simply merged into another. With the advancement in instrumentation in recent years, science has been able to show the affinity between many phenomena which previously seemed to have quite independent beginnings.

In almost all ancient religions, *ontology*, or the theory of being, is related to a personal deity, an anthropomorphic god, goddess, or a plurality of them. These deities were thought to be superior beings, but they possessed many humanlike characteristics. They had minds that thought, that planned, that created ends to be attained. So, like man, they brought the universe—the whole of being which man presumes to know—into existence.

Sometimes it was thought that these gods created the cosmos out of their own nature. At other times, it was imagined that creation began with a state of chaos—a nothing out of which the gods themselves

were born. They in turn then created the other phenomena of nature. However, chaos, or the state of nothing, was assumed by these early cosmologists to have a positive nature. It had a quality in itself. It was not nothing as we think of it—just the absence of something. It was presumed that, out of the formless state of this chaos, there came a potential which gave rise to being.

It was most difficult for the average man to conceive an eternal being, one that has always been and has never had a beginning.

For most persons, the idea of *self-generation* is likewise difficult to comprehend, for in their daily experience they are not likely to encounter anything that suggests such a phenomenon. A cause behind everything, including *Absolute Being*, the cosmos itself, seems more in accord with finite experience.

It is equally difficult for one to embrace the concept that there is not such a condition as absolute non-being, or nothing. We must realize that it is only by perceiving being that it is possible for us to imagine such a condition as its absence or opposite. If a state of non-being could be identified as such, actually it would then have a quality of its own. Whatever *is*, is then *being* of a kind. If something can come out of so-called *nothing*, then, rationally, such is actually not non-being but, rather, it is *something*. A state of nothing could never exist by itself without being something.

Philosophically and logically, we must accept the idea that being has always been and could never have had a beginning because from whence would it come? If you did attempt to assign a source to being, then logically you will always return to a state of some condition or quality which in itself is being. Likewise, there can never be an end to the cosmos—into what would being dissolve, be absorbed, merge, or disappear? Being cannot be destroyed, for that would be the assumption that there is a *nothing* into which it would disappear and nothing does not exist.

Being is in continual change, said Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, thousands of years ago; also that matter is always *becoming*. However, pure being is not just matter but the energy underlying it and into which

it may transform itself. In the great transitions and transformations which being is continually undergoing, it may seem to us that some entity or expression of nature has dissolved into nothing. But we know today that such are really changes into other expressions whose nature may not be immediately perceivable.

We constantly read scientific postulations about the beginning of our universe. Our solar system and sun and planets, and even the vast galaxy with millions of other stars and planets, undoubtedly did have a beginning. By that we mean that they had a previous state before being what they now are. They were either gaseous or some other substance of celestial phenomena. However, when we speak of beginning in this sense, in reference to the universe or galaxies, we are only referring to their form as we now know it. We do not mean that scientifically our galaxy, the Milky Way, for example, or the other galaxies with their billions of solar systems, originally came from nothing.

In fact, what astrophysicists are endeavoring to determine today—and that which they hope space exploration may render further light upon—is the nature of the *primary* or basic substance of the cosmos.

Is there a purpose for existence? The hagiography, the sacred writings of the religions such as the Veda, the Zend-Avesta, the Bible, and the Koran, either proclaim what is said to be God's *purpose* for man, or offer their Messiah's or founder's personal inspired opinions on the subject.

To conceive that there is a specific purpose for man's existence requires a belief in determinism. Simply, this implies that a mind has conceived a definite course of events for man in relation to the phenomena of nature. It is that man is expected or intended to act in a certain way so as to fulfill a purpose for his existence.

Further, this requires as well a belief in theism, that is, a personal deity. It conceives an exalted Divine Mind which has created each phenomenon of nature to conform to a scheme or cosmic project. Man is either thought of as being an integral part of this overall venture or thought of as being the central point, that is, the very reason for it.

Why does man want to think, to believe that there is an ordained purpose, a reason, a planned course for humanity? Such a desire can be related to the human mentality, the way the human mind thinks, and its experiences. For example, one cannot imagine himself consciously walking along a road, not knowing why he is there or where he is going.

We are conscious of most of our motives. The urges, the impulses we have to act, to do something, we are able to relate to some stimulus. We are able to see what appears to be the cause that prompted us to act or to function in the manner that we did. Or, through our appetency and reason, we establish desires, objectives, and ideals toward which we move. Never in a conscious, normal state do we act on our own volition without relating a motive, a purpose to our action.

These ends or purposes which we establish are an integral function of the kind of conscious being that we are. Life in itself, even in the simple cell, has certain necessities to which it must conform. Its nourishment, excretion, irritability (sensitivity), and reproduction in the broad sense are purposes of the cell. However, the cell has not the complexity, the organism by which it can evaluate its motivation, that is, the ends which it continually strives for. In a sense, it performs its acts blindly, that is, devoid of reason as man defines the word.

These actions of the cell are really its *functions* and not purposes set up independently of its nature. Now, what of man? Are the many things which he strives for and accomplishes—are they *purpose*? Man has the highly developed faculty of reason. By this means he can differentiate between the various impulses and stimuli that act upon him. He gives them value to satisfy his emotional states or conversely to avoid considerable distress to himself. As a sentient, feeling and *thinking* being, can man avoid doing otherwise? This thinking by man, this evaluation, this selection of ends or purposes for his physical, emotional, and intellectual selves are all part of what man is. They are not purposes, that is, ends which are separated from the natural powers, functions, and attributes of his very being. However, man is accustomed, in his setting up conditions to comply with his complex nature, to term such as purpose. Therefore, he considers himself *purposive*. It is comprehensible, then, that man will not think that the

phenomena of nature are but manifesting according to what they are in essence, but rather to fulfill some directed purpose. It is likewise seemingly logical, then, for man to assume that his own existence is the consequence, the fulfillment of a transcendent purpose—a *teleological* or *mind* cause.

Cannot man just be part of the manifestation of nature of the whole Cosmic Being, an integral attribute of a necessary phenomenon? Why must man attribute a function of his own finite, conscious phenomena, that is, the notion of purpose he has, to the whole cosmos?

In the ordinary understanding of the word *purpose*, it implies the existence of incompleteness, imperfection, and inefficiency. It is an end or objective that, it is conceived, will remove such apparent inadequacies. In a state of the *Absolute* where there would be adequate quality and quantity, purpose could not exist. There would be no desire to engender it. Are we to think of the cosmos as insufficient—as in need of something? What would it realize outside of itself? It is in its internal activity that everything is already potential. One can only confer purpose upon the Cosmic if he is also willing to detract from its self-sufficiency and conceive of something beyond its nature to be manifest. It is man, then, who designs purpose for his existence. It is man who wishes to establish certain ends for his personal being in relation to the whole of reality. Perhaps if a star had the same kind of conscious perception and conception that man has, it, too, might look about at the rest of the universe and wonder why it is, and what purpose it has in relation to all the other stellar bodies.

Man's reason, psychic and emotional selves, must be gratified. They must be stimulated and appeased. This can only be done by ideals, plausible reasons, or self-created purposes for living. If man were a lesser organism as he once was, he would not be troubled by trying to find a relationship to all reality. He would merely, as lower animals do, react instinctively to his natural appetites and to his environment. He would not be troubled by trying to rationalize them and to give a reason for them and himself.

The reasons man continues to conceive for his coming into existence he can never empirically establish. He cannot show them to be the

result of nature's functions, the development of life itself. But man can give purpose, which is a faculty of his intelligence, to his *immediate life*. He can establish ends which not only will gratify his inherent, intellectual curiosity but will satisfy those higher psychic impulses and sentiments which man designates as moral and spiritual qualities.

Chapter II

IS GOD AN ENERGY?

IF WE THINK about it for a moment, free from any emotional allegiance, we must conclude that it is extremely presumptuous for man to think that his *finite* intelligence is capable of embracing the absolute nature of the infinite. Whatever the qualities of such a cause, paramount would be the fact that such would exceed the border of any sense qualities from which man derives his ideas. Simply, if anything can be defined as *unknowable* in its *absolute* state, it would most certainly be the nature of such a thing as a First Cause, regardless of whatever other term man might assign to it.

Yet the mystic speaks of apprehending, that is, contacting and of experiencing the Divine, the Cosmic, or God by any of various delineations. Are we then denying that the mystic has had such an experience? The mystic has transcended in his mystical experience the limitations of his peripheral or receptor sense qualities. He has become aware of the extent of a state or condition that transcends any objective experience. It causes him to enter into an ecstasy, an exalted feeling of pleasure.

However, following the mystic's subjectivity, there is then his endeavor to convert the elements of his experience into objective terms. He transforms the experience into words, forms, and qualities which he can understand. More succinctly, he creates a mental word image of his experience which is related to his particular intellect, education, and general association.

For example, the Buddhist having such an experience may call it *Nirvana*; the Muslim might say that *Allah* was revealed to him; the Jew,

Jehovah; the Hindu, perhaps *Brahma*; the Parsi, *Zoroaster*. Unfortunately, the religious zealot will generally insist that the particular experience which he has had is the absolute nature of the First Cause, and furthermore—exactly as he objectively interprets it. He will be apt to be prejudiced against any divergent notion.

We can therefore say that man creates his own image of the omnipotent and omniscient cause. Man creates God not in essence but in the qualities which his mind attributes to Him, the image by which he conceives this essence. As for the First or Initial Cause, which is thought to be ubiquitous, considering it an energy is just as plausible as any other concept. *Thought is energy*. Therefore, those who believe in a teleological cause—that is, a mind cause—would certainly likewise be admitting that thought is an energy.

Even the orthodox religious student will recall the doctrine of the Logos in John 1:1 of the New Testament which states, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This definitely implies thought being formed into the *energy* of the spoken word. Centuries before the compiling of the New Testament, the Egyptian priests said the God Ptah, who was a patron deity of the artisans and who likewise symbolized cosmic thought, created the universe by the spoken word. We are told that Ptah “pronounced the name of all things.”

There are those who conceive the primary cause as being a universal consciousness, but then again in our human experience we accept consciousness as an attribute of life, and life in its vital force and function is likewise an energy. Furthermore, whatever man conceives this cosmic essence or substance to be, it is by the very fact of being—so far as human experience can conceive it—a parallel to energy.

A disembodied mind energy, as the creative force in the universe, is not generally accepted by the majority of the world populace. It is principally because of the human tendency of attributing to a supreme Initial Cause qualities similar to those of man’s own being. For example, man is causative; that is, he is conscious of introducing changes or innovations in his own surroundings and his own actions. He equates this volitional causation with personal freedom and creativity. He is

aware that such give him a superiority over most all other life forms. Consequently, he is thus inclined not to attribute any lesser power or quality to what he considers a transcendent superior being.

To say that the Cosmic—a universal cause—is an energy would only be offensive to those persons who prefer an anthropomorphic God; that is, one having human-like form. However, these persons are then denying their god as being determinative or having will and purpose, for certainly will and purpose are related to mind, and mind in its manifestation is energy.

Modern science has given an equivalent to matter and energy, at least to the extent that there is an interchange between them. Simply, behind all reality is a kind of electromagnetic spectrum; its range or limitations being unknown. Generally, scientists do not concede that such a phenomenon is God. But *if* that phenomenon is the basic cause of all that exists, then whatever man chooses to call it, it is the *Creator*. To state that such an idea is a sacrilege is actually to assume that man does know the exact nature of God.

This then brings up the question of the authoritative nature of the sacred religious works which are all quite specific in their definition of a god. The first outstanding fact to be observed from the reading of such literature is that the works are not in agreement on their concept of a primary or divine cause. Therefore, another point of view, such as that of a cosmic energy whose order or manifestation appears to be related to the energy which we know, has as much right as an abstract speculation as any of the other so-called sacred expositions.

Let us realize that the sacred works derive their authority principally from the declaration that they are the result of divine revelations. Nevertheless, the word descriptions of these revelations are the construct of the human mind that objectified them. We may then ask which was right or wrong: Ptah, Akhnaton, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jehovah, Mohammed, and numerous other personages or concepts which were held to be equally sacrosanct to millions of people.

Nevertheless, it is to man's credit that he does recognize a supreme something which lies beyond himself and which engenders within him

awe, humility, and a love for as well as a desire to understand it.

Does man in any way take part in shaping the universe? We arrive at our ideas, the knowledge we have, from the sensations we perceive from our receptor senses. The impulses registered on our eyes and our organs of touch, for example, provide those primary qualities by which we form an image of our experience. Sight conveys to us the notion of space, colors, and dimensions. Touch likewise gives us the notion of space and dimensions, or size and weight, and so on.

However, these images, the mental forms which we have of our perceptions, do not actually correspond with whatever is the source of our impressions. In other words, the vibrations which register in the brain create ideas which are translations of what is actually there. For analogy, one may see something which to him has the color of red, yet to another who is color-blind it may appear to be green. What then is its true nature? Of course, the spectroscope would show that the vibrations are within a certain band of the spectrum of light; yet the color is a mental image.

If we did not have the receptor senses and the qualities associated with them, we would not attribute to reality the particular forms which we do. In this regard, we are reminded of the old tale of the blind men and the elephant. Each man based his description of the animal according to which part of its anatomy he touched. The one who felt its trunk thought it to be similar to a tree; the one who felt its great ear believed it to be either a fan or a leaf. In actuality, however, it was quite different from either of the conceptions.

Supposing men were deprived of sight, their consciousness of the phenomena of the cosmos would obviously be quite altered. Or suppose men possessed another sense faculty for perceiving reality. Human consciousness might then establish quite a different series of images of the cosmic phenomena than now exists. We say, then, that *being* exists; in other words, there is reality which is quite independent of the human consciousness. Succinctly, if man did not exist, being would continue to be what it is. However, form is attributed to this being, that is, reality, by the human consciousness; it is a product of man's receptor senses, reason, and imagination.

Even our modern instrumentation is altering the impressions which our unaided vision has had of the heavens. Radio telescopes and space travel have disproved some of the ideas, the mental images we have had of remote celestial objects. The cosmos is not three-dimensional; nor is it limited to the colors of the spectrum as we perceive them.

We should not forget that it was not long ago that our mental image of the Earth was that it was flat and not round. Further, it was not long ago in the period of recorded history that man believed the Earth to be the center of the universe. He has *reshaped* the cosmos *in his mind* by later *observations* and impressions.

The absolute, true nature of the cosmos may never be known by the finite mind of man. We are learning more of the phenomena of the cosmos and its myriad changes, but we cannot be certain that our experience of what we perceive is reliable. Man, by means of such sciences as astronomy, cosmology, and astrophysics, is trying to discover, that is, to arrive at, a rational theory as to the origin of his immediate universe and that greater universe which we say consists of galaxies, solar systems, planets, and so on. Whatever phenomena may exist which advanced technology will reveal may once again in the future alter our image as to just what the cosmos is; in other words, it may cause us to *reshape it in our minds*.

Chapter III

BODY, MIND, SOUL

WHAT IS UNITY? We are *accustomed* to thinking of unity as being a simple thing, state, or condition. However, the idea of unity arises from multiplicity. When two or more things seem to merge into singleness, we refer to it as *unity*. Man's introspection, his inquiry into himself, dates back thousands of years. Rarely, however, would man look upon himself as a single entity. There were functions of man's being that were strikingly different from each other. Consequently, man has for long thought of himself as being a unity of three substances, or qualities. Furthermore, their relationship in him is a mystery which he still ponders. In general, these three different qualities of man's being are termed *body*, *mind*, and *soul*.

Of this conceived trinity man has held his body in the least esteem. In fact, he has often been contemptuous of it. He has in his religions and philosophy often subjected the body to self-abnegation and self-mortification. In other words, he has denied the body's needs at times and even tortured it.

The ancient Orphic school of philosophy thought the flesh to be evil and corrupt. They believed the body imprisoned the divine element, namely, the soul. They taught that the soul was constantly seeking freedom. This freedom was construed as the soul's flight back to its divine origin. The Socratic and Platonic schools were greatly influenced by this idea about the body.

Philo Judaeus of the first century B.C. was a Jewish philosopher who was born in Alexandria. At that time, religious beliefs were

greatly influenced by Hellenic, that is, Greek culture. To Philo, God transcended all; He was eternal. But *coeternal* with God, existing with Him, was said to be matter. Thus, there was a dualism—God on the one hand with matter opposing Him on the other. Philo said from God there descended logoi, that is, forces. The two principal logoi were *goodness* and *potency*, or divine power. These Philo termed the *messengers* or intermediaries of God.

Philo also taught that there were lesser logoi. These lesser ones, he said, were caught up and became matter. The soul—the logoi—was imprisoned in this matter. The body was matter; therefore, it was thought to be potentially evil. Man became sinful, evil, Philo said, by the misuse of his will power; in other words, he gave way to his senses and bodily temptations. Only by meditation and contemplation upon his divine qualities, it was declared, could man rise above matter and the body. These ideas of Philo left definite impressions on the Judaic and Christian theologies. The New Testament reflects these ideas.

What were the principal causes of those adverse concepts of the human body? What are the psychological reasons behind them? Even in primitive cultures, man has thought of the body as evanescent, that is, constantly changing. Like plant life, it was observed to decline and lose its qualities. The body could be easily injured, destroyed even by man himself. The body, therefore, suggests no permanency, immutability, or eternal nature. Compared to the heavenly bodies as the sun, moon, and stars, the body appeared to be an inferior creation.

Also, to primitive man, the ills and pains of the body seemed to emphasize its lack of purity. Even the appetites and passions were thought to be the examples of the body's weakness. They were comparable to the bodily functions of animals, which man thought to be beneath him.

But there was also the second quality of man's triune nature. It was the *thinking* part, the mental processes. We group these under the heading of mind, but there was a vast distinction between these functions of mind and that of the body. There was an intangible characteristic about the thinking part of man. It could not be seen or dismembered. The most impressive thing to man about this thinking

part was that it was *indwelling*. It was a dynamic something which moved the body as man might choose. This something inside would speak to him. It could command and plead and yet it was not visible.

Also, the body acted upon this *something*, on this thinking part, and this reaction caused man to experience fear, surprise, happiness, sorrow. Which, then, was the real? Which was the true entity or being of man? Here was born the idea that *self* was enclosed in a shell. It was generally thought to be inert, passive. The body was moved only by the world outside, or by this something within. The self, the realizing conscious part, was thought to be positive, the real being.

Here we see the beginning of *dualism*, the dichotomy, the division of man into two parts. This idea of the splitting of man's nature still persists with most religions and ethical philosophies. This thinking part of man was observed to exist only in the living body. It departed with death, so it was conceived as an attribute of whatever gave the body life. Life was observed to enter and depart the body with the breath. Breath was air; air seemed infinite and eternal, therefore, breath was soon assigned a divine quality by ancient man. For example, in Genesis 2:7 we find: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

But if we assume that the life force is divine, it must do more than just direct the organic functions of the body. Man thought that it must have some superior purpose to perform in the body. Regardless of what form man conceives the Divine to be, it was thought to be possessed of a superior intelligence. With the development of his self-consciousness, man acquired an increasing self-discipline. He began to experience strong emotional reactions to certain phases of his behavior. Some of man's acts caused him to experience pleasures; however, these pleasures were not all related to the sensations of his appetites. There were some that were far more subtle. They provided a kind of deep inner satisfaction. These sensations, man called the *good*; their opposite was *evil*.

It was easy for man to believe it was the Divine Essence, or Substance, within him that pointed out to him the good. It was thought to be the

Intelligence of the Divine in man. It was likewise thought that this Intelligence was a superior part of man's nature. This third quality of his being, man came to call soul.

Man soon learned of the illusions and deceptions of the senses. The senses were related to the finite body; therefore, they were not considered a dependable source for arriving at truth and knowledge. The thinking part of man, reason, seemed to provide him with *illumination*. In other words, it gave man personal answers to many of his experiences. Because of this efficacy attributed to reason, it was associated with the divine element of man. Reason was said to be an attribute of the soul. Plotinus, the Neoplatonic philosopher, said reason is "the contemplative soul."

How were these triune elements of man's nature to be integrated? Which should be the controlling power of human nature? Plato related these three elements to the classes of society proposed for his *ideal republic*. He said that reason in man should be like the philosopher ruling class; the will should be like the warrior class and should enforce the dictates of reason; and the body should be the workers who provide sustenance for reason and will.

Modern metaphysics and mysticism reconciled with science have repudiated the old Trinity idea, and with the rejection many superstitions, doubts, and fears were dispelled. Their first proposition and doctrine is that all phenomena, regardless of their manifestation, are interrelated. They do not recognize an actual duality, such as *material* on the one hand, and *immaterial* on the other. This modern mystical and metaphysical concept also does not expound that one state or condition of man's nature is basically good and that another is evil. It holds that such concepts are only relative to the values of the finite human mind.

The notion of duality presupposes that one state, thing, or condition created the other. Why should such be done? Which part of any two is the superior? Or why would one permit the other to be inferior or opposed to it? These questions are ones that have beset the dualistic theory of reality for centuries. Consequently, modern metaphysics expounds instead a *monistic* state.

This monistic state, this “One,” is the *cosmos*. It is eternally active. Being, the cosmos, is active because it is the fulfillment of what it is. Being is inherently positive, dynamic. Man’s idea of non-being, a negative state, is only *inferred* from being. It is the presumption of the absence of what is. Conversely, however, an absolute nothing does not suggest a something.

It has been said that nature abhors a vacuum; in other words, being continually strives to be. This striving to be is the very *necessity* of the cosmos. That which is aware of the necessity of its being is consciousness. Therefore, modern metaphysics and mysticism perpetuate a traditional concept. It is that the cosmos is *self-conscious*. The consc

iousness of being functions in various ways throughout every expression of the cosmos. We find consciousness even in inanimate matter. It is in the nuclear structure of matter and it is manifested as the inherent positive and negative polarity that matter obeys. We find it in the positive nucleus of the living cell and in its negative outer shell.

The consciousness of “One” cosmic energy may dominate and arrest another. For example, the energy that impregnates matter and makes it alive has a great potency. It is relatively more positive than matter which by contrast is negative. This superior aspect of consciousness and force then arrests and controls matter. It compels the structure of living matter to conform to it. That is why in the DNA and RNA molecules of the living cell the development is in one direction only. The living cell will not retrogress in its pattern. Only great interferences can produce a mutation, a deviation.

There is therefore a combination of consciousness in each living form, no matter how elementary it may be. This combination of consciousness is transmitted by an evolutionary process. It becomes a growing group consciousness. This *group consciousness* includes all the previous stages of consciousness. As humans, we have the consciousness that is the basic energy force, the spark of life. But also we have within us the consciousness of every form of life from which man has ascended.

Just as the living cell has that impelling consciousness by which it strives to *be*, so too does man. The complex organism of man—brain and nervous systems—provide him with self-consciousness. *He knows that he is*. He becomes an entity unto himself. But the variations of consciousness manifesting through the complex organism of man produce different sets of sensations. There are such phenomena as intuition, reason, the emotions, and the deeper sensations or moral impressions.

These different sensations and feelings which man experiences, he has come to segregate and classify. As we have said, he has imagined himself to be a triad. For analogy, suppose we have several taut metal strings of different lengths, as in a musical instrument such as the harp. If we direct a strong current of air through them, they will emit different sounds. Yet, it was the same volume of air that produced the different sounds. The air only caused the strings of different tension to vibrate differently. So, too, our organism causes the variations of the universal consciousness in us to produce different sensations. The body, mind, and higher consciousness of self, which is called *soul*, are all but effects of this *one* group consciousness in us. The distinctions are not in their essence but in the functions produced. It is just as all the different musical notes are nevertheless sound. Only as man comes to understand this concept will he cease exalting one function of his being at the expense of others. The body is of the same divine cosmic source as that which man chooses to call soul. But the body is limited in serving the whole man. In conclusion, as the poet Alexander Pope said, “The proper study of mankind is man.”

Chapter IV

ARE GOOD AND EVIL ABSOLUTE?

THE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTIONS and dogma of most religions set up certain standards of behavior which suggest that there is an absolute *good* and *evil*. Such standards or codes are, however, quite relative to human reference and conception.

The conception of *good* is basically psychological. It is related to the evaluation of personal experience. We term as good all that which produces pleasing and gratifying sensations. That which furthers us physically, mentally, and psychically, we term *good*.

