

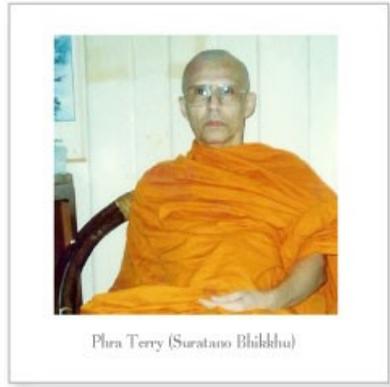


The Long View

An Excursion into Buddhist Perspectives

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About the Author



Phra Terry was born Terence Barnett Magness on May 1929 in Penang, then British Malaya into an English Catholic family. He attended school at St. Xavier's Institute and, the church nearby. The idyllic life as a youth came to an abrupt end with the Japanese invasion of Malaya and with it, his education as well.

By February or March of 1946 at about 16-17 years old, he and an elder sister fled Penang for Thailand seeking safety from Japanese bombardment. His parents had already been stationed in Southern Thailand as his father was employed by a British company there. One sister, however, chose to stay in Penang. This sister, who was a Catholic nun, subsequently became the Mother Superior there. She died some 30 years ago.

His parents were tragically killed by Japanese bombs like so many others. The sister, who fled with him, was interned in a camp in Thailand, but managed to survive the war, and married a Thai of royal lineage. His brother-in-law owned an interior decoration business when peace arrived, and Phra Terry worked for him until he became a monk. Both his sister and brother-in-law were lost in a tragic car accident in 1971, a year after Phra Terry was ordained.

With his formal education ended precipitously, Phra Terry taught himself the 3Rs, if you will. He delved into humanities and the arts and, indeed, all matters metaphysical, esoteric, social and scientific and so forth that could occupy an enquiring mind. He spent his time at bookshops and libraries exploring the philosophies and thinking of the ancients. He had a voracious appetite for religion, philosophy, history, literature and cultures of the Romans, Greeks, Indians, Chinese, and the Europeans and others.

Apart from his apparent love of books and knowledge; he led a pretty normal life of a young man, sometimes going to the movies and partaking of fine foods, music and such like with friends. However, one group of his friends – 3 of them were of a different bent, they were interested in meditation and the Dhamma. One of these friends, Archarn Charoen Phanrat, an engineer by profession introduced him to Wat Paknam in 1958, along with the other two who were architects.

This small group of friends would go to Wat Paknam by bus and learn meditation there on a regular basis from a Mae Chi (an 8-preceptor, upasika), Archarn Kalayawadee. She was an outstanding student of the great sage Luang Phor Mongkol Thepmuni and she taught Phra Terry meditation. She subsequently founded the Mongkol-Dham Group, Bangkok with her husband Archarn Charoen (since deceased in 1992). Phra Terry and their other friends were foundations members as well.

Phra Terry learnt and practised the Vijjā Dhammakāya and the Method of Meditation for 12 years before he was ordained as a monk at Wat Doi Suthep, Chiangmai. After his ordination he went to spend some months at Wat Djittabhawan, Pattaya in 1971. From May 1971, he went to Wat Paknam and remained there for some years before returning to Wat Doi Suthep. Phra Terry spent more than 20 years in Chiangmai and still lives there.

Phra Terry's writing career was prompted by the total lack of an English translation of Luang Phor's Teachings on the Vijja Dhammakāya in the 1950s. His first book, "*The Dhammakāya – Metaphysical Implications*" was published in 1960 and it was later expanded and renamed *Sammā Samādhi I*, in 1961. His second book, *The Life and Teachings of the Venerable Chao Khun Mongkol Thepmuni* was published later in the same year, 1960.

Then *Sammā Ditṭhi – A Treatise on Right Understanding* was published in 1962; another book, *Sammā Samādhi II (Right Concentration)* in 1963; and, *The Altitude & the Buddhist Experience*, in the early 1970s after he became a monk. A couple of these books were expanded, re-arranged and renamed in later editions. For instance, *The Vistas – Buddhist Insights into Immortality* (is the enlarged and renamed *Sammā Samādhi I*) and *Samatha Vipassanā: An Exposition of Attainments*, is the enlarged *Sammā Samādhi II*.

Phra Terry's books exhibit a rare quality of an in-depth personal understanding and knowledge of the Sublime Dhamma and an appreciation of ancient religion and philosophies. His explanations of how the law of kamma works in ancient as well as contemporary societies are instructive and enlightening. From his works, a reader can see that he knows the Vijjā Dhammakāya and the Method of Meditation, for he is a meditator himself.

As disciples of Luang Phor and Phra Terry, we have, with the aid of his books, come to understand a little of the Sublime Dhamma in its original condition and pristine purity and are profoundly grateful to them both.