The so-called *moral good* is an emotional and intellectual satisfaction. A person, for religious or other reasons, establishes a code of behavior which he thinks necessary for his moral or spiritual wellbeing. Since the required conduct is the fulfillment of the moral precept, it is intellectually and emotionally satisfying and, consequently, is accepted as *good*.

Such a positive state or quality as good engenders its antithesis, its *contra* condition, which is termed *evil*. Simply put, evil is that which engenders the opposite of pleasure for the human being. The disagreeable, the harmful, are thus evil. Each good, as it assumes a positive quality in the mind of man, also constructs a converse conception, just as light suggests its own opposite, which is darkness.

There are, however, variations of this conceptional absolute of good. Such variations are principally to be found in the categories of

morals and ethics. Everyone is familiar with the fact that in even the Christian sects there are diverse interpretations of human conduct in terms of good and evil. A fundamentalist sect will declare as evil what a more liberal one will not. Certain protestant sects inveigh against dancing as evil. On the other hand, the Catholic church does not. Non-Christian sects accept many acts within the scope of their moral code which by Christians are rejected as evil or contributing thereto.

Good and evil, therefore, are human conceptions. They are products of the human mind. They have no existence apart from the human evaluation of events and circumstances as related to man. Man may arbitrarily set up certain conditions which are universally objectionable to mankind and thereafter declare them to be absolute. Thus, for example, he may declare murder, rape, and theft to be evil because he can ascertain nothing but harm to mankind from such acts. He might, likewise, declare such virtues as charity, tolerance, and truthfulness to be a universal and absolute good for humanity. But, again, the point of reference in these things is man himself. They are good or bad only as man reacts to them. Without his response to such acts, they would have no qualitative content.

Mystically, there can only be one *good* and that is the moral inclination, the impulse of righteousness, which man experiences within himself.

All evil is relative to accepted standards. In other words, there is in nature *no absolute* evil; that is, it is not universal. This statement, of course, is contrary to the moral dictates as delineated in the various sacred books of the different religious sects. If there are admonitions and proscriptions against certain acts in religious works or the laws and customs of society, these, then, become the criteria by which the average individual determines what is *good* or *evil*. In fact, to a great extent, what we call *conscience* in its outward manifestation or expression is based upon the influences of those acts or kinds of behavior which we have been taught to think of as being evil. Conscience, or the moral sense, is a subconscious impulse to conform to an inner state of rectitude which man has. But the defining of what that righteousness or good should consist is construed objectively by the individual and arises out of his personal experiences and training.

If the details of conscience were universal and not individually arrived at, then all human behavior would conform to the same standard of good and would reject alike all apparent evil. Every person who has traveled rather extensively throughout the world has come upon people whose standards of proper and accepted conduct are construed as evil by the visitor. The visitor or traveler is simply measuring what these other people do by his own personal code.

If we think of the subject of evil abstractly, it cannot actually exist, nor in fact can good exist in the cosmos. The cosmos—and all its phenomena—is *what it is*. The cosmos is not striving toward some idealistic end which transcends its particular state at the moment of time. Consequently, *everything is neither good nor bad*. There is no external standard by which to judge the cosmos. Such standards are human devices only.

There is a distinction, although a relationship exists between what is termed *evil* and *wrong*. The word evil is associated with morality. It means that which is contrary to some edict or fiat which has been set forth in the sacred writings or the theology of a particular sect. The moral good is one that is associated with conscience and is consistent with the moral standard which that conscience has accepted. The moral good is generally conceived to be that behavior which conforms to the will of a supernatural being as a god, or divine principle. Whatever is contrary to it is then that which is proclaimed to be evil.

On the other hand, *wrong* is not directly moral turpitude. It is not established primarily by any religious code. Wrong and right are principally of an ethical construction. They are *not* commonly considered as being variations of spiritual fiats, but rather of improper social relations or behavior by the individual. For example, it is ethically wrong to insult a person. For further example, it is ethically wrong for an advertising agency to represent two competitive clients since the agency cannot do justice then to either in its claims. It is also ethically wrong to discriminate between men because of their race. However, we will note that in many codes of ethics adopted by them generally, businesses or societies do revert in principle to moral standards. For example, it is generally accepted that the

misrepresentation of a product being sold, that is, as to its quality, is unethical. Such conduct is cozenage and therefore *lying*, which is also a moral interdiction.

A society establishes certain rules of conduct founded upon the moral code that the majority of its citizens has adopted. Simply, a Christian nation's moral values are primarily founded upon the moral dictates of Christianity. Those who conform to them are thought to be living righteously, that is, a morally good life; and those acting contrary to them are then judged guilty of degrees of evil.

When we see an individual who deviates from such a standard, we think of him as being evil. Nevertheless, his evil is not absolute in the cosmic sense. Think of all those humans who were burned at the stake by the church during the Middle Ages and during the Inquisition—condemned as evil because their personal ideas did not conform to the despotic dogma of the church!

Evil, then, is not intrinsic but is relative to the beliefs and circumstances by which we judge human behavior. It is, however, necessary that some acts of man be restricted according to the reasons that society believes essential to its welfare. Time has always been a great alchemist in the transmutation of the qualities of good and evil into new forms of either acceptance or rejection by man.

Chapter V

IS CONSCIOUSNESS UNIVERSAL?

IF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS EXISTED independently of universal consciousness, religion then would have no meaning and mysticism would be without a workable premise. Consciousness in man is a state of awareness, a realization of various phenomena. By it man comes to perceive such aspects of externality as the outside world. Likewise he becomes cognizant of his own existence, that is, self-consciousness. All religions, even those termed pagan, have a theological system by which man is taught to commune with his concept of God. Any religion worthy of that appellation has resort to prayer. This prayer is an attempt at communication between man and his God, or gods.

Consequently, there is the implication that man can become aware of that transcendental power to whom he appeals. Such realization obviously requires consciousness. There is then a commingling, a state of oneness between the human consciousness and that kind of consciousness which man attributes to the Divine Being.

Now let us look at the matter strictly from the mystical point of view. Briefly, the mystic is one who aspires to a personal *union*, or *oneness*, with the Absolute. This Absolute he may call either God, Cosmic, Universal Mind, Supreme Being, and so on. The acme of mystical attainment is Cosmic Consciousness. If we transpose the two words as consciousness of the Cosmic we then have a better understanding of the term. Simply, it consists of man having a *consciousness of the Cosmic*, the *One* of which all reality consists.

It is not as if a separate state or condition were contacting another of a different nature. It is not a synchasy, a blending of different things. The consciousness in man, though of a lower stage of apprehension, is part of the consciousness that exists everywhere. But the different frequencies or ranges of manifestation must be brought into harmony with each other. The human consciousness evolves upward so as to be able to perceive the *One*, which is a consciousness likewise. The mystic holds that the whole cosmos has a state of awareness of its own nature. For man to realize his relationship to it is the highest perfection that the human can experience.

It is quite understandable that man most often believes that his consciousness is a separate and independent state. He fails to have an appreciation of the unifying factor that exists throughout all life and, in fact, throughout the whole cosmos. Every living cell, whether it be of a plant or animal, has consciousness. This consciousness is only separate in the particular way in which it expresses itself through the organism or through the plant itself. But basically, the cells in a human body have similar functions to those in other forms.

We speak today of different conscious states within man such as the objective, subjective, and subconscious, with the theorized variations of the latter. However, we do not think of these states of consciousness being separate within us but, rather, as being levels or octaves of the same one stream of consciousness that flows through us.

Just what is the *universal consciousness* like? It has no finite determinative qualities. Since all things are manifestations of the universal consciousness, then as the Dutch philosopher Spinoza said about the Absolute, "It is in all things yet it is no one of them." Further, all things are not the totality of the universal consciousness because it has the potential of infinite other manifestations.

We are quite ignorant of other worlds that exist in the infinite number of galaxies or other universes of the cosmos, that may have manifestations of universal consciousness of which we cannot even conceive. Consequently, universal consciousness is amorphous or, as Heraclitus said, "is always becoming."

Science may reject the hypothesis that all things have consciousness; in other words, that consciousness is in all reality. Now this, however, depends upon the limitations that we put upon the characteristics of consciousness. Physics and chemistry, for example, have shown us that the structure of matter follows what is generally declared to be a kind of innate order. This order is so precise that we hold it to be universal. The space exploration of today has, in fact, found chemical elements to exist in distant worlds, as revealed by the spectrograph, which have wavelength characteristics the same as those on Earth. We also now have soil samples from the Moon and Mars. May we not say that *order*, that persistent precision, is a kind of consciousness? Admittedly it differs in its manifestations from the human consciousness. But then again, we too have varying states of consciousness.

We are reminded of the philosophy of the ancient Stoics of whom Zeno was the founder (340-265 B.C.). The Stoics advocated that neither matter, soul, nor man were separate things but, rather, were part of one *connected whole* which may be called God or nature. A universal soul or rational principle, meaning *mind*, is everywhere present. In man it is what is called soul, the Stoics declared. In matter it is the natural laws by which it manifests.

This, of course, is technically called a *mystical pantheism* or, namely, God, or the Cosmic Mind, permeating all. The orthodox theist and the so-called Bible fundamentalist will, of course, reject this idea. He desires, as do many of those whom he calls pagans, to personalize his God, to make of Him a being of form. He thinks that to embody the existence of God in all things, as does the pantheist, is a kind of idolatry. But in assuming this he reveals his non understanding of mystical pantheism. The true pantheist in this sense neither adores nor worships any object as a deity. Rather, he knows that the cosmic principle is infinite in essence and extant, and therefore no one thing, or all things, could be it. But he holds that nothing that exists could be without the inherent order of God or Cosmic Mind.

Chapter VI

WHAT IS PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT?

THE CONCEPTION THAT MAN IS DUAL is as old as man's first analysis of his being. He has obvious functions that are so unlike in their phenomena that it is difficult to conceive of their being other than separate processes. The reason and the various mental processes are quite easily differentiated from the physical organism and its activities. In fact, the ancient Greeks considered reason the highest attribute of man's nature and a distinctly divine quality implanted in the body. The soul and reason were more generally considered to be synonymous and one of the basic attributes of his dual nature.

The Greeks, too, related love in its most elevated sense to the soul. Soul was a rational and loving entity. This love was construed as compassion and was considered to be of the highest moral sense of which man is capable. The soul as an entity or a substance was thought to be ethereal, amorphous, and invisible. It had no material qualities as does the body. These other qualities, though distinguished from the physical organism, seemed to enter and leave the body with the breath. Consequently, the Greeks identified soul with *air*, breath, or *pneuma*. The soul, then was of this airlike quality which soared to other regions. Long before the Greeks, the notion of wings had been associated with the soul and symbolized by a bird or by winged insects.

Eventually, the soul became personified with the mythical character, *Psyche*. According to Greek mythology, Psyche's husband was Cupid. When she discovered who he truly was, he departed; this was

accomplished through the treachery of Venus. Psyche searched and found him after suffering persecution by the jealous Venus. She was then portrayed as a beautiful girl with wings—the soul in flight.

Psyche became the root out of which grew such words and terms as *psychic*, *psychology*, *psychosomatic*, and numerous others depicting the inner nature of man in contrast to the physical. In most religions, the soul, the psyche, has been postulated as a kind of divine substance implanted in man. It is thought to carry with it certain attributes as consciousness, conscience, the moral sense, and other immaterial powers and functions.

There were and are various schools of thought concerning the inherent quality of soul. According to some theologies, the soul is immured by sins which man has inherited and from which it must be liberated before it can have a full expression. This liberation is to be accomplished by certain acts of salvation. Consequently, the individual aspires to that spiritual attainment, that freedom of the soul, which can be attained by conforming to prescribed religious rites. This activity is a kind of *spiritual development* or, in terms of the Greek name for the soul, a *psychic* development.

It is also a philosophical and metaphysical conception that the soul, as an infusion of the body, is accompanied by an efficacy and an intelligence that is a sort of supernatural or cosmic mind power. This doctrine expounds that this intelligence transcends the rational mind, or the moral intellect. It directs the involuntary functions of the body such as the respiration, circulation of the blood, and other organic processes over which the will has no direction. However, this supermind is accessible to the objective consciousness. Man can be attuned with a source to accomplish phenomena which his normal mental processes cannot achieve.

Since this supermind, or intelligence, of the soul with its energy is infinite in its cosmic relationship, it is held that it can and does produce phenomena beyond the capability of the brain and the body. It is not limited by time or space. It has its own state of consciousness, both perception and conception; that is, it can realize what the physical senses cannot perceive. Likewise, it can generate ideas which are far

more illuminating than those produced by the reason. This mind and its forces, it is further contended, exist like a reservoir within the human organism to be utilized to extend man's mastery over himself and his environment.

Since this intelligence and its powers are of the soul, it naturally follows that they would be referred to as *psychic forces* by adherents of mysticism and metaphysics. It became common in these systems to expound ways and means of "developing the psychic powers of man." This development, or method, has been defined in various ways by the different schools of metaphysics and esotericism. Actually, the term *develop* is a misnomer when associated with the notion of psychic powers, for if there is a transcendent soul force, a divine intelligence, functioning as a higher mind in man, it certainly does not lie within his province to *develop* it.

At least, the finite cannot logically exercise a control over the infinite. Consequently, the only development, according to this conception, would be volitional methods of mind whereby man can come to realize his latent powers, *awakening* and *directing* them but not adding to their omnipotence. Man develops only his state of awareness, his ability to realize and develop a channel within himself for the expression and function of his immanent psychic power.

With the development of organic psychology, the word *psychic* acquired a different meaning. It no longer had a relationship to any spiritual, supernatural, or separate embodiment in man. All forces in man, all phenomena attributed to him, were considered to be a unitary single quality of his whole organism and quite natural. The memory, the reason, the emotions, the so-called moral sense, conscience, consciousness—these were different functions arising out of the complex monad or single entity which man is declared to be. The human organism, according to modern psychology, can produce diverse forms of phenomena just as there can be different notes produced by a single, unified piano keyboard.

However, there is by this science a general classification of the human phenomena. Some of its aspects are declared to be consciously motivated, and some as subliminal functions of the mind, unconsciously.

In other words, some processes are believed to be more mysterious and more subtle since they are involved with the intricacies of the brain and nervous systems, or what is called *mind*. These, then, are the *psychic* functions of man as designated by science. But, we repeat, this refers to psychic as being completely purged from any divine or supernatural attributes.

Science readily admits that the psychic functions in man vary. The so-called subconscious motivations, instincts, and intuition which come to the fore of the conscious mind are more pronounced in some than in others. How and why this occurs in some individuals to a greater extent than in others is one of the enigmas of psychology and psychiatry and has become the incentive for further research. F r o m the psychological point of view, there are certain psychic functions which science believes can be developed consciously. One of these, for example, is *creativity*. Different textbooks on psychology furnish diverse opinions on what creativity is and how it can be developed. Since memory, imagination, and visualization are included in the psychic powers of man by science, there are also techniques suggested for their development.

Such phenomena as extrasensory perception, telepathy, bilocation (projection of consciousness), empathy, and telekinesis are as yet mysterious to orthodox science. But now sincere efforts are being made to investigate such phenomena as in the parapsychology laboratory of the Rosicrucian Order. However, the consensus in orthodox scientific circles is that they have no relationship to transcendent spiritual or cosmic qualities. They are but part of the natural process of the human organism. Nevertheless, in its experiments science attempts to ascertain whether practice will develop such latent powers in the individual.

Just as most psychologists will not admit of an infusion of an external intelligence, or Cosmic Mind, in man that might account for strange human phenomena, so many students of mysticism and metaphysics confuse natural organic processes with an external psychic force. Such students often relegate such common psychological and physiological phenomena to the psychic world. Afterimages, for

example, complementary colors which one may see after turning the eyes away from a bright light into which he has been staring, are often attributed to other than a natural function. Internal noises in the ears are often thought of as psychic forces to be developed! Nervous disorders, twitches, and jerks of the muscles are wrongly associated with nonphysical and psychic powers.

There are deeper phases of the stream of consciousness within us that do produce realizations and experiences which may truly be called *psychic*—if we mean the result of higher aspects of our consciousness and the intelligence of the life stream itself. The direction and application of these can be *developed*, for they are *natural* to every human being; but they are more manifest in some persons than in others. However, mental aberrations, abnormal functioning of the brain and the nervous systems, can produce phenomena which are *psychic* only in the *psychiatric* sense of the word—not in the mystical or metaphysical meaning.

The moral impulse, the desire to experience a union with reality beyond our own physical being, is both a psychic impulse in the scientific or psychological sense and in the mystical sense. It is mystical to have the desire and the love to experience the feeling of oneness with the Cosmic, the whole of being. But the states of consciousness through which one passes to acquire that experience are the result of natural, mental, and emotional processes. For analogy, a musical composition is an ideal, but there first needs to be the physical instrument upon which it can be produced or expressed to transform that ideal into a reality. The psychic forces in man are one and part of all of the natural powers of man's being. We do not develop them. Rather, we develop the way to understand and apply those forces to our lives.

Chapter VII

INTUITION, IDEALISM, AND ILLUMINATION

MAN HAS SEVERAL LIVES linked together in his mortal existence. This should not be construed as referring to reincarnation or rebirth. Rather it is meant to be understood in the sense that each of us in our physical existence may experience various states of consciousness which constitute different aspects of life. Each in itself is lived separately at the time. However, there are those who never experience some of these states of consciousness. Their entire mortal existence may be confined to but one limited view of life. For them, it is like looking out upon the world through the same window—continuously.

These lives we live are determined by *psychic* and *mental* motivation. The choices and actions that comprise our social and private lives are principally the result of decisions which we make and which, in turn, are the consequence of our thought processes and emotional states. Admittedly environment too has a tremendous influence upon us; that is, the circumstances into which we are precipitated daily. But the way in which we react to such stimuli, how we interpret and attempt to adjust to them, is the result of our psychic and mental life, the states of consciousness through which we perceive and conceive the particular experiences.

There are three principal states of consciousness, each characterizing a phase of life. They really are the motivating forces that determine the direction that our lives take. These states of consciousness are *intuition*,

idealism, and *illumination*. The first two are rather commonplace with most persons and though often referred to are infrequently understood. The third, *illumination*, is difficult to attain and even when experienced is often endued with some other meaning. Therefore, many have been illumined but have not recognized the experience as such. A plenum of life, that wholeness of human existence to which we consciously or unconsciously aspire, can only come from a coordination of these three states: intuition, idealism, and illumination. An unrelated spontaneity on the part of the first two can never lead to the third.

What is intuition? For centuries philosophy and metaphysics have given various and often conflicting definitions of this experience. In relatively modern times psychology has also given its version. Usually works on psychology describe the phenomenon of intuition under the heading of "Instinct." The experience of intuition is commonly realized as an *unreasoned knowledge* or *guidance*. It is a form of ideation which flashes into consciousness without our volition and often when apparently quite unrelated to our thoughts at the time.

We say that intuition is unreasoned because its impressions do not emerge as a related immediate conclusion from any proposition we have in mind at the moment. There is also a distinctive characteristic about the intuitive impressions. When we experience one of these it has an obvious clarity carrying the conviction that it is self-evident. In fact, we would designate as *intuitive knowledge* that impression about which we have no doubts. In other words, we may often question the validity of our judgment when reasoning. But at the time we experience intuition we never doubt it.

It is for that reason that intuition has so often been accepted as a kind of immanent knowledge, that is, an innate wisdom which transcends the knowledge usually acquired. In fact, intuitive knowledge has often been associated with a religious or spiritual connotation as an attribute of the soul. Immanuel Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, said that time and space are forms of intuition. And intuition, in turn, he declared to be *a priori* knowledge. In other words, he considered it to be a kind of knowledge that precedes the knowledge gained through experience. This *a priori* knowledge, he stated, is part of the real nature of man.

However, it needs phenomena or the existence of our senses to be expressed. But it does not need such experiences to exist.

Psychology places intuition in the category of instinct. It is knowledge acquired historically; that is, the human organism has had to adjust to many and varying conditions in its long evolution. These adjustments have become established permanent records in the genes, a kind of memory impression. Whenever, therefore, similar circumstances arise which are related to such memory impressions, they are released instinctively as intuitive ideas and instinctive actions. Psychology further states that intuition is only reliable in matters of our survival, protection against danger and threatening conditions to the life of the organism itself.

Opposed to the explanations of psychology are the numerous instances where ideas have come forth from seemingly nowhere into the mind. These ideas have been inspiring and have resulted in solutions to perplexing problems. Although it may not have been related to a chain of thought indulged at the time, the intuitive impression in most instances did have a relationship to some previous cognition. The intuitive idea always has an affinity to our interests, mental activities, desires, and experiences either of the present or the past. We venture to say that rarely is the intuitive idea completely foreign to our conceptions, interests, or talents.

For analogy, we may think of ideas as being like objects that are polarized, that is, having separate polarity which attracts or repels. In our usual objective mental process, we may not be able to attract all those ideas which are related to the particular thought which is dominant in our mind at a certain time. In fact, in our reasoning process, ideas that we consciously call forth may often clash with or oppose each other, resulting in no satisfactory conclusion.

Subsequently, minutes, hours, or days later, from out of the depth of the stream of consciousness there will suddenly emerge a composite idea, scintillating in its perspicuity, a perfect harmony of thought. It would appear then that there is a *subconscious judgment* that carries on after the reasoning mind has stopped or failed. This, it would appear, is a superior intelligence that is able to evaluate all the accumulated

ideas of experience that are stored in memory and find a harmonious relationship between them that eventually constitutes the released intuitive impressions.

Is the intuitive impression infallible in all instances? Everyone who has followed his so-called “hunch” has not always been successful. But these instances may not be indicative of the failure of intuition. Failure could be due to the manner in which the individual applied the intuitive impressions to his affairs. It may have become distorted by his trying to make it conform to some plan or purpose. Intuition is best relied upon in the *cautionary* sense rather than as a positive suggestion initiating a new action. Thus, for example, when we are intuitively warned *not* to proceed or to take an opposite stand, it is advisable to heed intuition regardless of how it may contradict reason. To disregard intuition entirely is to deny an evolved faculty that has been inherent in man throughout his ascent from a primitive state.

The second motivating force that constitutes an important phase of life is *idealism*. Perfection and idealism are related. Of course every ideal is not perfect by all standards. In fact, ideals held by some may be counter to those held by society generally. For example, the ideals of a communist in the capitalistic society or vice versa. An ideal is an abstract objective, a state or thing which is considered to transcend everything of a related nature. Something can only be an ideal by comparison with something else whose context stands as inferior.

Our ideals, however, can be intrinsically false. We may aspire to that which violates natural law and which has no possibility of ever manifesting as we conceive it. Then again, even though an ideal may be rational, it may not be within the capabilities or potential of the one visualizing it.

There are two measuring rods for idealism: One is reason and the other is *intuition*. An ideal may be transcendent, may be something to be attained. Yet it must be contiguous with the present. There must be some link between *what is* and *what is desired to be*. There must be a way, a chain of causality, by which the ultimate effect or ideal can be realized. To avoid mere idle fancy, an ideal should be analyzed by the reason. What possible approaches there are to it should be determined. This

method will often disclose that an ideal is false or that it is not within the realm of probability.

Intuition is a reliable guide in determining the feasibility of an ideal. If we do not give way to emotionalism, to excessive enthusiasm, but rather ponder upon some objective first, we shall usually experience an intuitive impression of value in relation to it. Most often this superior judgment of intuition is a valuable link with idealism.

The third motivating force and the one which provides the most exalted experience of life is *illumination*. The mystics were the first to use this term in connection with mystical experience. In the broadest etymological sense, *illumination* refers to an exalted enlightenment of the mind. In other words, the mind is illumined with a unique light of knowledge and understanding. From the mystical point of view illumination is “a freedom from the attachments of this world.” Thus the mind, the consciousness, is liberated to experience “the united life,” a life of unity with God, or the Absolute. More simply stated, man knows himself but not just as an individual. He discovers his cosmic relationship. To use the words of a mystic, “... he sinks into his divine element, like a wave into the sea.”

Dionysius, the sixth-century Syrian monk, said that illumination by which one knows the wholeness of his being is a gift of goodness. It restores the unifying power of man by which he realizes the oneness of all of which he is a part. If illumination is an aspect of mystical experience, what then is the whole consistency of the mystical experience? Where does illumination fit in? Generally there are three recognized stages of the mystical experience. They are *purgation*, illumination, and *perfection*. The first, purgation, is an admission of our foibles of character; it is an attempt at self-analysis and inner refinement and a desire to remove obstacles of our own doing, such as are represented by habits and customs, both mental and physical.

Out of this purgation, we are told, there gradually emerges illumination. There are states of gradual separation from objective consciousness. Degree by degree we free ourselves—even though it be only momentarily—from having our consciousness solely bound to externality, the world of things. We develop a sensitivity to more subtle

impressions arising within ourselves and composing the inner world. This is something infrequently accomplished by the average person. It is only partially attained when he can tear himself away from the television set and sit in meditation or even in abstraction for a few minutes. If we can do this each day, even for as short a time as fifteen minutes, we can realize the first steps leading to illumination.

Is it possible to outline these steps by which this illumination, this great enlightenment of the consciousness, can be experienced? The following is a brief summation of the stages through which illumination has been attained by those who have sincerely sought it.

(1) The awakening of the self to a consciousness of a divine or absolute reality. This is the personal conviction that there is an actual supreme power that pervades all. This awakening provides a feeling of joy as in the discovery of an amazing and pleasing phenomenon.

(2) The self becomes aware for the first time of cosmic beauty, that is, it experiences the harmony of pure being. At the same time one realizes his own imperfections; he attempts to eliminate them by discipline, and this constitutes purgation.

(3) When purgation is completed, there comes illumination which is had by degrees or stages. (4) The final test has been termed the *Obscure Night* or the *Dark Night of the Soul*. It is a test of the individual's determination. It is a challenge to him to make drastic changes in his way of thinking, his habits, and way of life. For example, one cannot be sensual to the extent of giving himself over entirely to the physical senses and appetites and yet expect to be responsive to the inner light of illumination.

(5) The fifth stage is when the Absolute is not merely enjoyed as an experience, nor when it is just a matter of illumination, but rather when one feels his oneness with all being. It is when one realizes that he is and yet is not. This means that one knows he is a mortal and yet realizes the immortality of the essence within him.

In practical living illumination follows both intuition and idealism. Our intuition helps us to form a series of steps to climb. Each step

in turn is an ideal; each ideal is more advanced, and more satisfying to our highest psychic self. An ideal may start with health, with personal well-being. Then it may advance to a consideration of the welfare of others, the service of society, and then gradually broaden with greater understanding. The idealism prepares the consciousness for illumination.

Illumination is not a mere abstraction. It is not an eventual isolation of self from the world. Rather it is a *synthesizing* of all of our faculties and powers so that we can derive the utmost from our mortal span here on Earth. For example, it provides a clarity of vision with regard to phenomena, the experiences of life. The self perceives an added significance in all the experiences in and around it. The infinity of illumination is a penetration of the natural world to a greater depth in one direction while at the same time penetrating the Cosmic in another direction. Yet these two directions are like lines curved to meet. Thus they form a whole, or circle, of more complete living.

Chapter VIII

CREATIVITY— IT'S MYSTERY AND MECHANISM

THERE ARE TWO KINDS of motivation by which man is compelled to act in life. One we may call *compulsion*, and the other, *self-generated*. This compulsion to act is dual in nature. First there are the instincts, such as the innate urge for survival, the gratification of the appetites, and impelling curiosity. These compulsions arise involuntarily within us; we do not call them forth.

The second aspect of compulsion is environmental influences, as for example natural catastrophes—floods, fire, drought—and flight from danger. The acts that follow are not the result of any previous cogitation which initiates them.

Self-generation, as the other kind of human motivation, is that which has advanced man to the status we call *civilized*. The self-generated acts are those which are initiated by the voluntary conscious direction of man's mental powers.

In the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum are to be seen examples of the evolution and expansion of man's creative power. We see, for example, in one gallery rows of prehistoric pottery from 8,000 to 10,000 years old. These were made very crudely over an open fire. They were made by hand before shaping by means of a potter's wheel came into use. The tops are oxidized—blackened by the heat. They were created to satisfy a *need*, for utility only.

Man's mental processes are numerous and complex. However, one word best sums up those acts by which man willfully directs his motivation. That word is *creativity*.

For an understanding of creativity, we can approach it by three related viewpoints. These are the philosophical, psychological, and their application. Ordinarily, when we think of the word *create* in the broad semantic sense, we mean to bring something into existence. But is it a substance or just form that man creates? Or can an original idea itself be a creation regardless of whether it acquires substance or form? Let us look at these words separately and see whether either one closely approximates the general idea of creating.

Is there a primary underlying substance in the universe? In other words, at the bottom, is all reality of one kind? Or, are there myriad kinds of substances in the universe having no basic relationship to each other? If all the substances we perceive were as singly different as they appear to our perceptions, there would be no nexus, no bond existing between them. Such a concept then would presume a vacuum between the different kinds of realities, a state of non-being. And *no* thing cannot give rise to *some* thing. It could not be a condition out of which anything could be created.

On the other hand, suppose we presume that all reality in the cosmos may be reduced to a single primary substance; it is isotropic, that is, of the same material everywhere. If that were so, then nothing could be absolutely created, because in essence all things would be fundamentally related. Certainly no thing could be brought into existence outside of the primary substance of the universe.

Let us now consider *form* and see whether that represents an act of creating. What is form? It is anything producing sensations having the qualities that affect our receptor senses. In other words, forms have, for example, either color, weight, taste, sound, dimension, or are hot or cold, hard or soft, and so on. No thing said to have form is devoid of all of these qualities. If it were, we could not experience it.

However, we can so manipulate the natural forces of the primary substance that a form *seems* to be a creation. But no matter what its

appearance, it does possess one or more of the basic qualities that all forms have. Therefore, from the philosophical point of view, man cannot create anything which does not have root in the primary substance of the universe.

Yet man does create forms which in their entirety do assume a difference from anything previously experienced. From the psychological aspect of this subject, this merely constitutes a *change* in the order of things and a new arrangement of that which already exists. The automobile, airplane, telephone, television, numerous devices—they are not absolute creations; they are extensions and developments of existing factors—elements, forces, and phenomena. What is new, then, is the *idea* by which things or conditions may assume to us a new appearance or state.

The creative idea can arise either objectively or subjectively. Objectively the creative idea is principally caused by the demand of a need. It is the realization of some insufficiency, inadequacy, or imperfection that incites the individual to remedy the condition. Psychologically, we can say that it is a dissatisfaction with an existing state that provides the motivation to create that which will satisfy.

To further elucidate, for example, what exists to us may be satisfactory in quality but seem insufficient in its quantity. The desire to increase the quantity becomes the motivation for the creative idea. However, the need for something does not always bring forth an idea for its fulfillment. A man may have a sum of money yet need more for a specific reason. It does not necessarily follow that there will then flood into consciousness an idea for obtaining it.

In this objective form of creating, *reason* plays a paramount part. One must cogitate upon the probability of causes that will provide the need.

In the reasoning there should be an attempt to find an affinity between what is and what is sought; more succinctly, how can what exists be extended so as to provide that which is desired? There cannot remain great extremes between what one is or has and the end sought. One must think how he can use his potential things, or abilities as active

causes from which the desired effects may follow. It is at this time that the unconscious association takes place in the subconscious. An idea comes forth that in its content bridges the present knowledge and circumstances with the end being sought. It flashes into consciousness with a self-evident clarity. The creative idea suggests how elements of the *known*, of experience, may be used to arrive at the goal sought.

The original idea may not be infallible. However, a failure causes a critical analysis of one's existing conditions or thoughts. It causes the selection of a new starting point for the mind to focus attention upon.

One does not begin by merely *wanting* to create. It is necessary to have a general idea with the hope of converting it into a reality. It is often preferable to first dissect the idea of that which is desired, in other words, to discover the elements of which the mental image is composed. In this process there is the possibility that there exists in the mind an affinitive idea, one that is in harmony with existing knowledge and the goal desired. The affinitive idea, therefore, is an *intermediary* one. It is creative in having the power to make the known materialize that which is imagined and sought.

To summarize, there are therefore two approaches to the objective method of creating with the faculty of reason. One, as said, is the analysis of the individual's personal potentials to discover that which may close the gap between actuality and his conceived objective. The other way is to try to find in the desired end some connection with one's experiences and knowledge, thus giving rise to the affinitive creative idea by which attainment is had.

We must now consider the *subjective* phase of creativity. There are those ideas which flash into consciousness and are rightly called *creative* and are self-sufficient. They embody the content, the originality, and the method by which they are to be transformed into reality. Such creative ideas are not labored; that is, they are spontaneous. There is, in other words, no previous conscious thought about them. Such creative ideas must be credited to the subjective, that is, the subconscious processes of *intuition*. Mystics and metaphysicians refer to this as an influx of Cosmic, or Divine, Intelligence; that implies a process quite contrary to, if not independent of, the common mental functions. Psychologists, on

the other hand, use the term *insight* for the phenomenon of intuition. Both definitions imply a kind of superintelligence.

The intuitive idea that may suddenly come into consciousness is a composite of various sensations of previous experiences, no matter how original it may seem at the time. The form the idea assumes may appear new. However, it is composed of the qualities and elements of past experiences. An idea whose elements would be entirely new would be incomprehensible to us. We would be unable to identify it with any known reality and therefore it would be valueless to us.

In the memory of the subconscious there are myriad ideas derived from past experiences. The registration of such impressions and their sensations were not intense enough at the time for one to be conscious of receiving them. These relatively dormant ideas cannot be voluntarily recalled, for we do not know of their existence; they are polarized; that is, they can be attracted to or drawn to more dynamic ideas which form in the mind.

For instance, an idea that drew the focus of attention by its perplexity and upon which one may have dwelt consciously for some time will be released into the subconscious as an *unfinished* work by the reason and perhaps objectively forgotten. The transcendent intelligence, or subconscious, begins an analysis of the idea which the objective mind has put aside. There is by the subconscious a superior evaluation and judgment. This employs also the appendix of previous ideas and impressions already stored in the subconscious from the past. A combining and a relating take place between them and the rejected idea of the objective mind.

It would seem that the rejected idea is more dynamic because of the previous thought given to it. There is then a sorting and selection that takes place, and, finally a harmonious relationship is established. This results in a *new* mental image, an idea with intensity. This new idea has sufficient stimulus to force itself into the conscious mind with convincing self-evidence.

The definition of *insight* for intuition, therefore, seems appropriate. There is, it would appear, a penetrating subconscious review of the

incomplete and restless idea transferred to the subconscious by the objective consciousness. The time lapse before the new intuitive idea enters objective consciousness varies. It may be hours after the conscious mind has ceased laboring with the train of thought, or weeks, even years, later. In fact, one may have forgotten the original idea which stimulated the subconscious processes so that the intuitive idea when realized seems to be unrelated to any previous thought that can be recollected.

The more one cogitates upon the subject of particular interest to him, the more intense the power of the idea when transferred into memory. It is therefore better able by association to attract from the memory in the subconscious those elements that will coordinate with it.

According to modern neurological and psychological research, the right hemisphere of the brain contains the processes by which the intuition occurs. In some individuals this *psychic phenomenon* of consciousness is more responsive than in others. It is said to be more responsive with women than with men.

Creativity, however, must be fed objectively if it is to become a frequent aid. Observation must be cultivated. Observations produce the stuff out of which experience and its ideas are composed. One should try to attribute as much as possible *meaning* and *identity* to what he perceives. From observation challenges arise in the mind as to the validity, the contraries, and the differences of ideas. These stimulate the mind and by association give rise to the creative ideas and deeper insight, or the *intuitive* motivation.

Meditation, of which much is being said today, is the practice of making the conscious mind more receptive to the release of impressions from the workings of the subconscious. It is a closing of one set of doors and the opening of others in the mind.

Chapter IX

APPLYING CREATIVITY TO YOUR ENVIRONMENT

OUR ENVIRONMENT IS a complex state. In part it consists of the geographical area in which we are located. This includes such physical conditions as altitude, climate, and a plenteousness or lack of natural resources. There are also other factors which, though not directly a result of the physical environment, do have an equal effect upon and influence the individual. These are family relationships, association with other persons, society; that is, customs and traditions, religious and political doctrines.

Environment can be either involuntary or voluntary in the influence it exerts. Most often it is a combination of both. For example, we do not choose the physical environment in which we are born, nor do we select our family association. We may, however, of our own volition later move to another geographical area. We may also select the persons we desire to associate with when we mature and form preferences.

In most every individual's life there are certain environmental factors that are inescapable and to which it seems he is subject. We may use the analogy of the coal miners of a century or more ago in Europe. It was the custom that a son should follow the trade of his father. As a young child the boy was made aware of this social obligation and expected it to be his lifework. Before enlightened government and labor regulations, these mining towns were deplorable. The homes were often nothing more than hovels where filth abounded and proper hygienic facilities

were nonexistent. The mines themselves were not properly ventilated. Boys had to enter an apprenticeship early and therefore had little or no opportunity for education. Here, then, a person was trapped in his environment.

There are many persons today, in our modern society, who for various reasons believe they cannot either transcend or transform their environment and therefore submit to it. Often such persons have some kind of moral obligation to their family or to others which they do not want to violate by any change. Many young women—and men—have foregone marriage because of a doting and often selfish parent. Here, then, is an environment that they have created because of a misplaced moral sense. They may not actually have established the unfortunate circumstances in which they continue to live, but they perpetuate them by refusing to change or to avoid them.

The element of *idealism* enters into the subject of creating environment. What are the conditions, the factors of life in which the individual wants to enter or surround himself? For analogy, let us consider physical environment. If they had their choice and the opportunity to do so, some persons would live in a coastal area. Still others would prefer the mountains or a fertile valley. There are multitudes of other persons whose ideal of life is living in an urban area, as a great metropolitan city with its so-called sophistication, technical conveniences, and facilities. So far as creating environment is concerned, it is, therefore, related to one's *personal idealism*. There is no criterion for environment that would win the approval or acceptance of all individuals.

In the creating of our environment, it is an essential first step to arrive at a concept of just what we want. For example, is the basic desire a change of living area? Is it association, employment opportunity, social and political customs? It is very seldom that one's environment in all its elements is undesirable. The average person who would like a transformation of environment can reduce it to one primary thing which would stand out and which, if changed, would satisfy.

The next consideration is whether one possesses the personal power, that is, the ability and resources, to create the change desired. Some

circumstances are indigenous—they are the long-established customs and traditions of a place which have the acceptance of the majority of people there. One may not approve of them—in his own opinion, the people may be bigoted, intolerant, or pursuing obsolete ends. This, then, engenders a soul-searching question: Has one the right to impose his personal views and concepts upon others? Has he the right to so change them to the dislike of the majority of other persons?

Simply, if you wish to be a crusader and attack what you think needs to be changed, you then assume a great responsibility for your acts. Great reformations have been made by the radically minded. Such persons often acted altruistically in endeavoring to create a new environment, physical and psychological. They did so with the intent of enlightening the people, leading them from a darkness in which it was thought they dwelt. History is replete with such successful reformations in which humanity benefited by those who defied a static traditional environment. However, there are also examples of fanaticism when transformation was made to gratify a personal concept regardless of the consequences to contemporary humanity.

It must be presumed that the average individual who wishes to create an environment is not aspiring to be either a crusader or messiah. Let us present an example: A man has a wife and three small children. He lives in a large city, in a section that is physically deteriorating. Many families have moved out to new locations. He considers the new residents entering as undesirable. Perhaps they are unclean in their habits; their children are undisciplined; and the parents are of low moral and ethical standards. This, then, is reflected in the vile language and offensive habits of their children. The man in our example notices the detrimental effects of such association upon his children.

The man and wife can *visualize* an ideal location. In their mental picture they see an attractive home on a clean street with a bower of beautiful trees. They also envision well-mannered children as playmates for their own. However, this visualization is only a contributing factor to the ideal, the better environment desired. In itself it is quite incomplete psychologically, mystically, and practically. In fact, it is nothing more than a mental state having no bridge with reality. What is the individual

going to bring to bear on reality, on the actual conditions as they exist? What influence or thing is he going to exert, to *create*, that is, to make the transformation?

Self-analysis or rather self-appraisal should be the next step. To move to a location in accord with the visualized ideal and to acquire the home desired is an economic matter. Has he the means? Obviously he has not or he would not have remained where he is. It is necessary, then, to find a way to increase his economic status. Is there any way that his existing employment can result in an increased income? If not, is there a possibility of retraining for another occupation or an advance in the present one?

The point being established here is that if the ideal is not to have a nugatory value, it must be related to the actual potentials of the individual himself. He is to be the active factor to bring about the preferred state. What of himself, then, can he apply? Actually, in such creating we see that the ideal must be subdivided into progressive stages by which the ultimate is to be attained.

Does *intuition* help? Yes, in a practical way. If one does not know how to approach his ideal—the creation of his environment—he should in reflection, in meditation, seek to see its components. In other words, he should hold in mind the wish to learn what should be the initial act, that is, just how to start. The whole process should be a nexus, a linking chain of thought and action.

Suppose one can see no possibility of an increased income through promotion to another position or further training for greater opportunity. This, of course, can happen. There may be a number of prevailing circumstances that constitute a present obstacle to all of these conditions. Rarely, however, is one permanently destitute of some improvement in his affairs. If he is sincerely convinced that he is, then at least for the time being his ideal of creating a preferred environment must be postponed. To harbor an ideal without recourse to the means of manifesting it may result in an aggravating frustration.

In a sincere contemplation and meditation upon creating an environment change, one eventually comes to a frank realization of

himself. He will know quite soon the vital points of his personal knowledge. First, he will know whether he has the training, the knowledge, the experience, or the material means to create what he wishes. Second, he may know that he does not have them but does have the determination, the will to strive, to sacrifice, and to persist to gain the personal ability and the qualities needed. If one cannot come to one of these two conclusions, then his ideal is nothing more than fantasy. Consequently, he may need a new orientation of thought, that is, the formation of a lesser but more attainable creative ideal.

The failure of an individual to attain or to realize an ideal for the creating of a new environment is not always his personal fault. There are often insurmountable obstacles regardless of the intellectual potential of the individual or his strength of character. For further example, in a country where the people are politically oppressed as under a tyrannical dictator, then personal initiative is also suppressed. In such a state a lofty ideal of the individual may run counter to the overwhelming political force. It is exceedingly difficult, then, if not impossible, to exert sufficient personal power to create any change. However, the individual need not abandon his ideal. He may sustain it with hope. It may be possible that he will find the moral and actual support of others in such a united way as to create the change.

Creating environment does not always mean the dynamic alteration of the existing conditions. Sometimes it is not worth the effort required to move what is inert. The obstacle may be so great in an existing environment in which one lives that the hope to bring a change by one's effort would be futile, or it would require too much time of one's life span. In such event it is far greater wisdom to retreat from the circumstances and to begin anew elsewhere. After all, it must be remembered that, that which is being sought is not just a flush of victory or conquest but rather a new series of conditions or different elements of living. An obstinate refusal to accept a greater opportunity to realize what is desired, because one is determined to remain and defeat an existing set of conditions, is poor judgment. Such is the crusader attitude, which is not incumbent upon one who desires to create another environment for himself.

Envy may cause the establishment of a wrong ideal in creating. One may assume that life, the environment, or the possessions with which another surrounds himself are *ne plus ultra*. In striving to attain this, then, he may dissipate his personal resources, his energy, health, and peace of mind only to find that he has been disillusioned. If one is forming an ideal patterned upon the life of another, he should first subject it to a thorough analysis. He should determine just how effective it was in providing for that individual the greatest cosmic reward—namely, *peace of mind*. Without this quality, no ideal is perfect; no environment should be created in which it is not the essence.*

*Refer also to Chapter Seven on “Idealism”

Chapter X

THE NATURE OF VALUE

IN EVERY ASPECT of human thought and experience value plays a very prominent part. Consequently, a philosophical inquiry into the nature of value, what it is, is as old as the history of thought itself. Therefore, an appropriate beginning for a consideration of value will be certain conceptions of it had by the ancients.

Among certain philosophers of the past, all reality, all being, was divided into two main categories. These were called the *macrocosm* and the *microcosm*. Literally, *macrocosm* means the great universe. At that time it generally referred to our Solar System in particular. By that is meant the Sun and its planets. In later centuries, man came to learn the relationship of these bodies to one another. The Sun maintains this macrocosm, this greater universe, by the attraction of its satellites to it. According to the universal law of gravity, every material thing in this macrocosm attracts and is attracted by each other material thing.

The other division of reality to which the ancients referred, the *microcosm*, means the small universe. The philosophers designated this lesser universe as man himself. Its sun or center, they declared, was the self, the *human consciousness*. Actually this sun or consciousness is the center of both universes, the large and small, so far as man's realization of them is concerned. Consequently, the forces of attraction in this microcosm, the one of which man consists, are his faculties of *perception* and *cognition*. They are, in other words, his power to perceive, to be aware, and to know.

It is by this attraction, by this means, that man draws reality into his understanding and creates the universe of which he is a part so far as his comprehension is concerned. Of course, all reality, with its various attributes, would nevertheless exist independently of man's perception and faculty of knowing, but they would not exist to man. He would have no awareness of the universe without such faculties.

Though the Sun remains as the center of our Solar System, it and its satellites move through space as a unit in the galaxy of which they are a part. Likewise man's personal universe, the microcosm of which he consists, is always limited to the unity of his consciousness. The universe that man realizes of himself depends upon the application of his consciousness. The world that man perceives is made up of facts or abstractions which are theorized from facts. But everything that we perceive is not always fully cognizable, that is, meaningful to us, just because we see it.

For example, we may see a cube which is so many inches square and of a certain color. But what does it mean? Has it any purpose or function? Does it have any specific effect upon us? Something more than its color, its shape, is needed to give it meaning. These realities that man experiences around him do not just compose a world of things, they also compose a world of *value*.

A thing is and yet it *ought to be* as well. A thing is, of course, if it is realized by us and yet it ought to be in the sense of being related to the self. Such a relationship as value is necessary, if we are to properly order our lives. It is the reaction that experiences produce within us which gives rise to the notion of value. If there be such a thing as wrong values, obviously then life's adjustment to them could be harmful to the personality. Consequently, value is important to our lives.

Let us consider *self* for a moment. We have stated that the significance of value is the relationship of certain experiences to self. Our consciousness is more than an aggregation of external impressions and internal feelings. We cannot say, for example, that self-consciousness is but a collection of sights, sounds, pains, pleasures, and emotions. Nor is self-consciousness just the sum total of our judgment. What we come

to distinguish as *self* from all else that we experience is the realization of our power of volition. It is the awareness of our own will. While we may be conscious of impressions, things outside ourselves, or of our own inner feelings, we are likewise aware of our own power of preference.

We have, therefore, what we might call a *consciousness of consciousness*, and it is this which gives rise to the nature of *self*. It is this will or choice of action of our mind and body that confers values upon what we experience. But, in exercising choice, we even come to put value upon will. We call the function will but attribute to it a preferred quality which we name *self*. Value, then, we see, is essential to our very self-consciousness.

How do we determine value? Everything that we experience falls into general classes of hedonic value. By that we mean all of our experiences fall into sensations of varying degrees of pleasure or pain. Some sensations are so intermediate between the two extremes as to seem neither to our consciousness. These different sensations become *values* to our organic being, to our mind and body. Pleasing sensations are desired and sought. Pleasure, therefore, is rightly considered a *positive* value. It is positive because it engenders action on our part to seek and acquire it.

Pain, the antithesis of pleasure, is regarded as a *negative* value. Pain is not sought by a normal being. However, it may move man to action but only to avoid it. Pleasure, biologically and mentally, always furthers some aspect of our being and of self. In its abuse, however, it is no longer pleasure but retrogresses to pain.

The facts which we experience in life do not always bring an immediate response of value. As Josiah Royce, the American philosopher, said: "Facts are realities. They can be described but they may bring no appreciation of them." In other words, facts may at times so react upon our beings as to give rise to no sense of value. Facts are, of course, that which is always objective. They are that which our sense receptors perceive, as something seen, felt, heard, and so forth. But the value of facts of experience is had only by *reflection*. It is a subjective

process of weighing the percept in connection with what it does to self. In other words, what effect the fact may seem to have upon our unitary nature constitutes its value to us.

In this consideration, we are reminded of Plato's doctrine of ideas. To Plato, objective experience, things of the world that we perceive, become real to us only as they participate in certain innate ideas which all men have. It is these ideas, then, which confer value upon experience.