The central message of the Buddha is communicated clearly by his works: that all earnest seekers who are upright, without guile and deceit and intelligent, would be able to achieve to the Ultimate Release. And, the unique Dhammakāya Method of Meditation is the means to cultivating the Noble-Eightfold Path in full scope and measure and to comprehending the Four Noble Truths in perfect clarity, without taint or distortion.

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Without a step out of doors
The whole world may be known.

Lao Tzu



1: Mere Geography

To state today that man is a product of his environment is merely to be trite; because he has always been, and always will be, a product thereof. So much is the situation taken for granted in its superficial terms, however, that the more devious implications are completely ignored. The attitudes and beliefs which play so great a part in the individual's psychology may readily be reduced to a matter of mere geography, where situations are inherited ready-made, and where choice plays only a negligible part. That a man is born into a certain country, into a certain climate of opinion, appears to be a mere matter of chance. Nevertheless, it is a chance by which all his prospective life is dyed, and upon which all his future grooves of thought must hinge. The psycho-physical entanglement which this matter of chance evokes is seldom recognized for what it really is, beguiling man to believe that his capacity for freedom of action, so confidently expressed, is something which is assured, when it is in reality summarily dictated by forces over which he possesses very little knowledge and even less control.

Environmental Conditioning Factors

The fact is that it becomes almost impossible for human nature, whose roots derive from certain environmental factors, to extricate it from the attachments with which it has been saddled, and with which it has been groomed to identify, from the very start. The vulnerability of the position, however, is the mental identification with particular areas of experience in the environmental context, endowing them with a universality of significance which they do not in reality possess. In that his attitudes and beliefs are even from the very start inevitably conditioned by his birth, the result of fortuitous circumstances, it becomes apparent how thin, and yet how thick, the border is which divides man from man, and that but a mere juxtaposition of locale would have produced a different man, a complete set of other attitudes and beliefs. If birth is to be viewed as a matter of chance, therefore, the consequences for life are grim, for it consigns man to the tragedy of witnessing over and over again the age-old spectacle of masses of individuals at odds, disorder and disastrous conflict, as bloody as it is blind. There is, of course, much talk of liberation, individual rights, and national pride. Ambiguous terms. It is to be observed that, granted liberation and the rest, appropriate implementation becomes irresolutely complex. In that the individual exists in a mental world completely his own, sensations of isolation and fear proportionately arise, from which disorders impulses emerge to blunder into shaky relationships. Shaking together as couples, families, communities, and nations. The birth of individual anxiety is from these meagre origins transformed into a collective enterprise, sheltered under the banner of an amorphous plurality and glorified as the attainment of a common integrity in good faith.

The disadvantage of being unable to stand on his own, however, renders man emotionally dependent upon externals for his precarious peace of mind. Relationships based on unstable emotions such as anxiety and fears are always extremely precarious affairs, collapsing at the least provocation and excuse. The vulnerabilities and inconsistencies of solitary existence are merely projected afresh onto the partnership, which sags eventually under the stress. The tenuous relationships between individuals are stabilized only when the partnership is entered into from positions, not of weakness, but of strength. Even if it is true that to attain to spiritual strength, so as to ascend above the storm, lies only in the province of the few, nevertheless if man is ever to be master of his fate, an attempt to consolidate his individual stand must at least be made, overcoming the tendency to be exposed to the mercy of every paltry incident that upsprings.

Relationships come and vaguely go. The great fact of vulnerability remains. The vulnerability of daily life is its legacy of emptiness. The frantic invention of psycho-physical picnics to excite the emptiness, capricious as the breeze, serve only to heighten consciousness for an instant but prove unable to contain themselves. Where expectation is over-pitched, and anticipation of miraculous sensations is misplaced, the letdown comes into its own, amidst the litter and shackles of the endless round. So there are no miraculous sensations, and to find himself on his own, alone, remains the open road of man. It becomes his fate to see a whole life pass, loved ones die, memories fade, the path ahead grow dim, until only a semblance of life is left, and an empty machine. It would seem that he must always be the victim of some huge joke played on him by the invisible powers of the universe, as his search for edification peters out as it began, in the dark. The vast immensity of space-time only serves to harden the isolation, as 'progress' clatters by shattering him on all sides. The inherent problem of a spiritual vacuum only shuffles into prominence progresses' smug and inflated schemes of earthly conquest, whose inanity becomes apparent when simple observation attests that man and his creations flounders on with neither ultimate direction nor purpose but in a vicious circle, and that if there is anything in need of 'conquest' it is obviously man himself.

Given these contemporary conditions, it is only inevitable that a false sense of security envelopes the human scene. With Marcus Aurelius, the lesson for today remains the same, and even more mortally so: The object of life is not to be on the side of the majority, but to escape finding oneself in the ranks of the insane. The dearth of a deeper perspective, the reluctance to view things in the context of a vaster scheme, the inability to approach life from some central stand, this is where contemporary vision has failed. Entangled in the valley of things, side-tracked by inessentials, identified with superficialities, the view from the peak, with its expanse of a horizon which endures, is lost, and some central insight dissipated for a blur.