Is value ever *inherent*? Are there things which in themselves as facts contain the ingredients, the essence of value? In other words, are there things in which value is as objective as their shape, weight, or color? Value is never an ingredient, that is, a property of the objects of experience. Value follows as an effect of something acting upon man. It is an *estimation* and *appraisal* of the experiences had, the sensations and thoughts which such experiences invoke within us. Reality, of course, is always valid in itself. It is as tangible and as definite as the degree of accuracy of our senses. But reality has no value except in terms of human relationship.

In our judgments we have come to set up a series of wrongs and rights, goods and bads. These judgments have no separate existence. They are always necessarily related to things and events. Both the realities, things of experience, and values are attracted to each other. The word *wrong*, for example, cannot be properly understood without referring to some thing or circumstance which gives rise, in turn, to some thought or feeling related to it. If we understand what is meant by the word *wrong*, it is only because we have recalled some past experience or precept to which we formerly applied the word.

Many of our values, however, are not personal judgments. They are not the consequence of direct experience. Rather, they are inherited as traditions and customs. We come to accept such values on faith, that is, reliance upon the responses of other men to events and things in their lives and which they have passed on down to us. There are many social and religious taboos extant, whose values we accept. For example, not to fast on certain religious holidays has the value of sin to persons of some sects. Such persons may not have experienced personally any

adversity by not fasting, but it is a value which they accord fasting upon faith alone.

There are various kinds of value. There are biological values that stem from self-preservation. There are also moral values and these are principally religious dogma. They may also come from what men call the dictates of conscience which, in turn, is our understanding of right and wrong conduct. Aesthetic values pertain to a personal sense of beauty in its various visual and auditory forms. Utilitarian values are expressed in terms of usefulness, something that is practical or that may be worthless to serve a need. Economic values are related to the utilitarian ones. Economic values have to do with that which contributes to our financial well-being.

In the realm of moral values, or the category of good and evil, religion and theology have tried to establish absolute ones. They have expounded that there are *universal* and eternal values. These they have defined as a kind of divine influence which, like some mysterious radiation, reaches down and puts its stamp of good and evil upon particular thoughts and actions of men in this world. It is contended that these universal values do not spring from, that is, originate within, the mind of man. Rather, these religionists conceive these universal values as being independent of human influence but constraining man to either accept them or suffer penalty.

Such dicta or fiat, however, as: love thy God, honor thy parents, destroy no life, confess sin, are actually not universal values. They have neither a divine nor a worldly existence independent of mortals, as religionists proclaim. They are, rather, objective mortal creations, man-conceived rules and regulations. Each is born out of the mind of man from some actual or imagined effects of a deed or event upon his life. Each such conceived universal value has an antithesis, that is, a contrary or negative state. These negative values are the things which it is believed befall man if he denies the positive ones. They tell of punishments and penalties producing pain, remorse, and anguish.

Apparently such values as the moral and religious good originate in human judgment and sentiment. They are interpreted by man as that

which constitutes the *right*. Almost all moral good is the human insight, called intuition if you wish, as to what behavior will put man *en rapport* with his surroundings. The moral good is conceived as that which brings peace and harmony to the emotional and psychic self. Such behavior, then, may be presumed to be a divine and universal value. In fact, it has been aptly said: "Morals are dependent upon values."

Proof that there are no universal moral values is found in the great diversity of religious dogma. As John Locke pointed out, there are no moral rules or regulations that are not violated by some nation thinking itself equally circumspect. Each people finds a kind of spiritual satisfaction in the behavior that it has been conditioned to accept.

If it be contended that there are such universal values as divine good, then all that which is not embraced by it and which is contrary to it must be evil. This notion then makes evil a definite creation. Such a claim goes back to the old theological theory that God has a satanic rival. This rival created fixed universal negative values called evil. Man is obviously put in a perplexed position by such a doctrine. On the one hand, he has to try to find facts of existence to fit into a category of good. On the other hand, he is obliged to try to escape the influence of so-called universal evil which competes. But the fact that some men select a course in life called evil shows that the values are human and arbitrary, and not universal.

There is a philosophical doctrine called *meliorism* which has a very important significance to value. Meliorism is derived from the Latin word *melior*, meaning better. William James, the philosopher, says: "Meliorism treats goodness in the world as neither necessary nor impossible. It treats it as a possibility which becomes more probable, the more numerous the actual good conditions become." In substance this means that the world, the Cosmic, is neither bad nor good. The world, however, has the potentiality of good exceeding the evil by man's will motivating him in the right direction.

But the world can only be made better in relation to self. A good world is one that contributes to those positive qualities that make for

the whole self of man. Let us consider man as a triune being—three fundamental selves merged into one. These are the *physical*, *mental*, and *psychic*. Each of these has a positive and negative value. What these values are depends upon the responses of the self to impressions received by it.

With the physical self, health is the positive value. It is positive and it is called good by man because health is satisfying to the physical being. Disease, then, is contrary, a negative value. The mental self has its inspiration, its satisfaction, in accomplishment. This, then, is its positive value. The negative value of the mental self is frustration, with its aggravations.

The psychic self, another aspect of this triune nature of man, has its higher sentiments or feelings, as the aesthetic qualities of beauty. These feelings are quite apart from the appetites and are found in such pursuits as the arts and moral values. These are the positive values which are established by the psychic self. That which is ugly, distressing emotionally, is the negative value of the psychic self. Such, of course, are the deficiencies of the positive; it is their lack which makes them relatively negative.

No value must be accepted of itself. It is always imperative that man first weigh a proclaimed value against the elements of self. Nothing should be declared a positive value unless it contributes to those positive values of the aspects of our being which we have briefly considered. Does this make each man, as the ancient sophists said, the measure of all things? In his estimation of personal values, man is, however, compelled to consider certain relatively *impersonal* conditions. Man is a member of society which is pragmatically necessary for his well-being. Society, then, becomes man's enlarged personal self. Consequently, man is obliged to ascribe a positive value to whatever contributes to the benefit of society. In doing this, it, in turn, advances man's personal self.

The primary duty which is incumbent upon each human being is that of assaying traditional value in relation to his personal existence and the times in which he lives. He must determine that traditional values have the essential qualities required by self.

Good and ideals are always related, that is, the ideal always appears as the good to the individual who has it. Each ideal, in fact, is conceived as a potential betterment of some aspect of self or it would not be held as an ideal. Ideals are motivations. They only need complementary conditions in our surroundings and way of living to make them become a reality having the same value as the ideal. We further expand our intimate world if our ideals have a practical good. The world, then, is as good as man sees it, and goodness is only as man values it.

Chapter XI

WHAT IS POSITIVE
THINKING?

IN ANY CONSIDERATION of what is positive thinking, which is a rather hackneyed term today, one must first have an understanding of the nature of positive. The positive, aside from the special connotation it has in electricity, is the *pleroma* or *fullness* of a thing or condition. A thing, let us say, is recognized for its particular quality. Its positive state is then the complete representation of all of those elements that compose this quality. It is the absolute assertion of that which is necessary to its nature. We say, for example, that something is *positively* alive. It manifests those qualities basically characteristic of life, such as irritation, assimilation, excretion, and reproduction.

To use an analogy which we have cited on previous occasions, a liquid quart container is positive in its state or condition when it becomes filled. When it has any amount less than its potentiality, its capacity, it is *negative*. The quart container is then not manifesting its *potentiality*, its true nature. Positive, consequently, is the fullness of a *function* or *quality* of something. When something has no such fullness, it is negative but only in relation to a standard of fullness which has been established for it. A pint is a negative incomplete condition for a quart, but a pint in itself is positive because such is the fullness or capacity of its own nature.

Positive has always been associated with action. Therefore, that which is said to be inactive or inert is a relatively negative state. This definition, however, only applies where the essence or the quality of a thing is considered to be action. Obviously then, its opposite must be inactive. On the other hand, let us use the example of a building. Its ideal state is one of stability or inertness, so its apparent motionlessness in such an example would be its positive condition. If, however, the building eventually reaches a state that its ordinary use produces

tremors within it, it then would be said to be in a negative condition. From this we surmise that positive and negative are really terms whose values are not innate but are related to human conceptions.

All *thought* is an active function. It requires cerebral energy, so consequently, thought is motion. However, because thought is active, we cannot say that it is always positive in its effects. Philosophically, thought may be said to be *positive* when it moves the individual to action. When thought is causative, when it compels one to objectify his ideas in action, it is positive. However, this does not take into consideration any moral or ethical values. In the individual sense, a criminal planning a robbery, which he executes according to plan, has been positive in his thinking. Military strategists who plan the details of the war which they eventually materialize have thought positively. When a group of individuals even planned to thwart or obstruct some function or venture, and successfully achieved it, they have thought positively. They have caused, by their thoughts, conditions or things to come into existence. Let us say that two nations engage in war and plan for the defeat of each other. Both are positive in their thinking to the extent that they cause acts to correspond or to participate in the thoughts which they have.

From the mystical and esoteric point of view, a thought is positive not only when it is causative but when it contributes to a certain moral or ethical ideal as well. It must be in harmony with what is interpreted or accepted as being *good*. In this instance, the plans of a criminal or any group seeking to attack the accepted good would be negative. Such a negative is obviously relative to that conceived to be good. There are religious sects who consider the doctrines of rivals as being negative—that is, negative in content to what they hold or believe to be divinely right.

The word *negative*, especially in metaphysical vernacular, has acquired a pernicious significance. In answer to these questions, then, we believe it first necessary to see that negative in itself is not inherently adverse.

Generally, in connection with thought, the word *negative* alludes to the stopping, opposing, or arresting of an idea. It does not imply that it is necessarily evil in its intent. In fact, a malevolent thought intended

to do harm can be positive. The word *positive*, in this connection, as said, refers to action, movement, accomplishment. An individual, for analogy, planning to rob a bank, is thinking psychologically in a *positive* way since his plan requires dynamic action. It is only by habit of expression, by usage, that we would call his thought negative.

To use the same analogy, law enforcement officers who learn of the planned robbery and develop a counter plan to prevent it, are thinking *negatively*. From this, one can see that *negative* has an adverse connotation associated with it only in relation to its application. In other words, it depends upon whether it is used in connection with a constructive or destructive purpose. For further analogy, a group of metaphysical students may concentrate to try to prevent by their thought the avowed function of another, which they think to be destructive. These metaphysical students are attempting to block, to arrest, an action by another. Psychologically, their thought in purpose and function is consequently negative, but it is for a beneficent reason.

Each of us may be inclined to think that any individual or group whose thoughts and deeds oppose our own purpose is thinking negatively. On the other hand, they may believe that their action is positive because their intent is morally and ethically correct from their point of view. Consequently, we can see that it is not whether the thought seeks to arrest or to stimulate something which alone makes it good or bad. Rather, it depends upon the *motive* behind it. If the thought is prompted by jealousy, avarice, or revenge with the intent to hurt, or to enslave or suppress truth, then it can be called negative in the moral and ethical sense, whether it is psychologically positive or negative in its action.

There are many who should have negative thoughts directed toward them to arrest what they are endeavoring to do. In other words, they should be stopped if possible.

Can negative thoughts reach out from the mind of another? The answer is *yes*. All thought is *vibratory*, regardless of its content. If thought can be transmitted, and we know that it can, then adverse thought can likewise be extended from the minds of those who conceive it. It can, depending upon the ability of the individual reaching out, annihilate

time and space as readily as can any constructive thought.

Are we to presume from this that everyone is at the mercy of malevolent persons and the thoughts that they transmit to inflict harm? One cannot be affected by such negative thoughts if he does not desire to submit to them. Our own thoughts of righteousness, of what we conceive as morally good, are in our subconscious as personal laws and are habitual with us. Their intimacy makes them *stronger* than the adverse thoughts reaching out from others. In other words, thoughts of others cannot penetrate our consciousness and compel us to act contrary to what we conceive as good if our motives oppose them.

To use an analogy, if we consciously would not enter into an act that society generally and we in particular think to be immoral, then no one can compel us by their thought to resort to such an act. Our own moral self, our own inner being, is the guardian of the threshold of consciousness. No exterior thought can surmount or supersede it.

There is only one exception: If we had no confidence in ourselves, and were afraid that we might submit to the evil thought of others, if our own restraint were so weak that we could be affected, then the thought of others could be harmful. Psychologically, however, it would not be that their thoughts actually were dominating our consciousness and life. Rather, it would be that subconsciously we were suggesting to ourselves that we were weak and must submit. This is the kind of *self* mental poisoning that Dr. H. Spencer Lewis explains in his book by that title. In that book, he refutes the superstitions of black magic, the *belief* in elementals and that man can be enslaved by the thoughts of others projected to him. He shows that the belief in such is the only dangerous factor; that thereby we poison our own minds.

If we ask for cosmic help and wish to keep clean minds and maintain certain morals, we then have a safeguard against any exterior impression that might be harmful. Our own thought, we repeat, is stronger than that of an external source.

Then there is the question as to how we know whether we are pursuing a *negative* path. A negative path is any action followed or adopted by us which tends to oppose or arrest a constructive cause.

Again the question of motive is involved. Analyze the motive and consequence of what you are about to say or do, or which you plan as a course of action. Ask yourself what results will follow from it. Will they be contrary to your moral standards or those of society? Will such action bring a hurt of any kind to another person? If the answer is in the affirmative, then you are pursuing a negative path. It is negative in the sense that it prevents what otherwise might have been a constructive venture.

We sometimes enter upon some activity without the realization that it is adverse in its nature. When we discover ultimately that it is so, we are usually provided with the opportunity of rectifying what has been done or preventing further action. Even this effort to prevent wrong action is in itself negative, as we have said, in that it is arresting something; but its purpose is *constructive*.

Chapter XII

WHAT IS SELF-MASTERY?

MASTERY, AS APPLIED to anything, constitutes the excellence of some art or skill. It means that the individual has full proficiency in some particular activity, whether it be mental or physical. This is understood if we use the common term, master mechanic. It denotes that one has learned to direct, control, and apply a specific knowledge in excess of what others without such training can do. The very word *master* denotes *action*. To master, one must *act*; he must accomplish or achieve. He has to attain a supremacy over certain conditions and things.

It is obvious that to be a master one cannot be pusillanimous; he must at least have sufficient strength of character to persevere in learning and gaining control of the elements of his skill or art. No one becomes a master of anything without personal effort. It is not an inherited virtue nor is it an honorary state. There is considerable labor in the attainment of any mastership. One is a master in that he excels and such excellence is a matter of application.

In the mastery of life, the term implies that the individual desires to direct intelligently, first, his own attributes and talents toward a conceived end or purpose. He wants to marshal his personal powers rather than allow them to propel him in any direction. One, for example, can be but an animal, allowing his appetites alone to form his purpose in life. Or he can discipline himself so that his natural desires, though satisfied, are directed toward some purpose that the individual conceives as transcending them.

Secondly, a mastery of life implies the creating of an environment or the directing of the same toward a personal ideal. Such a mastery of life may vary from individual to individual. One may master his life in conformity with what he thinks of as a purposeful life.

Thus A may be masterful and achieve success in terms of his own values. B may also master his life as he conceives the good. Yet both could be diametrically opposed as to the end such mastery serves. It is patent, therefore, that for a universal mastery of life, there must be a universal objective to be obtained. If this is not done, the mastery can be selfish, in the common understanding of that term.

What elements should a mastery of life contain that would have a universal acceptance? It is first incumbent on man to know as much about himself as his intelligence and facilities make possible. Knowing his emotions and ambitions, and honestly appraising his personality and habits cause most men to become conscious of their foibles as well as their strong qualities. It is then necessary, for a self-mastery, to control the weaknesses, to eliminate them if possible and to strengthen the personality. This likewise requires giving prominence to what we know to be our better qualities. This is the beginning of a personal mastery, but it is as yet far removed from a mastery of life.

Man is a social animal as well. He has a duty to society. He depends upon it; it influences his life considerably. It can affect for good or bad his personal mastery. Further, self-analysis must be made of one's relation to society. In furthering our personal interests, do we enhance the good society or are we, in some manner obstructing it?

Also, does society need to undergo certain changes? Is it in some way interfering with the proper mastery of ourselves? It is apparent that a society that tries to limit the thought and expression of the individual is obstructing man's self-mastery.

There is the final aspect of mastery of life and that is the question of what we shall as individuals do with our lives. Life is expendable, but how shall we spend it? To what ends shall our personal existence and that of society be directed? The spiritually and mystically minded person will ask for some cosmic or divine enlightenment in such matters.

He will want to have revealed to him some standard of goodness to which all the efforts of mankind ultimately should be directed. This, however, does not imply that one should neglect his mundane duties and ambitions. One can strive to master some trade or profession, for example. He can seek success in an enterprise and be a useful member of society. But all such mastery should be *subordinate* to a higher principle or ideal conceived by what he feels is his moral or spiritual self.

For further example, shall men try to establish on Earth a theocracy, a society patterned after what they think the spiritual dictates of God would be and in which they believe? If they think so, mastery then must consist of creating and directing all facets of experience within oneself and life toward that noble end.

A complete mastery of life, as we have stated, must of necessity take into consideration the moral self. All the lesser masteries must be coordinated into the one. But, we reiterate, even mastery of this inner self, which is called the cosmic part of ourselves, requires assertion on our part. It is not a passive acquisition, but a dynamic one.

Self-control and self-reliance are an essential in personal self mastery.

Aristotle defined virtue as the mean between an excess and a deficiency in human conduct. To be virtuous, according to this simple definition, requires one to know wherein what he does goes beyond what is required or falls short of the conduct expected of him.

Patently, self-control has the same requirements: What shall we control and why? The problem reduces itself to our code of ethics, morals, and religious precepts—if we have any. If a dogma of our religion forbade the eating of pork or of meat of any kind on Friday, and if we wanted to be conscientious in our observance of these restrictions and yet were tempted to indulge, we would then be faced with a problem of self-control. Others who did not have these same religious demands made upon them would obviously not need to control or restrain their desire to eat meat, or to do so only on certain days.

Self-control is made unnecessarily difficult by some because of what they impose upon themselves as denials. Fanatical beliefs which conflict with the fundamental nature of man often make self-control an impossibility. One must look fairly upon his strong desires and understand that they are not weaknesses of the flesh or temptations of some evil power.

Every craving, desire, appetite, or passion which is normal and thus common to all men and women is divinely conceived and is a *part of that cosmic order* which created man, his existence, and his consciousness upon this plane. Complete repression or abstinence is not wise. It actually attempts to oppose Divine Will and Cosmic Law. Obviously, any philosophy or religion that advocates such restrictions is unsound.

Self-control, therefore, if it requires continuous restraint of somatic urges, would be most difficult and would amount to destruction of normalcy and good health. Conversely, if we live a normal life, meeting as best we can the wants of nature and the reasonable ethical and moral demands of society, no appetite should dominate our consciousness.

Almost all inordinate physical desires are prompted by subnormal or abnormal physical conditions. For example, concupiscence, abnormal desire, is the result of ill health, most times of glandular abnormality. To control it is difficult until the physical cause has been remedied.

The very fact that a functional or bodily desire persistently dominates our thinking oftentimes proves the need for a physical examination and eventual cure. When the cure has been effected, self-control becomes quite simple.

Let us realize that *will* itself is really an *artificial* desire. When we will to do something, it is because we are dominated by that thought above all else. That thought is supreme, above every other physical or *mental desire*. We may love to go fishing, and yet of our own volition remain home to care for an ill member of the family. The sense of obligation has created an artificial desire, which when expressed as will power, gratifies us more than the pleasure of fishing. If this were not so, we would not remain at home. We have said that will power is an artificial desire. This is so because it is mentally created. It is not involuntary or instinctive.

Habits, however, tend to weaken will power insofar as their particular nature is concerned. Many times there are two desires in conflict with each other. We know or believe that one has more rectitude; yet we submit to the other. When we have so decided or chosen, we have exercised *will*. We have engendered and assigned more power to one of the desires than to the other.

Each time we do this, will is more easily opposed. Eventually, by repetition, a habit is formed. The objective mind suggests to the subjective mind that the habit become a law. Thereafter, whenever the circumstances or incidents related to the habit are experienced, the subjective mind, as a habit reacts to them without our willing ourselves to do so, and sometimes almost without any conscious effort.

After the conclusion of the habitual act, we may regret it and wish that we had the self-control or the will power to restrain it. In such circumstances, we can best strengthen our self-control by forming a *counter-habit*. It is not sufficient when the undesired habit takes possession to affirm mentally or orally, "I will not do this again." That will be of no avail.

Such efforts and affirmations are puerile because they are too late. If we had had the will to restrain the habit, we should have done so immediately; so the later affirmations add nothing. We must create competition for the undesired habit. We must ask: "What appeals to me more strongly? What is it that I love to do that is constructive, healthy, and morally proper, in which I can indulge every time the unwanted habit makes itself felt?"

Whatever that may be, if it can be easily done and if it can be done immediately, by all means indulge it. It may take a little will power, but since you like to do it, it will require far less effort than attempting to repress the detrimental habit.

By doing this each time we are tempted, we would eventually form another habit which would also become a law in the subjective mind. Further, it would become associated with the unwanted habit and every time the former made itself known, the opposing influence or habit would do likewise, and self-control would become comparatively easy.

Once the volition to control some act as a habit has been broken the only remedy is that suggested—a *contra-desire* or *counter habit*. The subject of *self-reliance* now takes us into a different realm of consideration. Another word for self-reliance is *confidence*. Every normal human being has a certain amount of self-reliance, and when he is young, it exists in a generous proportion. Psychologically, the quickest method of destroying that confidence or self-reliance is to have a series of failures.

This is especially true if the failures reflect upon our good judgment and abilities, and if they embarrass us extremely. We cannot avoid some failures in life, for we are not perfect in our knowledge and cannot anticipate everything that may occur and, farther, because our experiences are limited.

Extremely disheartening failures, however, can be prevented if we do not hitch our wagons to a too distant star. That old adage is more often a dangerous pursuit than a successful one. To put it simply, we must not try to take a whole flight of stairs in one jump. If we hesitate a moment and think, we will know inwardly and at least admit to ourselves what our abilities and powers are, and also *our limitations*.

Unless we have had experiences which cause us to believe that we have the agility and strength to reach the top of the flight in one jump, we should not attempt it. It is better to confine ourselves to three or four steps at first with limited success than to experience complete failure.

Just as the realization of each ideal we have set for ourselves stimulates us mentally and physically and gives us reliance upon the powers we have exerted, so, too, will failures rob us of the confidence and strength of accomplishment. Let us not set our sights too high; instead, let us shoot at those things which there is a probability of hitting. We must *climb* upward, not leap. Each time we succeed, our self-reliance makes it possible for us to command and coordinate our faculties easily so as to be able to go a little higher and do a little more the next time.

Parents often, merely to flatter themselves, ruin the self-reliance of their children by imposing upon them tasks far beyond their age.

The child knows that these things are expected of him. When he fails, his confidence in himself begins to wane, and if this is continued, eventually an inferiority complex is developed.

From the study of children—not as experts but just as careful observers—we can gain some excellent lessons in psychology. Let a person set a goal for his small son within his possibilities; then let him question the boy as to whether he thinks he can do it. The boy will desire to show that he can master what has been set before him. If the parent expresses apparent surprise and pleasure when he does, the boy realizes the satisfaction of attainment and his self-reliance is greatly strengthened.

Therefore, let me say, set for yourselves difficult tasks, perhaps those which will compel you to exert yourself and use your talents to the utmost, but still tasks *within the limits of your abilities* and which you have a good chance of accomplishing. When you succeed, you will be victorious not only over the circumstances but also over self, for you will have enlarged your self-reliance.

Chapter XIII

MYSTICISM—A WAY OF LIFE

THE SUBJECT OF MYSTICISM is one that is voluminous. Principally, this is due to the length of time that it has engaged human thought, resulting in the many varying interpretations which have been given to it. Mysticism has been distorted and twisted to support different religious concepts and philosophies, but mysticism is a pure thread in itself, regardless of the different patterns time has woven into it.

In its purest form, mysticism can be divided into three categories: *tradition*, *doctrine*, and *application*. When we think of tradition we think of something that has already begun. Tradition, then, is merely the tracing of the acts or imagined development of mysticism. But before mysticism was a tradition, a word, belief, or system, there must have been an underlying cause. Did mysticism arise from human environment? Was it the result of an inner experience had by an individual? Or was mysticism prompted by the need for some fulfillment in life?

Down through the centuries man has struggled for independence. He has called this struggle by various names. Sometimes it is called *freedom*, *liberty*, or *self-expression*. Actually, a person can never be absolutely independent because he is too dependent on the urges of self. Instincts, emotions, and appetites, as well as reason, bend him one way or the other. With all of man's prating about his independence, he is nevertheless very conscious of his *dependence*. He has been long aware of conditions, influences, and factors in life beyond his control.

Recently, a grave was unearthed in Spain. The origin of this grave is estimated to be of the Paleolithic Age, or the middle Stone Age of approximately 25,000 years ago. Along with the human skeleton were what appeared to be remnants of food. Also found were oddly shaped polished stones. These puzzling stones appear to be some kind of symbolic artifact. Perhaps they were used as offerings made to some conceived being in another life. Certainly the food and other objects buried with this Stone Age man are possible evidence of a belief in an afterlife. The artifacts tend to show man's dependence upon something that transcends this life.

How could man attract and draw supernatural power to himself? Moreover, how could he control and direct such powers? This quest led man into magic and religion. It is a moot question which came first—magic or religion? A study of primitive religion discloses a magico-religious basis showing that the two are psychologically interwoven. Some of today's well-established religions continue to exhibit these characteristics of a religio-magical background.

It was natural that man should first turn to his fellow humans for a solution to his problem. In war one turns to the strong, the courageous. The skilled hunter was consulted in order to find the best hunting ground. The one thought to possess exceptional wisdom or some strange power was believed to have intercourse with the supernatural. Such a person was thought to be contiguous with the very powers which man sought to have serve him. Individuals afflicted with strange maladies, as, for example, epileptic seizures, were thought to be infused with supernatural forces. Those who were shrewd could deceive their fellows into thinking that they had special powers.

Out of such a heterogeneous kind of people there emerged sorcerers, shamans, and priests. With time, the priesthood became a distinctive class in society. They studied ways and means which were thought to invoke the gods in man's behalf. Further, it was thought that, by their rites and practices, priests had acquired a definite supernatural relationship not had by other men. Here, then, a very obvious dependence existed. Men were obliged to turn to the priests who acted as intermediaries between the men and the gods.

The priesthood formed schools for divulging knowledge about the gods. In these schools were initiatory places in which the mysteries were disclosed to the initiates in a kind of ritual drama. The mysteries explained how the gods came into existence, died, and were reborn. They explained man's mission on Earth. The mysteries also related how man should live so as to assure immortal happiness.

In such mystery schools as the ancient Osirian school of Egypt, man first sought an insight into the nature of the gods. The mystery schools then spread into Greece, and there the Orphic and the Eleusinian schools were pre-eminent. However, the Egyptian rites and ceremonies continued into the late Roman period. The initiates in these schools came to experience a union with their image of deity.

In Greece, great centers of initiation were established at Eleusis and the island of Delos. The Greeks called the initiator, or the interpreter of the mysteries, the *mystagogue*. Our present word, *mystic*, is derived from the Greek word *mystes*. The *mystae* were the initiates into the *mysteries* to whom the secret gnosis, or knowledge, was imparted under solemn oath. An ancient ritualistic definition of the function of the mysteries descends to us. It is: "I close my eyes and my mouth. I keep an absolute silence."

However, some individuals *alone* began to have unusual and ecstatic experiences. In their sincere desire to know about their god-relationship, they contemplated the mysteries. In caves, on mountaintops, or alone on the desert beneath the starry heavens, they meditated. In their meditations they wondered:

What is this Supreme Being like? What would one feel like in His presence? Could man be close to the Deity? Must man be separated by the huge space of the heavens from Deity? We can assume that with such thoughts the meditators felt a titillating warmth come over them. Something within them seemed to soar out into space. They no longer felt alone. The Earth, the stars—*all* appeared to be a throbbing part of man himself.

These *mystae* experienced a *oneness*, a unity with all reality. They were an intimate personal channel for this god power, and were now aware

that they needed no shamans or priest—intermediaries—in order to receive cosmic power. These individuals were the first mystics. They discovered and proclaimed the basic phenomena and principles of mysticism. It was taught that man can personally experience a unity of self with whatever he defines as the Cosmic, the Absolute.

Here, then, was an open door to omniscience. However, man became impatient, wanting to make the experience quick and facile. He also wanted to prolong it so as to escape life's demands upon him. As a result, the objective interpretations of these inner experiences became distorted. For centuries there was no universally proclaimed method of attaining the mystical consciousness. There was no concise analysis of the states of the mystical experience, and likewise, no generally accepted explanation of the ultimate effects of mystical attainment for man.

Time and unemotional philosophical reflection have changed these conditions. This reflective thought has enabled us to sift through the reports of the mystical experiences, rationally approaching their methods and effects, and then categorizing them. This then brings us to the second category of mysticism, the *doctrinal*.

The steps of the grandeur of consciousness—the ecstasy—can be reduced to a simple order. The substance of each step is, however, ineffable. At least, it is so personal that no one will accept another's interpretation as being descriptive of his own experience. Though we speak of mystical doctrines, there can be no fixed dogma or creed of mysticism. At best, the doctrines are but a system of rules of procedure to help one attain the mystical state. However, from varied personal experiences, certain principles, as doctrines, have developed. As one mystic has said: "Ours is an experimental science. We can but communicate our system, never its results."

Mysticism must be a personal experience. It is not an accumulation of facts. Mysticism is a "feeling," a kind of special *living experience*, not just a *knowing*. The mystical consciousness must be considered a ladder of ascent. It is a climb upward in consciousness to a final stage of unity of all phases of the self.

Dionysius the Areopagite, the first convert of the Apostle Paul, was one of the great masters and mystics. He said of mysticism: "It provides the highest and the most divine things which it is given us to see and know." This seeing, of course, meant an *inner awareness*.

A doctrine of mysticism denies that knowledge is limited to an unfolding of our normal consciousness. It further denies that reason alone is the sole channel to truth, in that such a method is hopelessly incomplete. This doctrine further proclaims that there exists in the heart a glorious intellectual mirror in which man may perceive the true nature of things. This, of course, is an allegorical phrasing referring to the more complete view of reality which lies beyond our surface consciousness.

Mysticism expounds that proper meditation captures the whole self. Such meditation integrates the various levels of self within the subconscious. The light of such meditation provides a wonderful discernment. It has been affirmed that one hour of such inward light provides a person with more learning than he can derive from man in one thousand hours.

We must understand, of course, that this light and learning does not refer to accumulated facts. It is not just perception in the ordinary sense of the word. Rather, it is *apperception*, an understanding and an appreciation of life's experiences. It is one thing to perceive—we do this every hour of our wakefulness—but it is quite another thing to understand what we see, hear, and feel in life. Another mystical doctrine proclaims that perfection is not just an obedience to the needs of the body but rather an obedience to the true light of the inner self.

The technique of mysticism consists of the means of attaining the mystical experience, creating the *oneness* of self with Self, and finally the unity of self with God, the Absolute, or the Cosmic. From out of the perfect experience there emerge all those benefits which are credited to mysticism. We must realize, however, that every mystical experience is partially a product of our social and intellectual environment. No experience which we have is unrelated to our customs, beliefs, and training. Every experience is framed in our ideas and within the limitations of our comprehension.

There are three main types of mystical experience. First, there is a joyous apprehension of the Absolute. This is not a conscious union with the Absolute. The self still realizes its separateness. It is not immersed in the Cosmic but rather has an awareness of it.

The second type of experience is a deeper perception. It is a greater clarity of the phenomenal world—our world of everyday. Blake, the mystic poet, explained this when he said: “The doors of perception are cleansed.”

The third type of mystical experience is when the psychic consciousness is quickened. It is said that there is a dialogue between the surface consciousness and the deeper levels of our consciousness. This may be construed to mean that there is a deeper flow of intuitive impressions or, we may say, *illumination*.

In the final stage of mystical consciousness *all* is *one*. Man seems to perceive a unifying thread tying together all of the particulars, all of the myriad things of the world. In other words, the *one* appears to be that which gives everything else its existence. This is the very thing that scientists are trying to discover by physical methods—a true basic unity for the universe and its phenomena.

In connection with the mystical experience there are also what are known as the *noetic effects*. These are states of insight and depths of comprehension which can be plumbed by the intellect. What is realized as a result of them is a personal conviction that is unshaken by the skepticism of others.

Such mystics and theologians as the Christian scholars Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas declared that all divine revelation was *truth* and must be accepted on faith. Whenever there is a contradiction by reason, the latter must give way to faith and revelation. In philosophy reason was free to speculate on all subjects other than the revealed truths of theology. They declared, however, that reason could and did at times demonstrate the truth of faith and revelation. The mystics further affirmed that *intuition* was an agent of truth even equal to revelation. By means of intuition one could acquire the truth regarding the workings of nature and of the cosmos that surpass the reason to singly realize.

Furthermore, intuition by its self-evident clarity could inspire and guide the reason so that man could demonstrate and objectify the truth. Thus it is possible for man, it is held, by the transcendent means of intuition to gain a glimpse of the nascent state of things, a pristine vision, by which he can reduce reality to natural causes and bring it within a scope that man can experience.

Also related to the mystical experience is the effect of transiency. This means that the mystical experience cannot be sustained for long—a half hour at the most. The majority of mystical experiences are of a few seconds duration. The time lapse, like that of a dream, may seem much longer. The mystical experience may easily fade in memory, but with recurring experiences it develops further, and eventually details may be recalled.

The final category of mysticism is its *application*. This is its value, its worth to everyday living. Mysticism must not be construed as an escape from reality, nor is mysticism impractical in its ultimate effect. The illumination provided by mysticism causes an acuteness of the reason. It broadens one's perspective of the vicissitudes of life. As Dr. H. Spencer Lewis said: "It puts man in partnership with the Cosmic. Man becomes aware that he does not stand alone. He knows how to supplement his limited objective powers. He is thus fortified in emergencies, in demands that are made upon him."

In mystical experience both the *subject* and the *object* are fused in the understanding. Simply, there are fewer gaps between what we experience and our understanding of them. Consequently, this lessens fears and the engendering of superstitions from doubt and ignorance.

In conclusion, it must be stated that a mystic does not have to be a believer in any organized religion. Plotinus, one of the earliest great mystics, was a Neoplatonic philosopher, not a religionist. Albert Einstein, of our times, said: "The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science."

Chapter XIV

SUGGESTION TO THE INNER SELF

WHAT DO WE MEAN by *suggestion*? Of what does it consist? These questions come within the scope of semantics, that is, the basic nature of a word itself. As we analyze the conditions which give rise to the word, *suggestion*, we find that much which is ordinarily attributed to it is actually *not* related to it. A suggestion is a word, a sign or gesture which conveys an idea *not directly expressed* within the medium, itself. It will be noted that a suggestion is distinct from a symbol. The latter is intended to represent a specific idea *directly* and *simply*. Psychologically, suggestion must find some association or relation to an idea had in the mind of the recipient or it means nothing. In other words, it must arouse some idea within the mind of the one to whom it is made, or it is not a suggestion.

Let us use an analogy to give this point greater clarity. Suppose two men are working in bright, glaring sunlight. One continually shields his eyes, both for comfort and to see better. Then, the other man takes out a pair of sunglasses and proffers them to him, but says nothing as he does so. Here, then, is a suggestion. It implies that the glasses should be used to shield the eyes. The glasses indirectly, are associated with the individual's intention and action of shielding his eyes.

The intelligence and the imagination of an individual are contributing factors also in causing incidents or conditions to become suggestions. One person may see in something a suggestion; another may not. For

further analogy, a person may have difficulty in carrying several odd-shaped, cumbersome objects. Perhaps they slip from his arms as he walks. He sees suddenly, stacked against a wall of a building, several discarded small cartons. This *suggests* that one of the cartons would hold all the miscellaneous articles he has and facilitate carrying them.

Consequently, we can see that a suggestion must not be subtle or too unrelated to some idea in the mind of the other to whom it is being made. It must clearly express, even though *indirectly*, a possible relationship. Suggestion is very commonly and effectively used in connection with modern advertising. An advertisement in midsummer may show a glass containing a refreshing drink protruding from a cake of ice; the beads of moisture and frost can be seen upon the glass. Perhaps, in addition to the glass and the ice will be an illustration of a large thermometer showing a temperature of summer heat. To the reader on a hot summer day, or to the passer-by, if it is an advertisement in a shop window, it becomes associated immediately with the heat of the day and his thirst.

The *ineffective* use of suggestion is often seen in certain types of extreme abstract art. The blotches of color on the canvas, the crisscross geometric patterns and confusion of design in some such paintings do have a very definite meaning to the artist. To *him*, they objectively express a subconscious urge or impression which he has symbolized in his art.

The relationship between the design and the feeling are entirely intimate and related to himself alone. Rarely do they call forth in another who views the art, the same interpretation and feeling which the artist intended. The subject insofar as the viewer is concerned is too subtle, too indirect, and too removed from any ideas of his own.

If we make a direct remark which in itself conveys an idea, it is then not a suggestion in the psychological sense. Rather, it is a *proposal*. Such proposals are very often erroneously termed "suggestions." Let us use still another analogy for explanation. Suppose one person says to another: "This Sunday I do not know what to do. I have completely free time."

The other may respond by saying: “Why not attend the splendid public concert to be held in the park this Sunday afternoon?” Commonly it would be said that the second person had made a suggestion. Actually, however, he has directly expressed an idea in the form of a *proposal*. The remark conveys very clearly its idea or intent. It requires no association of ideas on the part of the one to whom it was made in order to be understood.

Often we may have become victims of this misuse of the word *suggestion*. Perhaps in some literature it should have referred to “a proposal,” “a command,” or “a request,” depending upon the subject matter of the particular reading matter. This is especially so where we are concerned with communicating an idea to the subconscious.

In our relations with the subconscious mind, the *inner self* of our psychic being, directness and frankness are necessary whenever possible. The purpose is to implant a specific idea in the subconscious mind so that it can act upon it in a definite way. Therefore, we should in our meditations clearly and precisely formulate the idea to be communicated. There is no need to complicate the situation by being indirect or subtle.

As we are told in mystical studies, one should first determine the merit, the worthiness of our request or proposal. We should learn whether it is consistent with cosmic principles, whether it may be morally and ethically proper—as we feel and think of righteousness. For, if what we propose is not right cosmically or is counter to our real inner moral sense, it will not be acted upon by the subconscious, the inner self.

Of course, sometimes it may not be possible for us to express concisely and simply what we wish the subconscious to act upon. In such instances the idea then may be *suggested* by some act or gesture which will depict it—more properly symbolizing what we want done.

For an idea to become firmly implanted in the subconscious, it must have a certain puissance behind it. That is, it must have an emotional impact and power. It should represent our will and our determination. If it has not this stimulus behind it, it is not registered in the subconscious.

Suppose one has a crisis in his business or personal affairs.

The wrong course of action in connection with the problem might result in some serious personal loss. The individual has not been able to arrive at a convincing and logical decision as to what should be done. He therefore wishes intuitive assistance from the inner self, to draw upon its superior judgment. If, with depth of feeling he clearly delineates in his own mind the problem and then frankly asks for inspiration and illumination, the subconscious mind will work upon the problem.

Thereafter, of course, for twenty-four hours, at least, the petitioner, as we may call him, should no longer dwell upon the problem objectively. He should give the subconscious self an opportunity to take over. In the science of psychology this process is called “unconscious work.” This means that though we are not conscious of what is being done, the idea is nevertheless being acted upon by the subconscious mind. Ultimately, the answer or solution, if it is possible, will come through as an intuitive flash or hunch, as it is popularly called.

Just when such will occur is difficult to say. If it is forthcoming, it is usually within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. However, it is not until one has first sincerely striven to reach a decision or solution *objectively*. There must be a true, passionate or final appeal to the subconscious, the inner self. It should not be done evasively, that is, to avoid the effort of reaching a solution by the use of our own objective powers.

If we know what should be done in some circumstances and we want cosmic aid, then we can *suggest* the solution to the Cosmic. Suppose a member of one’s family is to undergo a serious surgical operation. We can by mentally visualizing the circumstances, that is, by picturing the person recuperating, leaving the hospital, and returning to health, suggest that cosmic power be used to bring about this picture.

In conclusion, we must reiterate that suggestion to the subconscious must have a strong, emotional stimulus—as should all direct proposals, or they are ineffective. Remember, it is our natural obligation to use our will first to bring about a satisfactory conclusion or the satisfaction of some desire. It is incumbent upon us to do that. That is why we *have*

will, reason, imagination, etc. It is only when we fail to gain an end by the use of those personal powers that an appeal then should be made to the subconscious. In fact, a weak or indifferent will which could be the principal cause of a failure objectively, is likewise incapable of stimulating the subconscious or the inner self, to act in any manner.

Chapter XV

WHAT IS TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION?

THERE ARE FADS in cultural pursuits, in philosophies, the arts and sciences, just as there are in foods and clothing. The subjects of fads are not always original concepts. Often they are age-old practices and customs that have suddenly become popularized in a modified form. To the dilettantes who indulge them they are strikingly refreshing and a novelty. Such interests, however, go through a brief cycle of intense acceptance by a large portion of the public who are always seeking ways of escape from their ennui. Eventually these activities revert to their original and proper channel of probity where they have a more lasting nature to the real aspirant and student.

Such a current fad has the lofty title of *transcendental meditation*. It has caught the attention of the press and popular periodicals because some of its transient adherents are personalities of the popular arts—the stage and screen. There are always mentalities who are greatly impressed by whatever may attract celebrities for the moment. Psychologically, perhaps, they feel that if they pursue a similar interest they will assume vicariously some of the glamour of such personalities. Consequently, there is the momentary flurry of interest in transcendental meditation.

What is transcendental meditation? What benefits can it provide? Is it wholly applicable in a Western world culture? Buddhism has incorporated meditation as a basic requirement of its religio-philosophy.

Though Buddhism as a worldwide movement espouses meditation, yet it is a syncretic doctrine with them. It has in its essence been borrowed by them from much earlier Vedic writings. In the Pali language, said to be the one in use at the time of Gautama Buddha, the word *meditation* is known as *dhyana*. The practice was associated with life in retirement and the concentration of the mind upon a *single thought*.

In the ancient Rig-Vedic period the requirement to do penance involved bodily mortification, that is, the denial of certain bodily requirements to the point of personal, physical suffering. But in the latter, post-Upanishadic period, a transition of practice occurred. Doing penance began with meditation upon a sacred symbol—a mantra. The methods vary but they are collectively “a universal method of mental culture of all Indian religious schools.”

In Buddhism it is quite necessary to distinguish between meditation and absorption. *Meditation* becomes *absorption* when the subject and the object are completely blended. In other words when the meditator and that which he is meditating upon become so blended into one that he is no longer conscious of self—that is *absorption*.

In this practice, it would appear that that which is concentrated upon, the object, be it a symbol or whatever else, is only a means to arrest the objective consciousness; it is apparently to momentarily lose awareness of the self that is ordinarily realized.

There are highly intricate preparatory methods in Buddhist meditation. Paradoxically, these are forms of meditation in themselves. We are told in such preparatory texts that a quick-tempered novice should practice on love. He should regard all sentient beings as though they were his parents or brothers. Through this meditation he must include them in his desires for well-being and happiness.

Further, a novice who is deficient in concentration should at first practice “counting his inspirations and expirations”—his rhythmic breathing. Those novices who have difficulty in suppressing their impure desires are instructed to meditate upon the impurity and impermanence of the human body. This psychological advice is

to impress the individual with the fact that his desires are related principally to his organic functions and that they are evanescent and therefore not worthy of single importance.

A novice who is dull or stupid “should practice self-culture by meditating upon the twelve chains of causation.” This doctrine is rather abstruse and one wonders, therefore, how the novice who is a dullard can improve his intellect by resorting to such profundity. We are finally told that when one becomes successful in the concentration of the mind to the extent of suppressing the senses, he gradually attains a state of ecstasy. This ecstasy is considered a kind of karmic compensation. One labors through this practice and thereby, on reaching a state of ecstasy, has atoned for any past wickedness. He has likewise begun to liberate himself from the hold that worldly interests have upon him.

This ecstasy or extreme pleasure, is itself divided into four stages or degrees of *meditation*. The *first* dhyana, or meditation, is a state of joy and reflection which results from *seclusion*. The meditator has separated himself from all sensuality and sin. It is to be noted that interpreted in this way this seclusion does not necessarily mean physical isolation from society, that is, becoming an anchorite, a hermit. It is a mental seclusion—the barring to consciousness of certain thoughts. In mystical literature this kind of seclusion is known as *mystical silence*. The *second* stage of ecstasy is “of joy and gladness born of deep tranquillity.” However, that is *without* reflection and investigation. These are now suppressed. It is called “tranquilizing thought,” the predominance of intuition. This may be construed as meaning a joy that comes from an intuitive illumination or knowledge without the necessity of exercising the reason.

The *third* stage of this meditation and ecstasy is patience “—through gladness and the destruction of passion.” It is said that one becomes “aware in his body of that delight.” This inner delight is perhaps a peace and contentment when one is devoid of the perturbation of desires and their transient satisfactions. The *fourth*, the very highest stage of this series of meditation is “purity of equanimity and recollection without sorrow and without joy by destruction of previous gladness and grief.”

All of this would seem to be a hierarchal nihilism —in other words, each stage of meditation suppressing the former sensations and objectives and, in turn, introducing what is a higher state of attainment. Finally, what is left is almost inexplicable, an equanimity which is not definable in any sentient terms. Yet, it is a form of consciousness, or the state would not be realized.

One might ask at this juncture of instruction, What is the ultimate *purpose* of this concentration and meditation? It is said that it is to attain *arhatship*. Such attainment provides, it is proclaimed, perfect enlightenment. But is this again not just another abstract term? Can this be reduced to concrete values or advantages?

Personal advantages are set forth as being the extinction of desires; the cessation of thoughts which produce illusions and which become chief obstacles to arhatship. More definitely it is consolidation of that knowledge which makes more facile “concentration of the mental faculties on a certain thought.” It is a strengthening of consciousness which provides an understanding of the *four noble truths*. Also a distinct advantage is said to be the *acquisition of superhuman faculties* of which there are said to be six. Then the final benefit is related to be “ultimate tranquility or rest.”

This Buddhist meditation process with all of its myriad ramifications has been summarized as follows: first, concentration of the mind upon a single thought. Gradually the soul becomes filled with a supernatural ecstasy and serenity while the mind still reasons upon and investigates the chosen subject for contemplation. Second, the mind is freed from reasoning and contemplation while the ecstasy and serenity remain. Third, while the thoughts are still fixed as before, the meditator divests himself of previous ecstasy and attains tranquil ecstasy. Lastly, the mind is exalted and purified. It is then indifferent to the distractions of emotion, pleasure, and pain.

The *Upanishads* form a concluding portion of the ancient Vedic literature. In fact, the literal translation of this word means “sitting down near” the teacher to receive instructions. The *Upanishads* contain the earliest records of Indian philosophical speculation and are the foundation upon which most later philosophy and religion of

India rest—according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the noted Indian scholar and the world-renowned philosopher. He states that the Upanishads are not so much philosophical truths as “to bring peace and freedom to the anxious human spirit.”

The Upanishads put forth metaphysical considerations as dialogues and disputations. The content is poetically delivered by authors whose minds were philosophically tempered. As Dr. Radhakrishnan further states, the Upanishads represent the *striving of the human mind to grasp reality*. The age of the Upanishads is a matter of speculation. However, it is generally conceded that the earliest portions are of a period from 3000-1000 B.C.

Our brief consideration of the Upanishads is because the beginnings of the yoga system are to be found in them. It is these variations of the yoga system which are being popularly introduced as *transcendental meditation*. We now turn back to the Upanishads momentarily to relate the basic precepts of yoga meditation. The Upanishads state that reality is not rightly perceived by our imperfect understanding. The mind is said to be like a mirror in which reality is reflected. In other words, the extent to which we know reality depends upon the state of our own mind, that is, whether it can respond to the full extent of reality. This conception has a parallel in Greek thought, in particular in the *Dialogues* of Plato.

The yoga meditation of the Upanishads is intended to help man overcome his mental limitations that he might more fully experience true reality. Yoga presents instruction on how to refine the mind and improve the mirror of consciousness. This is to be accomplished by keeping the mirror clean, that is, by keeping out unneeded peculiarities. It is only through such a discipline, it is related, that one can rise to “the height of impersonality from which the gifted souls of the world see distant visions.”

The yoga doctrine expounds that our empirical, objective consciousness turns itself back on the *external* world. The consciousness becomes lost in the illusions of the unreal world of the sense impressions. When the aspirant rises above the empirical—outerself, “one gets not negation but intensification of the self.” This can be

construed as meaning that one acquires a greater comprehension of the whole essence of the integrated self.