Suffering is Universal

The universality of life's problems, and the relative insignificance of individual life, necessitates some central vision to usher things into their proper perspective, without which stability the whole scenario becomes totally confused. The whole business of the emotional life, fraught as it is with inconsistencies, constantly undermines the stability which life is somehow expected to provide, but which proves to be more than human nature can sustain. From religion would have been expected a stabilizing stand. The attempts of orthodox religion to occupy the void which contemporary materialism has ushered into man's consciousness, however, leave much to be desired. Its failure lies in its removal of the mind from the seat of immediate experience, expecting it to grasp the essence of things by an act of faith, insisting that truth and salvation can be vouchsafed only through the aid and bounty of the divine. Thus the earnest seeker, perplexed and yearning with his heart to believe, cannot with a mind intellectually honest unconditionally accept.

On the other hand, lies his inability to completely accede to the deductions of science, with its reduction of life to biological freaks composed of mere chemicals, protoplasm, and cellular affinities. The typical bias of the scientific approach is to turn its lenses outwards, to the development of precision instruments which, as a consequence of their having achieved some superficial success, have come to be highly regarded as extensions of self. The success, however, is inevitably complicated by the fact that a major portion of reality always remains impenetrable even to the most precise of these so-called extensions. The specialist fiddling with his extensions fails to take into consideration that the prime objective which requires clarification lies not at the further end of his lenses, but within the mind itself. It is a question of priorities. The whole point of the matter is astonishingly missed by the methodology employed. The mind remains bogged down, as it has always been, by its own limitations and oversights. The classification of matter into energy, molecules, and electrons, although

proudly impressive as to sound, brings man no nearer the truth. The fact is that nothing has been explained, the mystery remains.

Seeking Mental Equipoise

It has always been the mark of a civilized society to aspire to an expansion of consciousness so as to apprehend life in the context of a deeper reality. Allowance for factors other than what the sense-oriented mind collects, however, must always be made to achieve this end, or else the exploration and outlook becomes inevitably circumscribed. As long as the mind remains bogged down by the sense-door field, so long will any insight into reality remain inconclusive and incomplete. The peripheral mind, at its superficial level composed of little more than local sensitivity, is limited in the extreme by its sense-door adjuncts, moving along set frames of reference and peculiar grooves, the filtering process of which distorts with fallacious sophistication and deceptive aplomb any material received. If man aspires to be something more than his sensations and to come to terms with himself, so as to perceive things in the context of a deeper reality, a technique of penetration must be devised which pursues its deeper explorations inwards. The objective is to first void the mind of its tendency to sense indexing, at which it is most facile, and to develop a methodology which enables it to attain a pitch of penetrative insight whereby ultimate reality may be plumbed.

Unfortunately, for the average man engaged in the business of life, insight into reality is simply too tedious a project to propose. Nevertheless, it is this distinction of which mental culture is composed. For mental culture implies consciousness of values, and if man prefers to remain unaware of the fundamental conditions under which life evolves, then to be unconscious would be just as well. Neither a smug materialism nor a distorted idealism provides a respite to man's anxiety since they, failing to penetrate to certain transcendental perspectives, remain content with mere superficial interpretations and matters of mere geography. To attain to perspective a certain contemplative climate is the first demand. However, the tendency to relegate the responsibility for the mind's tumultuous condition on to the environment, issues characteristically into the complaint that the hectic pressures of daily life are simply uncondusive to contemplative cultivation and repose. Provided the requisite contemplative landscape, the first thing the mind begins to do is to fidget and to fret, revealing the root of the disorder to be the germ of an inner fever unable to come to terms with itself. If the mind remains the most cantankerous quantity even by itself, for it to exist in peaceful concord with its environment becomes a superhuman feat. The endless tug-of-war which wages within the mind is not something, therefore, which can be shuffled off by an irresponsible search for scapegoats at any time.

Concessions to human debility accomplish little in terms of character-formation, and the evasion of psychological issues only circles back to a delayed crisis of self-confrontation. Playing with pebbles and with shells, flirting upon the outskirts of things, the hallmark of human life is its inconclusiveness and frivolity. This is the healthy man's field, his playground, and is simply his healthy way of being himself. But to be healthy is no longer enough, not when decrepitude awaits just round the door. The impulse to escape self-confrontation, an age-old one, travels along peculiar avenues. One form of which is embodied in the charm of shifting landscapes. To trot around the globe has for long been viewed as an exciting education in itself, even if the tendency to drift becomes monotonous, as no permanent port presents itself to cast an anchor in. The benefit of such forms of travel arises in the mind's capacity to seek and discover whether any areas of psychic compatibility exist. Ever since birth, however, certain labels become attached to the mind and with these labels it is content. The inner resources to resist the pressures of the natal environment and to expose the mind to a wider world is a capacity which only the few possess, the majority simply dissolve into the faceless crowd. Self-effacement is an inestimable virtue in itself, but not at the expense of an inner

defeat. For once such a defeat occurs the ground is laid, and a precedent prepared, for a constant defeat.