The yoga system for meditation, like that of Buddhism, requires that one go through a whole course of mental and spiritual discipline. "The mind of a man who does not know his own self goes hither and thither like water pouring down the crags in all directions. But when his mind is purified he becomes one with the great ocean of life which dwells behind all mortal forms."

Yoga insists on exercise of perfect control of our passions and emotions. A trance state may be induced by controlling breathing and concentrating. The method also includes concentrating on mystical words, mantras, or symbols to fix one's attention upon. The psychological aspect of this practice is to cultivate a steadiness of mind by focusing attention for a time on one particular object and eliminating other impressions.

Breathing is an essential part of the meditation process in yoga as is also the reciting of certain mantras. In the ancient Vedic writings it is said that reciting the mantra, om, constitutes an offering to Brahma. Meditation on om is the root and essence of Veda and the way, it is said, of union with Brahma (oneness is accomplished). An ancient phrase relates: "For him who engages in reciting om no danger exists anywhere." It is said that sixteen suppressions of the breath accompanied by the recitation of a liturgy and of om repeated daily after a month will even purify the slayer of a learned Brahman!

Yoga and its meditation forms have come to mean to its devotees a discipline by which they hope to train themselves to bear the shock of the world and yet leave the soul untouched.

Meditation has also constituted a prominent part of the Christian religion. A meditative mood is considered to be conducive to a devout life. For the Christian it has been said meditation is the *eye of the soul*. It enables one to see "the light that never changes."

What is the psychological basis of meditation? As William James, eminent psychologist, has related and has long been taught by the

Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, *consciousness is a stream*. In its various depths or levels there are different perceptions, sensations, or realizations to be had. Consciousness as an awareness adapts itself to the demands which are made upon it. Empirical existence, our relationship to our physical environment, makes the most dominant demand upon consciousness. The objective percepts, the awareness of self and its surroundings, is a paramount requirement of survival. The sensations which they provide, the pleasures, distractions, and pains, have a comparatively low threshold of sensation in relation to the other levels of consciousness. The more surface level of consciousness is the objective.

Because of such biological demands we acquire the habit of submitting to them readily. The objective world and its sensations become to most persons the whole nature of self and its expressions. However, occasionally we all have glimpses, call them intuitive impressions of a subliminal world—the so-called subconscious one. They are the fleeting sensations rising from the other levels of the stream of our consciousness. Often these provide an ecstasy, a pleasure which far exceeds those provided by the appetites and passions.

Those who stop to think and have had these passing, though infrequent, experiences, come to realize that a greater *reality* undoubtedly lies beyond the perception level of common consciousness. How is it to be gained? Each receptor organ, as our eyes, ears, nose, receives intense stimulation during our waking consciousness. To bypass them, to free the mind of them is a difficult task. If, however, we concentrate—focus our attention on some single thing or subject for a time—it helps lessen or diminish the impact of the other stimuli upon our objective, surface consciousness. It makes *meditation* possible, that is, it lets images from the deeper levels of consciousness come to the fore. Transcendental meditation from the psychological point of view is a loss of personal identity with the reality of the world. It is the attempt to enter into a wholly subjective state for full realization of reality. The sensations which are experienced *are not comparable* to those of the physical senses. Further, *transcendental meditation* should not be used as an escape from the world of reality as it is so commonly done by devotees popularly attracted to it. It is true that what reality is like we do not actually know. We receive only impressions of it through

our receptor senses. These are transformed into sensations which we interpret. However, our physical existence is dependent upon our adjustment to such illusions—if that is what they are. Plato called it the Shadow World.

We can and should try to know more of reality and of ourselves through the medium of our other levels of consciousness which meditation makes possible. But to consider the body a prison of self, something to be demeaned, and to think of the appetites and passions as being that which should be completely suppressed is a *false* conception.

We should not endeavor to escape the world and its impact on our life but rather to *master* our personal life in this world. From the *Rosicrucian* point of view to endeavor to live in a mental and psychic vacuum through any method is a negative approach to human existence.

Chapter XVI

WILLING ONESELF TO RELAX

TO RELAX MEANS to cause a condition of tension to become lax, or to yield. There are innumerable things which may cause tension. Primarily these are stimulations by which we have, through the lash of will, *driven* ourselves to accomplish something. The muscles, under the impulse of the nerves being tense for a long period, are unable immediately to slacken or yield when the work has been accomplished. It is like a spring that has been compressed for a long time under pressure. It loses its resilience and is unable to return completely to its former state when the pressure is removed.

There are, of course, psychosomatic tensions. We are not conscious objectively of what causes our nervous tension under such conditions. There is a subconscious aggravation as subliminal anxiety which causes emotional reactions. These emotional states cause the tension. Such persons cannot readily be taught to relax. They do not know the cause of their tension and cannot eliminate it without help for the emotional disturbances. They first need the assistance of a psychologist or psychoanalyst to make them aware of the latent causes of their trouble. When they can again face realities, realizing them, adjusting consciously to circumstances which they may have been subconsciously opposing, the tension eases—at least, from that time on they can be taught to relax.

It must be realized that *will* is a mental desire. We say *mental desire* to distinguish it from the desires arising solely out of the appetites and

instincts. The desire of *will*, as we know, can and often does oppose other desires. We may, for example, force ourselves to go on a hunger strike when physically our body craves food. We may, likewise, deny ourselves sleep in order to pursue some work or pleasure. One may deny a sex appetite because of moral ideals enforced by will. Therefore, will can be and often is with everyone, an intensely positive desire, an extremely stimulating motivating force.

Will compels action of some kind whether physical or mental. The action takes the course necessary for the satisfaction of the *will's* desire. Consequently, we can freely say that *will power* stands in a contraposition to relaxation. Will is the concentration of energy, the necessary tensing of certain muscles in order to accomplish an end. Relaxation has as its purpose the easing, the "*laxing*" of tension. One can no more relax by willing himself to do so by the use of intense concentration than he can shout himself into silence.

A contra-activity, however, may help at times to induce relaxation. Suppose one is obliged to pursue a strenuous mental activity for several hours a day. Perhaps he is a public accountant or a university student cramming for a final examination. For hours he has been concentrating, focusing his attention on pages of a textbook, or on rows of figures in a ledger. Such a person can find relaxation by a change to a temporary and vigorous, physical exercise. Fast walking, swimming, doing push-ups or riding a bicycle will bring the relief. They are also expending energy by this physical exercise, contracting, using muscles. But, there is a rechanneling of the energy and a withdrawing of it from its former source of concentration. They relax the existing tension. As soon as they feel the former tension leave they can cease their physical activity. The short period of exercise will not have been sufficient to have caused any other tension and so they can immediately rest and recover.

There is, however, a habitual tension caused by an inherent restlessness. This has a psychological basis, as well. An over-conscientious person may have this experience. Such an individual is reluctant to take time away from his work or duties. He thinks of entertainment and recreation as "wasted time." He has acquired the habit of using will to *drive himself*. When he is not working there is the

taunting urge of *conscience* and *will* to keep going. Consequently even though trying to participate in some change of activity, such a victim cannot entirely do so. The habit impulses keep his mind chained to the subject of his work. In a sense the person is not happy until he returns to it. But he is always made uncomfortable by the tension under which he constantly labors.

This restlessness, this ceaseless drive to work, the pangs of conscience when one takes time away from it, usually have a psychological origin. The individual may have a *subconscious guilt complex*. Subconsciously, he may believe that he has neglected doing something of importance and is ashamed of the neglect. He is, therefore, now consciously trying to compensate for that guilt by excessive conscientious application to his work. What he neglected and what caused the shame may have no relationship whatever to his present occupation. In fact, the individual may not even realize that there is any relationship between some past, forgotten experience and his present restlessness.

Are there different ways to relax? Yes, there are many ways, almost as many as there are individuals. In other words, each of us usually finds some little method that seems to relax us. We may not always succeed, however, in making that system or method function equally well for another. The causes of our tension are often quite different from those of another. We may learn how to compensate for the particular circumstances that cause our tension. However, probably the same compensations would not be applicable to another.

There are a few simple suggestions that we may offer which, though not universally beneficial for the reasons mentioned above, have been helpful to many persons. First, there is deep breathing. Loosen the clothes, particularly around the neck and throat. Step outside or stand before an open window. Inhale deeply. Hold the breath as long as it is comfortable; then slowly exhale. Continue this for several minutes. This brings into the lungs the positive polarity of the *vital life force*. It charges the blood cells, revitalizes the blood, and eases nervous tension.

Next, be seated in a comfortable chair in a *semi-darkened* and quiet room. Avoid bright light. This is what many persons fail to do. Light

is a stimulus. It causes visual sensations and thus prevents relaxation. Loud sounds are also stimuli that interfere with relaxation. Remove tight clothing and shoes which will allow easier circulation of the blood to all parts of the body.

Bring together the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand; then, press these fingers in the hollow at the base of the skull at the back of the neck. This is the *occipital* region of the brain. While so pressing the fingers firmly but gently, take a deep breath and hold it as long as convenient and slowly exhale. Do this several times. This causes a discharge of excess psychic energy. This energy then goes through the radial nerves into the fingertips and thence is transmitted to the occipital region. The energy is then further transmitted to the spinal nervous system and eases tension.

It is difficult not to think of *something* while relaxing, that is, to keep the mind virtually blank. But one can at least keep out all thoughts of the day or of tomorrow that will arouse emotions. The emotions, as feelings, cause nervous responses which can induce tension. Do not will any thoughts. Do not will at all except to dismiss disturbing thoughts. Keep the feet raised at least at a level with the body; this causes less labor to the heart in pumping the blood. Of course, if you can lie in a completely recumbent position that is even better.

Try this method in addition to any of your own experiences that have proven helpful.

Chapter XVII

INTERPRETING COSMIC GUIDANCE

BEFORE CONSIDERING COSMIC GUIDANCE, let us think about the source from which it is to come. In other words, Is there a supernatural? Almost all religions subscribe to a belief in the supernatural. The term is rather self-explanatory. It connotes a realm or state which transcends the natural, or phenomena having a physical basis. The assumption is that the supernatural is of a quality or condition that lies beyond the capability of human objective perception. The supernatural in religion is generally held to be that not discernible by any of the receptor senses. If such phenomena are said to be so discerned, they are then usually declared to be miracles.

There is the further assumption that there exists *within man* an extension of this proclaimed supernatural, that is, the soul. This soul, then, has its own unique methods of communication with its supernatural source. It can and does realize, it is contended, its infinite or cosmic unity. This unity is experienced as an immanent or indwelling state. The individual, therefore, has experiences which he attributes to a supernatural phenomenon. It is impossible for him, however, to reduce such experiences or transfer them to a physical category that can be verified by others externally. In other words, the religious experience of the so-called supernatural is a *subjective* one.

It is for this reason that religion stresses *faith*, which as a category is quite epistemologically separate from empirical knowledge or that of the senses. However, time has proved that much which man once

attributed to the supernatural definitely falls into the category of the naturalistic and is quite verifiable by the senses. This has been the chief conflict in function between religion and science.

The Rosicrucians do not contend that there is a supernatural. Rather, they speak of a sole reality, *the Cosmic*. The Cosmic is a matrix of all phenomena, that declared to be physical as well as the so-called spiritual and that which falls into the category of the psychical. The distinction is, according to the Rosicrucians, merely in the manner of manifestation and perception of the phenomenon. Those feelings, experiences, and impressions which we have and which cannot be objectified, or made “publicly verifiable,” are termed *psychical*. They are, however, part of the whole cosmic energy affecting the nervous systems and levels of consciousness of the human. They are *natural* but of a higher or transcendent order. It is, for analogy, just as that energy which we experience as visual light, infrared and hertzian waves is of a higher vibratory nature than that of sound, and yet it is of the same basic phenomena of nature as sound.

It is necessary to say that the interpretation of cosmic or intuitive impression is very closely related to the intelligence which receives them—but in a unique way. The respective tongues or languages of mankind do not exist in the Cosmic Mind; they are man-made devices. Consequently, the cosmic impression is, at its first inception or realization by us, translated into or interpreted in terms of the language with which we are most familiar. The communication, the intuitive or cosmic flash of intelligence, does not come to us couched in German, French, or English, for example. We objectively embody the cosmic impression in words of a language so that it will have meaning to us.

Another category of necessary interpretation, though not a voluntary one, is the selection of ideas to correspond to the cosmic impressions which we have. No matter how profound, how transcendental the import of the cosmic communication, it must always be embodied in ideas which are related to human experience and human values. Our minds can embrace only that of which we have had experience, in part at least. The synthesizing quality of the mind may be inherent, as the philosopher Kant said, as an *a priori* factor, but first there must be

had those qualities of experience with which it can work. We think in terms of our sense qualities, as color, dimension, and such contraries as hot and cold, light and dark, soft and hard, and the like. Every impression, every idea, to be comprehensible to us, must incorporate these qualities. An original idea, so abstract that it would not relate itself to these sensations or qualities, would be meaningless.

It is often difficult for us, in daily experience, to relate the sensations we have had to ideas representing them with sufficient clarity for others to have a realization of our feelings. Consequently, it is even more difficult for a person to express to others the import of a cosmic impression which he has had. Cosmic guidance and intuitive impressions cause a *superrationalizing* on the part of our mind. Within the subconscious process of our stream of consciousness, these cosmic impressions associate with themselves ideas or thoughts, from our fount of knowledge, that will best express them. This process is involuntary; it is not the result of the exercise of will. We do not reason as to which ideas are best suited to the impressions had. We can, therefore, say that objectively we are not interpreting the cosmic impressions. However, the impressions are never realized outside of familiar terms or ideas because, as we have said, they would not be known to us; they would be meaningless.

The cosmic impressions flash into consciousness as self-evident truths. As we all know, they seem quite complete and comprehensible. It is because of this preconsciousness or pre-objective association of the ideas that the cosmic impressions or messages seem to come to the individual out of the Cosmic just as they are realized.

We may use a homely but, I believe, effective analogy of how cosmic guidance is translated into terms of human intelligence. The perforated music rolls that are used in automatic player pianos in no way resemble, as we look at them, the finished musical composition that is heard. The perforations or slits in the music roll do not visually appear like the notes of the musical scale. However, as you know, when air passes through them into the piano, it actuates combinations of keys in the instrument, producing musical notes and chords. We may liken the perforations in the roll to cosmic impressions. The keys of the

piano will represent to us the objective impressions, the result of daily experience, the qualities of our senses. The musical notes themselves, we shall say, depict the ideas expressed as a consequence of the cosmic impressions. No matter how elaborate the perforations of the roll, as, for example, in a classical composition, there would need to be keys on the piano to correspond to them or the result would fall far short of what was intended by the composer.

Education does not necessarily make for profundity of thought. Intelligence, observation, meditation, and reason do. A person may live a simple life and yet he may be very analytical and gain exceptional wisdom from his daily experiences. He retains in memory a fount of complex ideas, symbols of value and meaning, which can be reassembled in a flash by the cosmic impressions into a new and more enlightened order. Actually, the perfect interpretation of the cosmic impressions is made in the process itself. When you realize the cosmic impression, there have already been associated with it the most significant ideas of your intelligence and of your experience. Anything that you would do thereafter, as a matter of reasoning or analysis, would be likely to undo what had been done by the superior cosmic process.

May one person gain a greater value or insight from a cosmic impression than another? The answer is: Yes, that is possible, if the experience is personally had and not related to him by another. In such an instance, the consciousness of self, or the plane of consciousness to which self can penetrate, may be deeper in one person than in another. The individual has drawn from life's experiences a more profound meaning or, we can say, there are more keys in his keyboard to play upon than in that of another. As a result, the cosmic impressions have a greater wealth of ideas to assemble in his consciousness. The same blow of a mallet, for further analogy, upon a wooden drum will be less resounding than on a metal one.

It is for these reasons that we discourage students of mysticism from endeavoring to interpret another's cosmic impressions. All one is doing in that case is to express himself in terms of the depth of his own consciousness and the extent of his own experience. He may be too shallow in these qualities for another and would, therefore, be doing

an injustice to the other's impressions. Conversely, to use a trite term, he may in another instance be "speaking over the head of the other" in his interpretation. An interpretation that does not correspond to your personal convictions, knowledge, and depth of consciousness of self is lacking in intimacy. It has a feeling of being foreign and strange. Therefore, it does not inspire confidence and does not motivate one to action. On the other hand, the interpretation which is associated involuntarily with your cosmic impressions has the warmth of your own understanding. It is, in other words, self-evident.

One can go astray in interpreting cosmic messages when he insists upon interpreting them in the light of his personal preferences or biases. A cosmic impression, the voice of the inner self, as we all know, may be contrary at times to what the decisions of our reason would ordinarily be. If we, therefore, seek to alter the intuitive impression which always comes to us without the labored processes of our reasoning, we most assuredly affect detrimentally the cosmic impressions. Let us again resort to our analogy of the perforated music roll to explain this. The perforation of the roll is done to conform to the composition of a professional or perhaps even a master musician. If we make slits in the roll arbitrarily, we distort the true interpretation of the master.

We can advance the value of cosmic guidance to ourselves only by enlarging upon self. In other words, we must extend our experiences through study, contemplation, and meditation. As we do this, we become attuned with the Cosmic Mind. We then give it the opportunity to *reorganize* our thoughts as cosmic impressions. As a result, they have more vital importance to us. The person who is continually objective may gain an accumulation of knowledge as worthy material to be reassembled by cosmic impressions, but he is never passive enough to allow the finer impulses of the Cosmic to motivate him.

Chapter XVIII

OUR MISSION IN LIFE

THERE ARE TWO principal proclivities in life which move man to action—aside from the commanding physical desires and appetites upon the satisfaction of which existence itself depends. The first is *obligation*; the second is *idealism*. The obligations are those which our personal moral concepts and adopted standards of ethics cause us to feel must be met, and that without doing so, there would be no peace of mind. Such obligations, as to their nature and the form they assume, are as varied as men's interests and activities. What one feels a solemn obligation in life, another might not. Such obligations might consist of the care of parents, a college education for each child of the immediate family, the rectifying of wrongs done to a relative, and the repayment of a sum of money to prevent a stigma. The ideals, on the other hand, may be those which the individual aspires to as the end in life—the very reason why he wants to live and from which he gains a positive pleasure or joy. These ideals may be referred to as *ambitions*.

Of course, fulfilling an obligation provides a sense of satisfaction as well, but it is of a negative nature. We all have a sense of relief when we have performed a lengthy and trying task or fulfilled a duty, but it is not the same exaltation we experience when realizing an ideal. The fulfillment of an obligation is like the removing of a disturbing condition or an irritant. It just returns us to our *status quo*. But the realizing of an ideal is an additional stimulus. We have not just removed something; we have gained something. Consequently, it can be seen that persons by their moral sense are often compelled to choose, as their *mission in life*, something which is not exactly the thing they would like to do, but what they want to do under the circumstances.

The question really before us is: Which is the right mission, the *ideal* or the *obligation*—presuming that we have both. The answer to this would probably be, the intermediate way—striving reasonably to meet a reasonable obligation and alike to seek to attain the ideal. We are fully aware that a division of efforts under many circumstances is not advisable. But if the individual has both ideals and commanding obligations, he must take an intermediate course or not truly be fulfilling his mission in life. It must be realized that obligations which we assume, and even create for ourselves, are not really as vital as we sometimes believe them to be. We do not mean by this that because some do not consider them important, they are not, but rather that some are actually not inherently so.

Our emotions as we all have occasion to know, greatly influence the value that we attach to many things, as well as does that innate sensitivity that constitutes our talents. One inclined toward art has a greater natural appreciation of the harmony of color, line, proportion, and perspective than one who is not. His reason, consequently, causes him to measure the worth of things by their beauty and artistic value. He will contribute an importance to things which others may disregard. We need not, at this time, enter into a discussion as to whether beauty is immanent in the object, or in man's mind. The fact that something is beautiful to him is the important factor. These emotions we have may cause one to imagine or to bring about in his mind excessive obligations. Thus one might have the passion to vindicate a parent from what he believes constitutes a slur against the parent's reputation. He dwells upon it, builds it up to such an all-consuming desire that nothing else matters but to right what he conceives as a wrong. He pushes into the background those interests which would ordinarily constitute his ideals and ambitions. Actually, this passion has made his obligations, as he conceives them, his mission in life; but from an impassionate view, his concept of his mission is distorted.

There are, however, certain arbitrary yardsticks of measurement which we can use to determine what should be our mission in life. These standards are an admixture of cosmic obligations and personal satisfactions and enjoyments. Every sacred tome which contains inspired writings of mystics and sages and their cosmic revelations—

whether these tomes are the basis of religious precepts or philosophic discourses—usually contains an admonition of *man's duty to man*. Man must recognize the brotherhood of man. He must realize that he has a divine heritage—the right as man to give the highest expression in material form of the divine within him. He must never violate the trust, as he frequently does. He must create about him in matter, as Plato said, forms that express the idea of beauty which he inwardly senses. He must create on Earth and portray them in his conduct those things which will reflect the spiritual realm. He must work with his fellows and also maintain his individuality.

Looking at civilization as a whole, though it is somewhat battered, man has done fairly well. It consequently behooves each man in some way to contribute something—small or large—to human society and well being, and not work for himself alone. One who sweeps the streets and sweeps them well, with an understanding of the importance of his task in relationship to humanity, and not to get it done so that it will merely pass inspection, is doing as much in a humble way as the bacteriologist working in a laboratory seeking to find a way to stem the spread of a disease.

One who seeks a job or position to get by is obviously abrogating this cosmic law. He conceives his mission in life as attaining just that which will further his end and without any consideration of the rest of mankind. One should always attempt to find employment in those occupations, trades or professions that bring him pleasure, *that he likes to do*.

This is not only because it makes work more enjoyable and removes it from the class of grueling tasks, but because it commands the best in him, and he gives without unconscious restraint all of his ability and talent. However, if one insists on doing those things that he likes to do, even though he is unqualified or untrained in them, keeping one who is qualified from doing them, he is not pursuing his true mission in life because, again, he is selfish. He thinks only of his own gratification. He has not taken into consideration the results of his work as to whether or not they are a contribution to society. One has found his true mission in life when he is able to give wholeheartedly of

himself, when his heart rings with joy with each hour's labor.

Do not confuse eminence and distinction with your mission in life. If you have a longing to work at some menial task that you know you can do well, and which is constructive, DO IT, whether your name will be on the lips of your fellows or not! There are many in prominent places today who are not, *and they know they are not*, fulfilling their true place in life. Ego has caused them to push into the background their finer and higher sentiments. When the world is in a turmoil and severe economic upheaval prevails, one of course cannot always immediately step onto the path that leads to his mission in life. He cannot always find the job or the work that represents it. He must bide his time.

We said at the beginning that man is moved by obligations and ideals in life, aside from his instincts and desires. These instincts and desires are impelling and often must be served first. One must eat, drink, and shelter himself and family before fulfilling a mission in life.

Success in a personal *mission in life* is greatly dependent upon our relationship to others. *Intolerance* works against personal attainment. Do we really know at times that we are intolerant in our views?

How can individuals avoid an attitude of personal intolerance? In fact, why do so many oppose the different views and actions of others—even when their content is not harmful? The cause lies in the human ego and the instinctive urge of self to assert itself. We are disposed to give ourselves over entirely to our instincts and desires whenever the opportunity affords itself. We are a composite, not just of our thoughts, but also of our emotional responses and desires.

It becomes difficult for many persons to so detach desire from self as to impersonally analyze its worth in relation to the welfare of others. Consequently, we ordinarily defend a personal interest, belief, or desire exactly as we would our physical person. We seek to advance such beliefs and favor such intellectual desires as vigorously as we seek out ways and means of gaining our sustenance.

In this instinctive aggression, this promoting of our desires of self, we trespass upon the rights and dignity of other human beings.

We conflict with their hopes, aspirations, and beliefs—and they have an equal and inalienable right to express them. We cannot construe our personal welfare to mean that all counter thoughts and desires necessarily jeopardize our being and must, therefore, be opposed. Such a conception would destroy society. It would set against his neighbor each individual who thought or acted differently from another. We find this behavior among many of the lower animals which are not gregarious. However, it is not worthy of man and defeats those elements of his nature which require unified effort and group living.

This intolerance can be rectified by an *attitude of forbearance*. Forbearance consists of some restraint of our animal instincts. It is nothing more than a form of personal discipline and sacrifice to restrain ourselves in some regard, to be willing to forego some of the enjoyment of our physical senses and personal powers in order to allow others to do the same.

If we examine every instance of intolerance, we shall find that the individual did not necessarily want to injure someone or deprive him of his rights, even though his actions amounted to that. It was really because he was concerned only with his own interests and satisfying his own desires that he violated the sanctity of the self of someone else.

We are not truly exercising all of our potentialities if we allow desire and instinct to solely motivate us in our relations with others. To attain the highest human relations necessitates a rational understanding of the common human welfare. We can and must discipline ourselves. We cannot live alone. We must sacrifice something of our own satisfaction for the collective good in which we want to participate.

Strange as it may seem, freedom sometimes becomes an obstacle to tolerance. Thoughtlessly insisting on a personal freedom or what we interpret it to be interferes with the liberalism of tolerance. Freedom is the exercise of will; it is conforming to what we want to do or have the desire to do. If, however, we exercise our personal wills to their fullest extent as a display of freedom, we *cannot be tolerant!* We must impose forbearance on will and the instinctive desire for freedom if we are to know tolerance and the peace which follows from it.

Chapter XIX

COSMIC ETHICS

DOES THE COSMIC have a system of ethics? If so, what is it in relation to ours? This summarizes questions concerning this subject rather frequently asked by students of mysticism and esoteric studies. This presumes, of course, that the Cosmic is teleological, a *Mind Cause*, which is purposeful. It further presumes that this Divine or Infinite Intelligence has established certain specific values concerning human conduct in relation to itself. These values are what man would term *good* and *evil*, or *right* and *wrong*. We shall further presume that the questions intend to integrate the meanings of ethics and morals, that is, for this purpose they shall mean the same.

If there is a divine or cosmic code that has been defined in a terminology comprehensible to humans in every tongue, then, obviously, every mortal would be bound to obey it or suffer whatever penalty it imposed. The fact is, however, that there is no universal code of moral or ethical laws attributed to a cosmic cause which has universal recognition.

Men profess many such codes which are sacrosanct in different religious sects. They are declared to be a theurgy coming to man as a miracle from a divine agency. Specifically, the founders or prophets of these sects are declared to have revealed these codes while spiritually illumined or cosmically attuned.

To an extent, in the psalms of Akhnaton one may derive a meaning as to what he believed the proper relationship of man, ethically, should be to his God and to his fellow humans. The following are excerpts from some of his psalms:

“How benevolent are thy designs, O Lord of eternity!”

“Thou didst create the earth according to thy heart.”

“Thy love is great and mighty.”

“When thou hast filled the Two Lands with thy love.”

We note that the God of Creation proclaimed by Akhnaton is adored as *benevolent*. Throughout the full psalms are references to the forms that this benevolence takes toward man, its many kindnesses, emphasizing and implying that such divine benevolence was a virtue which men could emulate.

There are, too, as other excerpts show, references to Ra, the sole god’s *love* of mankind and how the many things he created in the universe, including man, were motivated by love. This again, if not directly, implies that man’s conduct should be motivated by love. Again in the phrase, “Thou didst create the earth according to thy *heart*” we can construe it to mean the higher emotions and sentiments of kindness and compassion.

It is quite probable that if Akhnaton had not passed through transition at such an early age, he would have issued a moral and ethical code for his monotheistic religion and publicly proclaimed it. Such, of course, would undoubtedly have been declared to be cosmically ordained and inspired.

In Buddhism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism are also to be found as a part of their hagiography that which is accepted as ethical mandates issued from the Divine by which man is to govern his mortal life. The decalogue and Mosaic law, which greatly influenced Christian concepts and also the teachings of Christ, are further examples of implied or declared divine or cosmic moral and ethical edicts.

However, as every student of comparative religion knows, such edicts or codes are not in full agreement. There are certain interdictions and commandments in most religious codes which profess a divine origin that are, however, basically similar in content. These have undoubtedly arisen out of hygienic or social necessity as well as from traditional

taboos.

Men have been illumined and inspired in meditation. In this conceived unity with their God or what they believed to be the Absolute, they have felt a deepened sense of love for mankind and a great desire to serve it as they believed they had been divinely helped. They believed they had been ordained to so serve their God and that it was a cosmic wish that certain particular acts be performed or be prohibited.

These ecstatic feelings of the religious messiah or mystic must, of course, always be translated into an understandable behavior for mortals. It likewise must prohibit those acts of men which actual experience has shown are harmful to their physical being and social welfare. Murder, theft, lying, adultery, profaning of the gods, all these would logically be acts which would in effect support a concept of what would be ungodly conduct.

It is not that such religious founders or messiahs were hypocrites in proclaiming that their God had established such a particular code of laws for man. It was not their intention to declare a divine authority for certain laws in order to enforce them when otherwise they might not have been successful. Rather, psychologically and mystically, in their states of religious experience or attunement, they sincerely felt motivated to act as they did. Since certain familiar human conduct became associated in their minds with the mystical experience of "doing God's will," they conceived that such ideas were actually the intent of the Divine or Cosmic.

For us to think of them, however, as being the exact words of a deity is anthropomorphic and primitive. What, then, is cosmically right or wrong? To a great extent, this must always be an individual interpretation, depending upon the evolving consciousness of man. Man's definition of what is right or wrong and what he feels is offensive to the dignity of spiritual belief grows with personal experience and the ascent of the civilization of which he is a part.

An enlightened society, as we know, tends more and more to abolish as being immoral certain barbaric acts which are brutal and cruel. Men are motivated to do this not by a special doctrine or mandate in words

from a divine origin, but by being better able to translate spiritual motivation within themselves into the language and thought of their times.

For example, not long ago it was believed that it was quite proper and in accordance with man's understanding of divine intent to burn heretics at the stake. These heretics were those who did not conceive God as their persecutors did, or who refused to accept the current religious dogma. Their persecutors were certain that what they did to their victims was what God desired. They could even find certain passages in their sacred literature which would be interpreted to justify their actions.

Therefore, to use a moral basis for the regulation of society which may be founded on the construct of some personal sectarian ideas will only invite the hostility of certain groups rather than the harmonious support of the populace. Ask the average man of what *goodness* consists, and he will fall back in most instances upon his individual conception of a spiritual interpretation of *goodness*. This interpretation will reflect his religious training—especially what he has heard should constitute the moral goodness of man.

A walking Socrates of today would find, upon interrogating the man in the street, that most of them would be but quoting some traditional moral decalogue of this *goodness* with which they were familiar. He would likewise find a great diversity in such ideas as to what constitutes spiritual goodness.

The moral codes that are workable, regardless of their implied divine origin, are those that are grounded in practical human experience and affairs. Each of us knows what furthers his own welfare in every category of self. We *know* what is wrong, what is harmful to us, *not because it* emanates as a tradition or has come down to us as a moral precept from some theological system or creed. We know that certain *behavior* cannot be tolerated in society, if not only society but the individual is to survive and to enjoy peace of mind.

Deceit, lying, theft, assault, murder—these are rooted in the instinct of preservation of the self; that is, there is a natural opposition to them

because of the necessity of personal welfare. Whether, for example, perfidy—deception in one's relations with others—is a religious or moral prohibition or not, it cannot be tolerated for its primary harmful effect on men generally. True, one may, by deceitful resort, gain a distinct advantage to himself. But if such conduct were condoned, that same individual might eventually be subject to the effects of deceit imposed against him by perhaps a more clever person than he. Ethics, today, is closer to our needs than most rules and laws professing a moral foundation. It is because ethics is more contiguous to society's affairs; it is more *intimate* to the individual himself. Ethics, strictly speaking, consists of rules of behavior and conduct with regard to the individual's relations to other members of that society in which he exists. Many ethical codes or rules are founded upon or can be said to emerge from certain moral principles. But, if there is this affinity between certain ethics and morals, it is because these particular morals were first established out of an insight and knowledge of the *practical necessity* of human relations.

Ethical codes are far less difficult to comprehend and to accept rationally than some morals. It is because the individual can more easily perceive their direct effect upon his personal well-being. Any normal person can see the value, the *good*, in prohibiting theft and advocating honesty. Virtue is an ideal. It is the desire for what is conceived as good because it satisfies a higher sentiment in persons—the spiritual nature of self as it is called. But honesty has a practical content, regardless of any virtue that may be attributed to it.

Ethics is a kind of *social insurance*. We are obliged to adhere to it for the self-centered reason of personal protection. In doing so as individuals we likewise extend this protection to others. The individual knows when he is unethical, because he will forcibly resist any similar conduct being exercised against himself. The thief will not tolerate any theft of his own possessions and thereby indicates his knowledge of the basic wrong of such conduct.

However, the self-discipline and the sense of righteousness of many individuals are not sufficiently strong to cause them to uphold the common ethics. They seek to evade them so as to gain their personal

advantage at the expense of others. When in society there is a general acceptance and agreement on the enforcement of basic ethics, then the violators, when detected, are punished.

There can be and, in fact, there is prevalent at this time a tendency toward a general decline in ethics. This has been styled *permissiveness*. Let us look at this permissiveness and its effects upon ethics psychologically. As we now experience it, permissiveness is to a great extent a retrogression of the fundamental requirement of society. Simply, it is the granting of excessive freedom to the individual. It is the centering of the interests of the individual in the *narrowest* sense of self, in other words, to further one's instinctive aggression and self-interest, regardless of how such may infringe upon the welfare of others. This, then, is a disruption of the essential ties of the common welfare necessary for the continuance of society.

There has crept in a *perverted form* of ethics of which the permissiveness to a great extent consists. This perverted ethics which is admired and encouraged both subtly and openly advocates "dynamic individualism." It contends that in a complex society where individual competition is keen, every resort of the intellect and experience must be exercised to gain personal dominance. A more terse way of phrasing this particular trend is: "the end justifies the means."

Further, *expediency* in itself is extolled as a virtue. In other words, use whatever means are at your disposal. Today the one who achieves an end by such means is too often admired as being the progressive and the successful individual. The effect of his acts upon others is submerged in the admiration for his personal achievement.

Primitive instinct is ordinarily stronger than moral restraint of the passions, appetites, and desires. Once the individual believes he can circumvent the proper behavior and conduct, and the established ethics, and thereby gain, he will be greatly tempted to do so.

Today there is then the attempt, as said, to justify this lessening on the part of individual ethics. There is the claim that the current pressures, the uncertainty, the rivalry for enterprise necessitate relegating many common ethics to the past. What is the danger in all

this? It is the eventual, complete disruption and decline of society. We are witnessing the creeping shadows of it in today's events. They are ominous reminders of past civilizations who likewise discarded these safeguards.

Chapter XX

MYSTERIES OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

WHAT CAN BE SAID of the so-called psychic phenomena of which so much is being said today? It is often asked, Are *telekinesis* and *levitation* realities or figments of the imagination? In the consideration of psychic phenomena, we wish to say again that we are not relegating the word *psychic* to the realm of the *supernatural*. To Rosicrucians there is no supernatural. There is nothing which is outside or beyond the scope of nature. All that occurs does so by cosmic and natural laws.

What man may term supernatural is that which at the time is mysterious to him and for which he can find no natural or physical explanation. Many things in the past believed to be supernatural, we now consider superstitions. In our more advanced knowledge, we have found natural causes for them of which past intelligences were ignorant.

Consequently, we use the term *psychic phenomena* to mean that which has to do with those human natural powers transcending the ordinary objective faculties. There are innate powers and forces which commonly are not objectively perceived. We do not consider, for example, the functions of the subconscious mind as being supernatural. They are, however, psychic in that their phenomena are not physical or material.

As for the word *telekinesis*, this may be defined as the movement of objects without any physical contact, or a mechanical action at a

distance without contact with a human being. Thus, true telekinesis could be exemplified by the moving of tables or objects in a room without their being touched by human hands, and not as the result of any mechanical means under the direction of human intelligence.

Have the phenomena attributed to telekinesis actually been observed by intelligent observers with scientific training? One of the foremost collectors of case histories on psychic phenomena of this type, and an eminent researcher himself, was Dr. Charles Richet.

Dr. Richet collaborated in the field of psychical research with such outstanding men as Sir William Crookes, the latter being a notable British physicist and chemist. He was outstanding in his research in electricity and the inventor of the Crookes tube, the predecessor of the electric lamp and the modern radio tube or valve.

It is appropriate to relate a few of many such phenomena investigated by these eminent men and set forth in Dr. Richet's now classic work on the subject. Dr. Richet quotes the investigation of a Judge John W. Edwards of a supreme court: "I had recourse to every expedient I could think of to discover imposture and to guard against trickery.... I have seen a mahogany table, with a central pillar, and carrying a lighted lamp, rise at least a foot above the floor in spite of the efforts of those to prevent it....

"I have seen a mahogany chair turn on its side and move backward and forward along the floor without being touched by anyone, in a room where at least a dozen persons were sitting, without any of them being touched by it. It often stopped a few inches from me, having been moved so quickly that, had it not stopped, my leg would have been much bruised."

Then, again, there are the researches and investigations of a Professor Thury of the University of Geneva. In a pamphlet written by him, Professor Thury says: "Two persons by themselves, Mme. de Gasparin and Mme. Dorat, drew along a small table without touching it. The table turned and swayed under their hands held about one inch above the surface. I saw the space between the hands and the table during the whole time and I am certain that, during the four or five

revolutions made, there was no contact. . . whatever. . . no doubt was possible.”

Could trickery, deliberate fraud and deception enter into such a demonstration? Many times investigators of psychic phenomena did expose fraudulent mediums. Dr. H. Spencer Lewis was one of the first executive officers of the New York Psychical Research Society some forty years ago. He, with his colleagues, consisting of scientists, newspaper reporters, university professors, and serious investigators of psychic phenomena, attended many such demonstrations or so-called seances. The ignorant and credulous who might attend such sessions were often deceived by skillful devices. The members of the Psychical Research Society, Dr. Lewis has related, were often skeptical but, because they were searching for knowledge, kept an open mind. Many of the phenomena, they openly admitted, were not due to any trickery but were obviously the result of a force that could not be explained upon physical grounds.

What precautions were taken, during such investigations, to preclude any fraud in the apparent movement of heavy tables or other objects in a room by mere touch or without any actual contact at all? It is related that the mediums often had their hands and feet tied and, at other times, their hands and feet were held by members of the investigating group. Still other methods consisted of tying threads to the fingernails of the medium or fastening threads to their hands without wax, the other ends of the thread being held by the researchers.

Sir William Crookes explains a scientific method which he used in a demonstration of telekinesis, the moving of a heavy object by claimed psychic power. He had a heavy board balanced on a “knife-like edge.” To the top of this board was attached a spring scale. The scale, in turn, was connected to a stylus so as to produce a graph for any movement of the scale.

The medium was placed at a distance of a yard from the balanced board. He was observed by all to cause the board to swing up and down gently at his will on its knife-like balance. Even when the movement was very gradual, the degree of the motion was registered on the graph.

The Rose-Croix University in San Jose, California, as do some other institutions of learning, conducts research and courses in *parapsychology*. The approach to the subject is with the use of modern scientific instruments as well as theoretical assumptions. This subject, of course, means investigation into the psychic powers of man. A similar course, in which experiments with telekinesis were performed before a large number of students, was given several years ago on winter evenings. Since I participated in this series, I hope to be pardoned for the use of the personal pronoun in describing these experiments.

A large library table of oak was placed on the floor of the amphitheatre classroom. The table weighed, as I recall, about forty pounds. First, I pressed the fingertips of both my hands firmly against the top of the table. I requested that those present remain passive. They were asked not to attempt to assist me mentally in any way. I had tried the experiment several times previously before very small groups and with varying degrees of success.

I next concentrated intently on the table with the desire that it should move toward me, that it should glide in any direction in which I chose to move. After three or four minutes of intense concentration, an emotional state was developed. In other words, I felt a sense of excitement and exhilaration. Then the table seemed charged, that is, it became almost vibrant to the touch.

I could actually lighten the pressure of my fingers on the table top because the table seemed to adhere to them as if with an adhesive of some kind. At that moment, I realized that I was in command. I could move backward slowly or quickly and the table would glide along the floor as though on ice. It never, to my knowledge, left the surface of the floor, though some of the observers said that one leg of the table seemed to rise a fraction of an inch.

After such a demonstration, I was extremely fatigued, as though having gone through a severe emotional ordeal. Trying the experiment in telekinesis again a few moments later, I was not successful. I attributed this subsequent failure to two things: First, temporary fatigue from intense concentration and, second, distraction caused by the rather large audience. Though they were quiet and attentive, I felt

the impact of their thoughts during the experiments to be a disturbing factor.

In previous experiments with only two or three persons present, my efforts with telekinesis were more successful, that is, the results were accomplished more easily and quickly. In these other experiments, three persons stood at the other corners of the table. We all pressed the fingers of both hands firmly against the surface. When successful, the table would move smoothly and quickly in my direction after a few preliminary sudden jerks.

The others would have to follow quickly in order to keep their fingers on the table top. However, after the table was in motion, the removal of their fingers apparently had no effect upon the phenomenon. It would appear that, if one person was able to manifest the force, that was sufficient—a number of persons, at least in our experiments, being more of a hindrance than a help.

There are types of telekinesis other than the moving of objects. These consist of *noises* and *raps*. Dr. Stanhope Speer, a physician in England, quoted in Richet's work on his investigations of this particular type of phenomena, says: "Often we heard knocks on the door, the sideboard and the wall at a distance from the table where we were sitting. They could not be produced by any human (physical) means. I satisfied myself of this by every possible method."

This phenomenon has often been associated with what is popularly called "haunted houses." In them have been heard loud creaking in the walls and what sounded like knocks on doors and snapping in floors and ceilings. Careful examination of the materials indicated no flaw in them that would cause such conditions. Most often such conditions occurred only when certain persons dwelt in or occupied the premises.

A few years ago, such a phenomenon occurred in a house in Oakland, California. Detailed accounts of the circumstances were related in the daily press. It was said that chairs moved across the room by themselves, shutters on the windows flew open, doors slammed shut and shingles pulled loose on the roof when there were absolutely no observable physical causes to account for such happenings.

Scientists from nearby universities, expecting fraud, made careful investigation without revealing what was termed “natural causes.” The conclusion by the skeptical investigators was that it was the result of some form of clever trickery. Such, however, was an entirely inadequate explanation. Fraud was never proved.

If it could exist in such a deceptive manner that these trained observers could not perceive it, it was certainly not to the credit of their intelligence or ability.

What are the theories that have been advanced as explanations for telekinesis? One ridiculous statement made by an investigator is that the loud creaking, when several persons are assembled in a room, is due to “creaking of knee joints.” As to the moving of objects by the touch of the hands, it has been theorized that this is due to the conscious or unconscious contraction of the muscles causing the pulling or lifting of objects. It is assumed that the individual having entered into a semitrance state is not aware of the pressure he is exerting on the object. They further contend that an unstable object, such as a table in perfect equilibrium, could be easily moved by muscular contraction.

It has been further related, in these suppositions, that the varying emotions of the subconscious mind are transformed into minute muscular responses. The table, then, in moving seems like an intelligent entity. It moves positively in one direction, or it may quiver as if in hesitation, making a start in another direction, then changing and returning to its present position.

Others have admitted that, in some way which they do not understand, “mechanical vibrations can be produced in matter at a distance and without contact with a human.” In other words, innate human powers and intelligence can act upon inanimate matter. It is further agreed, however, that the presence of a certain person is usually necessary for such phenomena.

What is our opinion? We believe that there are definite *natural causes* for such phenomena; that they are psychic only in the sense that they are subliminal powers not ordinarily realized or used by man. It would appear that certain human beings, under an emotional stress which

they induce in themselves, can radiate an energy, or a force, that can affect the gravitational attraction of material things. This human phenomenon can lessen the gravitational attraction upon an object so that its weight is materially reduced, or for the moment, it becomes “weightless.” We may use the analogy of an object’s becoming statically charged so as to adhere temporarily to another object.

In our experiments at the Rose-Croix University at the close of the winter series of classes, we attempted to attach a scale to an object to be lifted to determine its weight before and after being moved during telekinesis. The term, however, ended before any conclusions were reached. It is our further opinion that an object under the influence of “psychic” force would have less weight than otherwise. This would indicate that the phenomenon affects the molecular structure of the object insofar as its relation to gravity is concerned. This would, if conclusively proved, rationally account for the mystery of levitation.

Chapter XXI

REINCARNATION—FACT OR FANCY?

MILLIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD cherish a belief in rebirth. This concept in its variations is perhaps one of the most universally held religious doctrines. It is undoubtedly as ancient as the belief in immortality. Certain religious sects demean reincarnation because it is not compatible with their own exegetical interpretation, or because it is condemned by their theologians.

Yet the doctrine of reincarnation contains postulations equally as plausible as other beliefs in the afterlife. Most religious doctrines are founded upon *faith* and personal experience. They are not in the same category as the empirical laws of science, which are demonstrable. Consequently, two doctrines may have equal claim upon the beliefs of man if each is to be accepted on faith and not upon objective evidence.

The idea of the continuation of life after death has intrigued the imagination since the earliest known records. It has been the dominant mystery of life which has challenged the human mind. The instinctive impulse to survive has caused both a fear of death and a hope of immortality.

The early concept of the duality of man—the association of air and breath with an intangible spirit—suggested that an element of man survives the apparent destruction of his body. But where and how would this incorporeal, invisible entity of the duality of man survive, for the animating force related to breath departed with death.

However, there was no evidence that this entity was destroyed. It was simple for the primitive mind to believe that, perhaps, this immanent entity soared on invisible wings like a bird to another realm high above the clouds. Or perhaps it entered a nether world beneath Earth as the Sun seemed to do each day in the west. In fact, early forms of the soul, such as the Egyptian BA, were depicted as a bird.

What constituted this other life after death? What these afterlife experiences were assumed to be like varied with the cultures of different civilizations. Some adherents presumed the next life to be a virtual paradise as do some religious devotees today. Man's entrance into this paradise, of course, was to be determined by whether he had observed a certain moral code on Earth, and such beliefs usually required that the soul first be judged for its conduct.

Paradise was usually a place of ecstatic pleasures, similar to those on Earth but more intense and within the moral restrictions of the particular religious sect. The tedious and mean labor and suffering of Earth were excluded from this other world paradise. Conversely, the sinner was condemned to a region where all the tortures imagined by the human mind would be imposed upon him.

In the *Koran*, the devout Moslem was promised an afterlife in a world where he might recline on a silken couch and be surrounded by surpassingly beautiful maidens whose eyes were like "hidden pearls." Though the Moslem was forbidden stimulating drinks in this mortal life, in this afterlife he was to have wines that would neither cause his head to ache nor confuse his mind.

Along with the conception of the continuation of life after death was the belief in rebirth in some form on Earth. How this notion arose among primitive peoples even anthropologists, ethnologists, and philosophers can only speculate. In plant life there is every indication of resurrection, or rebirth. Certain species seem to wither and die, only to revive or be born again at a later period.

The vernal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere is a time when plant life is renewed after the barren, moribund appearance of nature

in winter. Perhaps man, too, is reborn to live again among mortals in some other form. At least, nature would seem to suggest it.

Psychologically, the desire to live again among one's friends and family, continuing the familiar ways of life one had enjoyed, would certainly have as strong an appeal as a promise of life in another world which had never been experienced personally. A cursory examination of the history of this subject reveals that the belief in a re-embodiment on Earth has been accepted by millions for centuries.

Today, the words, *reincarnation*, *transmigration*, and *metamorphosis* are commonly and erroneously interchanged. There is, in fact, quite a technical difference between their meanings. The doctrine of transmigration supposes the possibility after death of the soul of man entering a plant, bird, reptile, or a bull; in fact, anything that is animate.

Wherever it has been a religious doctrine, however, transmigration has been governed by certain assumed supernatural laws the form in which the soul incarnated being dependent upon its personal development, and the experience to be gained dependent upon the form in which the soul is placed or the punishments imposed upon it. Usually, the transmigration of the soul into an animal has been accepted as an act of regression.

Primitive peoples are keen observers of animal life and behavior because of its being contiguous with their own living. They presume a certain similarity between the characteristics of animals and the behavior of humans. To the primitive mind, then, there was an actual bond or relationship to the human personality by the law of similarity. Consequently, it was not difficult for such minds to assume that a particular species of living things possessed souls of humans that passed into them at death.

The Egyptians had three ideas regarding the human personality after death. One was the mystical union with God; the second, transmigration into an animal; the third, metamorphosis, or the voluntary entering of the soul into another form. In the concept of the mystical union, the soul was returned to merge with God. It became *one* with the Divine Essence.

In this idea, we find an ancient expression, which prevails in many esoteric teachings today, of the highest form of mystical pantheism. In the famous *Book of the Dead*, a collection of religious liturgies and descriptions of life after death, we find such statements as “I am Ra [a god]” or “I am Thoth.” It was believed that when the soul united with God, it was a complete apotheosis, the absorption conferring on the soul a divine power equal to that of God.

Some Egyptologists are in doubt as to what extent the Egyptians believed in *transmigration*, or the passing of the soul into animals. Some tomb inscriptions seem to imply transmigration. Various scenes show Egyptians driving swine before a god for judgment to be passed on them as if they possessed a rational soul.

On the other hand, there are example of *metamorphosis*—the belief that humans attempt to transform into other living forms. There are also indications that the Egyptians believed that inanimate objects could be transformed into living ones, as the metamorphosis of a wax model into a crocodile. The *Book of the Dead* contains several chapters of magical formulas, giving the deceased the power to be transformed into whatever he pleases—a hawk, a god, a flower, or a reptile: “I am the swallow; I am the swallow. I am the Scorpion Bird [or white bird], the daughter of Ra.”

Since the civilization of Egypt covered a period of thousands of years, its culture advanced and declined at different times. Prevailing religious conceptions over such a long period of civilization were both primitive and representative of advanced abstraction. As in many lands today, crude polytheistic beliefs and animism were concomitant with illuminated mystical and philosophical beliefs. Theoretically, Buddhism teaches neither the existence of reincarnation nor, in fact, the soul of man. However, it does refer to a “stream of existence.” There can be in Buddhistic doctrine a continual renewal of births. This “turning of the wheel,” or rebirth, is dependent upon man’s deeds on Earth. Rebirth, in the strict sense of the Buddhist interpretation of this word, is actually an act of retribution, a punishment for not having attained a certain state of consciousness and moral values.

Rebirth is a retributive act of *karma*, the consequence of certain human deeds. Therefore, in effect, Buddhism conforms to the doctrine of reincarnation. In fact, Buddhism in some of its literature relates how certain persons remember their former lives. Buddha, it is related, said that this recalling was one of the supernormal attainments of Buddhistic sainthood.

The ancient Celts had a definite belief in reincarnation, but not transmigration in that word's true meaning. The soul after death was thought to await its reincarnation. It continued to live during this interval, but in a manner quite unlike that on Earth. After such a period of waiting and purgation, the soul passed into another human body. The Druids so firmly believed that man reincarnated into human form that their burial rites required that they burn and bury with the dead the things that could be used again in this new life.

There is a Jewish type of esoteric mysticism that includes references that can definitely be construed as pertaining to reincarnation. It is believed that the ideas are syncretic, that is, borrowed from early Egyptian and Indian teachings. This mysticism seems to be based on the following abstractions: "God is the creator of everything; therefore, souls are his creation. But does God continue an act of creation? Does he create souls as soon as men are born?"

This system of thought contends that God does not create new souls. He ceased creation at the end of the sixth day. Souls of the dead, it is implied, after a certain peregrination in paradise, return again to the lower world. However, from this system of thought there would appear to be, in addition, a reservoir of *unborn souls*. More souls were created by God than there were human forms at first. This paradise to which the souls go after death is a kind of world in which there is a realization of the glory of the Divine. There they remain with those souls who are created but have not yet been born. It is also said that "Moses in ascent to heaven sees the souls of the great and pious and those who lived on Earth...and those who are to come to life hereafter."

Herodotus, the celebrated Greek historian, says that the Greeks (Pythagoras, for example) gained their ideas of reincarnation and

transmigration from the Egyptians. The Orphic school of Greece taught that the soul is imprisoned in the body as in a dungeon. It continues to return to earthly imprisonment until it finally attains the virtue of perfection. Plato, in his *Dialogues*, makes reference to this notion.

The myth of Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, related that she sent souls back to Earth from the underworld in the ninth year when they were purified. After three such incarnations on Earth, they continued an immortal existence “in the island of the blest.” A purified soul is said to have remarked, “I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel; I have passed with eager feet to the circle desired.” The wheel refers to the mystical wheel of fortune. Its revolution symbolizes the cycle of successive lives, the termination being the end of incarnations.

Heraclides Ponticus says that Pythagoras was permitted to retain the memory of his previous incarnations. It is related that he proved this on the occasion of a visit to the Heraeum at Argolis. There Pythagoras identified as his own the shield of Euphorbus before seeing the inscription upon it. Pythagoras implied that he had been Euphorbus, who had been killed before the walls of Troy.

It is also indicated from ancient writings that Pythagoras apparently believed in transmigration. Once he took pity on a dog being beaten, exclaiming, “Beat him no more; for his soul is my friend’s, as I recognized when I heard his voice.” Pythagoras also declared that the essence of soul is in animals, but their reasoning being inadequate, its activity is impeded.

Plato proclaims that those who fail to emancipate themselves from the burden of corporeal things cannot rise to the pure elements above. They are dragged down into an underworld where they live as apparitions. Later, their souls are again imprisoned in some form, the very sensual being transmigrated into lower animals such as wolves, jackals, etc. Those who lack philosophical virtue but live respectable lives become bees or even men in their next existence. Only those who devote themselves to philosophy and the exalted reason—which in man is considered divine—are entirely exempt from further incarnations.

Orthodox Christians most often abhor the belief in reincarnation, either because of their unfamiliarity with the subject or because of religious dogmatic prejudice. They willfully or otherwise identify it with transmigration and metamorphosis. There are numerous references in the Bible, however, that can only be properly understood in terms of the reincarnation of the soul. Such quotations are too numerous to consider here; however, in his excellent book, *Mansions of the Soul*, a treatise on reincarnation, Dr. H. Spencer Lewis has cited many of them.

To many intelligent persons, the doctrine of reincarnation seems to be more in accord with what they consider *divine justice*. To them, rebirth affords the opportunity for man to properly expiate his mistakes—or sins, if you wish to call them that. To such thinkers, reincarnation is a compassionate principle which allows man more than just one short span of mortal life in which to learn how to achieve a harmony with cosmic and divine laws. It is contended that, if spiritual truths are more profound and more vital than mortal knowledge, souls should be allowed a greater span for learning than that provided the mortal mind.

Certainly a belief in reincarnation cannot detract from the development of the moral sense or an appreciation of spiritual values; nor does it lessen man's mystical unity with whatever he considers to be the initial and infinite cause. The charge that it cannot be substantiated—so often leveled at the doctrine of reincarnation—could likewise be laid by perverted personalities against the belief that the soul exists in a paradise or heavenly state for eternity. There are traditional and sacerdotal authorities for and against all of the different *human conceptions* of the immortality of the soul.

Chapter XXII

METAPHYSICS AND SCIENCE

IS METAPHYSICS OBSOLETE and completely superceded by science? In this modern age of empiricism and materialism do abstraction and pure reason no longer provide avenues of knowledge?

In the fifth century B.C. the sophist Protagoras expounded the unreliability of the senses as a source of true knowledge. He went still further and claimed that all so-called truth is related to the individual's concept. Each man is "the measure of all things." In other words, there is no absolute knowledge. Virtues, for example, are not universal but are only relative to the age in which they exist and the customs of the people. Such may even vary from generation to generation and land to land.

The Sophists were not alone in denying the dependability of the senses. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and other schools did likewise. However, it was generally affirmed that there was a universal knowledge, a sort of *innate* wisdom that might be called forth from the inner self, or the soul as it was generally alluded to. The reason was held to be the determinative, the measuring rod of such truth.

If a concept was had that was self-evident and appeared indubitable and could not be refuted by logical argument, such was thought to be indicative of absolute knowledge. In this regard, then, belief and opinion also fell into the category of knowledge if their conclusions had the support of reason, or at least if they could not be otherwise

refuted.

Pyrrho, founder of the school of Skepticism (fourth century B.C.), declared that it was not possible for the human mind to know the true nature of reality. He inveighed against all philosophies which professed to teach an absolute knowledge. Man cannot know anything with certainty, he said. Like the Sophists and those of certain other schools he also pointed out that perception was a false source of knowledge. The senses are imperfect and they vary with each man in the sensations they provide and the images they form in the mind. Two men may look at the same object at a distance and draw different conclusions as to its nature.

However, Pyrrho was not completely in accord with the doctrines of the Sophists. He did not deny that there might be a universal and absolute knowledge. Rather, he asserted that it was not in the province of the human mind to comprehend such absolute knowledge. It has been said that the persuasive reasoning of Plato's arguments obliged the Sceptics to take a stand of probability; in other words, that it was *probable* that there was an absolute knowledge but man could not know it. The argument of Plato against the Sceptics was that they asserted with absolute certainty the *nonexistence* of an absolute certainty. In other words, the negative statement of the Sceptics was being made by them a positive reality thereby contradicting their own argument.

It must be realized that in the so-called classical age of philosophy, in the times of ancient Greece, science at the most was only in the embryonic stage. There was just the beginning of a separation in men's minds of natural phenomena from the determinative acts of the gods. To Thales, it is generally conceded, goes this first criticism of the gods as being the primary cause of all natural phenomena. In this period of the absence of the spirit of science, that is, of critical observation, experimentation, and the search for natural causes, and as well a lack of instruments, reason was the key to knowledge.

Syllogistical reasoning, *logic*, was developed to a high degree. What was clear to the understanding and for which no equally rational contradiction could be had was accepted as absolute knowledge. To most of these early philosophers—and also to many of those of the

later centuries—reasoning was a divine quality. Mind was declared an attribute of soul, and reason and mind were thought to be synonymous. Centuries later, Kant expounded an *a priori* knowledge, which is had by all men. This was certain innate universal truths which all men came to realize. “By *a priori* knowledge we shall therefore,... understand, not such knowledge as is independent of this or that experience, but such as is *absolutely* independent of all experience.”

The scholastic philosophers of the church, about A.D. 900 in an age when personal enlightenment was at its lowest level, depended almost entirely upon dialectical persuasion. The teachings of Aristotle were held as the epitome of knowledge and which could not be transcended. The Aristotelic method of logic was used by these churchmen to virtually split hairs with regard to any subject. If they could advance a proposition that could not be refuted, it was accepted as absolute truth. Consequently, it resulted in nothing more than a repetition of these logical conclusions about the same subjects. There was no attempt to put them to the test of material examination where physical phenomena were concerned.

The age of science put an end to the absolute reliance upon reason as proof of truth. It is held that the modern age of science really began with Francis Bacon. He declared that reliance upon the deductive method of reasoning alone, that is, just beginning with a broad general concept and then endeavoring to find factual matter to support it, is not sufficient. Bacon contended, “Theories and opinions and common notions, so far as can be obtained from the stiffness and firmness of the mind, should be entirely done away with, and that the understanding should begin anew plainly and fairly with particulars...” These particulars to which Bacon refers in regard to his inductive method pertain to those things which can be individually perceived, examined, weighed, and analyzed for what their qualities actually appear to be. From a study of such particulars, then, man observes the causes of phenomena and learns the laws by which they manifest with an apparent regularity.

In general, the empirical methods of science in our technological age are built upon this philosophy of Bacon. It seems to put down

with finality reliance alone upon tradition, the rational concepts, the products of reason, as well as beliefs and opinions no matter how soundly supported alone by logic. Upon a first consideration this would seem to be atavistic, that is, a reversion to a full reliance upon the senses alone, and which practice, as said, was long ago rejected by several of the classical schools of philosophy.

The philosophy of science, if we may call it that, is that which affirms what our senses confirm to us as reality and which we must accept unless these senses themselves can later refute such experiences. In other words, we live in a physical world, a world conveyed to us by the impressions of our senses which in turn produce within us sensations. We are obliged to react and respond to these sensations and experiences for our existence. If we were to deny all that we perceive as not being some kind of reality, we would not survive the conditions of our environment. However, such revelations of science had through our senses are no assurance of their true nature. Our experiences of reality are only relative. They serve us but we are not certain that our human interpretation of the stimuli of our perceptions—that is, what we see, hear, feel, and so on—is an exact counterpart of reality.

In its true classical nature *metaphysics* contains three basic subjects of inquiry by the reason. These are *ontology*, the nature of being, or reality; *epistemology*, the nature of knowledge; and also what we may term in a broad sense as *psychology*. In the latter category metaphysics concerns itself with social problems, morals and ethics, subjects that are not physical properties. However, many of the logical conclusions about the same remain in force today. In other words, even where such classical subjects are brought to the attention of the psychological sciences of today, many of these propositions of the past still hold forth and are unrefuted. Also in the realm of epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, many of the traditional and metaphysical concepts challenge modern science to refute their postulations. The *insight* of some of these early metaphysicians is amazing.

However, metaphysics is a *deductive* method. It is the arriving by reason at a general notion, or concept. It consists of concepts which are from the scientific method unproven no matter how plausible they

may appear. For this reason many of the young scientists of today, armed with a Ph.D., are wont to scoff at metaphysics as being nothing more than a kind of mental gymnastics.

However, there must be a *beginning* in a search for knowledge, even if such knowledge be only relative and be found wanting in another decade or century. What does one search for? What is it that needs clarification? Science starts with particulars in practice in its research and experimentation, in accordance with its inductive, empirical method. There must be a motive, though, as to the kind of knowledge which is desired. Is it to comprehend the working of a phenomenon? Is it to disprove a tradition, a theory, an unsupported belief?

It is here in motive and purpose, or incentive, if you will, that *metaphysics* still plays its part. For analogy, astronomers and astrophysicists are desirous of arriving at some idea of how the greater universe began—if it even had a beginning! The thought about whether the cosmos had a beginning and what the nature of such a cause might be is *metaphysical abstraction*. It is a matter of pure deduction.

By itself, such reasoning might accomplish nothing more than a satisfying rational conclusion. The conclusion might be quite false and perhaps eventually easily disproved by science. Its great potency, however, its value, is that it points to a direction for science to pursue. It stimulates the imagination and puts man in an exploratory channel in which science alone can function.* (*See Chapter One)

There are two general types of scientists today, we may presume to say. One is those whose knowledge and skill are devoted to the application of the known laws in nature to serve some practical end. The other type of scientists is those engaged in speculative science, or as commonly termed “pure science.” We may say they are interested primarily in the laws of phenomena, their causes and effects, and without regard as to how they subsequently may be applied to some expedient purpose.

With this latter class of scientists the *spirit of metaphysics* lives on. Albert Einstein may be said to have been such a metaphysical scientist, though he abhorred those metaphysicians who remained wrapped up in

their little cocoon of personal thought and never ventured to expose their ideas to externality.

The search for and acquisition of knowledge will lose their stimulus if ever the abstraction of metaphysics is denied its expression and influence. Metaphysics can be, and is, the push behind much of the dynamic scientific speculation and research in our times.

Chapter XXIII

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 that which progress consists. Mere substitution of other words for “progress,” such as “advancement,” “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? What experience which man has had or that he now has relates 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, the retrogression, of his present status. No one strives for an end 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 analogy, 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 actually makes no *personal progress*. This is because he has not moved in the direction which he conceives to be a superior end.

Another similar analogy 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 of what they conceive 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 analogy, 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 satisfaction is sensuous; there is moral and mental satisfaction as well. Therefore, every determined action is designed to enhance the

personal interest—designed to make 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 satisfy 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 which are 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 his 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 to be superior, then there has actually been no progress. To further explain, 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 desired quality. 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 category, 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 a further analogy. 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 the 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. All men are not 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 likewise 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 so 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 XXIV

HOW SHOULD WE REGARD DEATH?

THERE HAS BEEN as much fact, myth, and superstition related to the phenomenon of death as there has been to life. Notwithstanding the obvious cessation of life's functions which occurs at death, man has wanted to conceive it as being a continuation of another life but with varied modifications of this mortal existence. There are two most probable causes for associating an afterlife with death. First, there are certain qualities or attributes associated with the phenomenon of life which were not comprehensible to primitive man. It was apparent to him that *breath* and *life* accompany each other. In other words, with man and animals breath was a natural function. When death occurred, the breath departed.

This something that left man—did it entirely vanish, was it destroyed at the end of physical life? The breath was identified by early man with air, the wind, a seemingly viable force. The wind in storms lashed trees, bent their boughs, and whipped the sea and large bodies of water into a fury. Consequently, the attributes of strength, power, and action were seen as of the nature of air. When a living thing expired, it was only its shell, its body, which died. Its motivating life-giving quality—the air—was assumed to merge with the surrounding source from which it was presumed to have come.

But though air was ubiquitous, apparently existing everywhere, man was not content to lose his individuality in the wind. Therefore, he assumed that the breath, or *pneuma* as the Greeks called it, of his

being was conceived to retain the characteristics it had when it was confined in the body. It did not have a corporeal existence but a kind of vaporous and ethereal one, a sort of shadowlike reality.

Another contributing cause of the belief in life after death is principally biological and psychological. It is the innate urge which we have to live, *to be*. Each cell of the human organism has this exclusive urge to survive and to continue its nature and function. Collectively, then, man wants to live; that is, if he is functioning as a normal human. He dreads the state which will mean the termination of the ego, the "I." In fact, most persons even find it inconceivable to think that mind with its enigmatic phenomena and its scope of experience can absolutely cease to be. They revert to believing that the intangible elements of their being such as consciousness and self-awareness are the medium by which they will continue to live. The form and expression that these mediums will take in another existence, of course, vary with how human experience and imagination can depict them.

It is to be expected that the afterlife will be defined in terms that correspond to qualities and conditions experienced on Earth. One of the most difficult concepts for man to embrace is that of a disembodied mind; that is, a self-consciousness that has neither physical form nor substance. When man ordinarily thinks of himself, it is not just self-awareness; it is not exclusively the feeling that *I am*—he also visualizes this *I am* as a being clothed in the familiar mortal structure, the individuality and personality paralleling his objective experiences and habits.

Man not only likes to attribute to the self after death all his physical attributes and characteristics, but he also attributes them to his idea of God. Xenophanes, Greek philosopher (c. 570?-475?) relates this human weakness in an impressive way:

"The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black-skinned and the Thracians that theirs are blue-eyed and red-haired...if only oxen and horses had hands and wanted to draw with their hands or to make the works of art that men make, then the horses would draw the figures of their gods like horses, and oxen like oxen, and would make their bodies on the model of their own."

Therefore, if such believers think of survival after death, though it were not stated as being an exact correspondence of the mortal body, it would be considered somewhat as being like a mirror image of it. In other words, it would appear similar, though of a substance or kind unlike the physical being.

The orthodox religious person is most often fearful that he has not met the standard required of him for a happy life in the next world. Consequently, millions of persons are terrified by such thoughts upon the approach of death. If one must believe that a heaven and hell—or their equivalent in other terms—exist, there is then only one recourse: It is to observe consistently that conduct which his religion assures him will provide a heavenly acceptance. He then psychologically puts his mind at ease; he feels that he has conformed; his conscience is clear. The believer convinces himself by suggestion that he is exempted from an afterlife punishment.

In this sense, heaven and hell really exist within the human consciousness. We can create a hell for ourselves in our fears of our actual or imagined guilt. On the other hand, we can have a sense of righteousness that we have conformed to whatever code we have accepted, and that creates here and now a euphoria, a feeling of goodness which is a “mental heaven.”

Another fear of death is the thought that one may not have fulfilled his obligation to his loved ones. In other words, has he properly provided for his family, or will they be left destitute? Is this approach to death to become a mental self-chastisement? The same sense of personal guilt can arise from a realization that one has shirked all his life what should have been a moral duty. With death approaching, one may feel that there is not time to rectify such wrongs, and the mental torment increases.

This self-censure can be overcome by *self-purgation*, that is, endeavoring to the best of one's ability to fulfill responsibilities, meet obligations, especially where they personally affect others. Even if such have not been fulfilled at the time transition approaches, if one has done his best according to his conscience, then there is no mental anguish.

Reincarnation as a doctrine and which is fundamental in many religions throughout the world, having millions of adherents, reinforces the innate desire of man for eternal life. Reincarnation, however, goes beyond just immortality in another realm of existence. It also provides its devotees with an assurance of *rebirth on earth*. To many persons, then, this is even more consoling than just eternally residing in an ethereal realm. It is a more intimate aspect of continuous life. It would provide the physical, mortal existence once again after an interval of immaterial reality.

As far as the substantiation or verity of the doctrine of reincarnation is concerned, it has as much implied authority as have any claims to a permanent afterlife. The Bible is frequently quoted by some and interpreted as proof that man will dwell in a kind of paradise after death. On the other hand, certain other exegetical authorities make the counterstatement that the Bible does not unequivocally proclaim an eternal heavenly existence such as some theologies declare. The reincarnationists not only also quote the Bible for verification of their belief but they refer to other ancient literature as well, which is held to be equally sacred by multitudes of people and which make reincarnation a fundamental doctrine of belief.

The word *transition* as used by the Rosicrucians alludes to death not as a cessation of the human self but rather as a *change* to another transcendent existence. Categorically, the Rosicrucians look upon this transition as though one were passing from one chamber to another. However, they relate that the change is not just in place or time but also in the manner of self-awareness, that is, the realization of existence that one will have. The Rosicrucians affirm that the kind of consciousness, if there be that kind of phenomenon, is quite unlike what man has ever experienced here as a mortal. It is said to be almost inexplicable. Words cannot adequately depict a state of existence for which there is no earthly comparison. The self, it is declared, exists but of a quality and of a nature that is different from any image the mortal mind can visualize.

This does not mean that the self loses identity, that it is completely submerged in a universal stratum—call it the Cosmic. Rather, it has

a new sense of *oneness* with all reality, which is an experience that at the most is fleeting to mortal man, and then only had by a few. Notwithstanding this oneness after transition, it is held that there nevertheless is a retention of the individuality. A crude analogy might be the waves of the sea or ripples upon the surface of the pond. They cannot be separated from the body of water of which they are a part and upon which they depend, yet they have identity. They exist as a particular phenomenon. Each wave is different to some degree from every other, yet none are detached from their common substance.

Unfortunately, erroneous ideas have arisen regarding the Rosicrucian conception of transition and its relationship to human emotions. When one grieves over the transition of a loved one, there are sometimes those who say to them in their misunderstanding, "You should not grieve, you should rejoice for his transition to a higher realm." The emotional nature of man is as much a part of his structure as his intellectual by which he forms his doctrines and philosophy. This *feeling* side of man cannot be truncated just because of the acceptance of a belief in transition. There is the reality of a physical companionship, a mortal intimacy that terminates at death. Eventually, it may be replaced by an exalted feeling. But it is natural that one should feel at least a temporary great loss at the termination of the closely bound physical relationship.

When a loved one, for analogy, is to take a long journey, or is obliged to absent himself for a considerable time, such a departure engenders sadness on the part of those close to him. This is so even though it is known that the departing person will still live and will eventually return. Consequently, why then should there not be this grief at the physical departure at death? There is an ultimate reunion of the consciousness between the living and those who have passed through transition. The image of the departed becomes enshrined in the loving memory of those who remain. This softens with time the traumatic loss of the physical being.

How then should we regard transition? There can be no intellectual or emotional standard for all mankind in this regard. Each self will be attracted to that idea which is in accord with the depth of his reasoning,

his emotional nature, and that which satisfies the self the most. Some conceptions of death and the afterlife seem to offend the reason and intelligence of certain persons. They seem irrational, illogical, and not given to clear thought. Other views will seem shocking, lacking in spiritual essence to still other persons. Each believer will try to seek out experiences, tales, accounts that will to him seem to confirm his beliefs. The more the individual does this, the greater becomes the hiatus between what he believes and what others do.

If each of us is required to establish a personal philosophy of life that seems to be most in accord with nature so that happiness is to be had, then likewise each must view death in a way most in accord with an inwardly developed sense of peace. It is natural to fear death because of the instinctive urge to survive that is inherent in each of us. It is wrong, however, to fear the after-consequence of death. To many persons, what they think is going to happen to them after they die causes a far greater fear than that of the cessation of life itself.

What are the fears of death? Are they the loss of loves, family, friends, possessions and fame; or of an unknown crammed with the varieties of uncertainty extolled by religion and philosophy? Only the living can grieve, for in death there is naught of those to sorrow about.

—Validivar

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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