The mind is an adjustable shutter, facile at adaptation to fresh fields of experience. To the extent that it derives its reflexes from a more *sophisticated* background, however, the less receptive is it to change. A real sophistication would be able to appreciate that the sense-door-field and its peripheral areas of contact with which the mind is habituated to identify serves only in the capacity of an office, not as a permanent abode. If office-work delegates its purpose, it is always to the home that the mind returns to rest. Once again it is a matter of priorities. For in what would lie the significance of a bustling office without the substance of a home? As life begins at home, so there it ends. The object of life is to discover whether for man an enduring home exists, integral in its orientation, and possessing definite survival lines. For to live the life of surface-men, forever walking on the crust of things, is to forfeit the compensations of in-depth exploration.

Despite the vacuum which exists within the human heart, despite the ultimate hollowness of that which passes by the name of human happiness, there exist certain areas of experience which reveal more enduring satisfactions. The problem is to induce the exposure of some inner resource, some interior landmark, some enduring beacon, on which the mind can unshaken stand. The misery of being ensnared by pitfalls of the psyche is the rude awakening, with its overload of regret. Exposed as life always is to the mercy of an emotion, the greatest boon is to eliminate the anxiety of a ceaseless attempt to evoke an anticipated reciprocity from external sources over which the mind has no definite control, by reducing emotional attachments to a minimum, so as to attain through self-containment the greatest immunity from pain.

2: Mere Temporality

When the bottom falls out of human hopes the stage is laid for a new approach. Man's search for reality is in essence an express instinct for survival. For survival it often becomes expedient to initiate a change, a reorientation process, which becomes a possibility with a shift in locale, of psychic geography, wherein things are marshalled into proper perspective. Despite the expediency for shifts and the advantages to be derived therefrom, however, it appears that human nature prefers to remain as it is: anxious and afraid, relics of a short-term view. It is to be observed that even after straying far, a man by some devious instinct returns to his birthplace to die. This clarifies the degree to which man succumbs where matters of geography are concerned. So he remains his own limit, with an emotional clot within.

Spiritual Exploration

It is only when a movement is made to other shores of thought, leaving insecurities and fears behind, letting trial and error take its course, that man begins to stumble at last across a broad perspective and a long-term view. At the onset of what may be called a shrugging-off process, momentum is gained, and it dawns upon the evolving consciousness how much the product of its neighbourhood the mind was, and how little it actually means in fact. It is the mark of the true explorer in search of certain perspectives that when something integral presents itself, something which stands strict scrutiny, then he adjusts himself accordingly, without regrets for what is left behind. Portents of disaster wove themselves to be invalid when a break with the past comes clean.

In his drift towards new horizons the spiritual explorer is apt to have his navigation determined by a sequence of preconceived ideas. In coming across Buddhist lands for the first time it may be that glimpses of gleaming temple-roofs and spires, leafy courtyards where pigeons flutter and bells tinkle from the eaves, and where within the sanctuary the Buddha sits enthroned in realms of bliss, may lead the uninformed to assume that this calm and this peace is perhaps something which arrived by itself, even like some superficial breeze. The fact is that whatever peace there appears - suggested by the seated attitude of rest is really an internalized depth and dearly gained, the culmination of an aeonic struggle with the world without and even more so with the world within.

There is a tendency today to seek for bridges of understanding between the faiths. There is much which is taken for granted regarding this subject. If comparative religion does reveal a substratum of concord beneath specific dogma, there still are irreconcilable factors which cannot be evaded, and these concern among other things the aspect of time. In this respect we have short-term religions and long-term ones. That is, we have on the one hand, for one life of struggle on earth, an eternity of reward. This possesses an obvious appeal, for its demands are simple and its rewards immediate. And as it is only in the nature of man to seek quick compensations for less labour, so it is that the majority succumb to the gain of a heavenly post rather than the prospect of a distant Nirvanic (*Nibbanic*) goal. This is true even for those who nominally profess the Buddhist faith.

The goal of human life as portrayed by Buddhism, however, is a long-term project. Although man's sojourn on earth is brief, life itself is long. This long-term view is typically Eastern in contrast to the Western short-term view. Two distinct attitudes, therefore, arise, one aggressive, the other mild. A symptom of the aggressive attitude is to scan the horizon for the allure of a healthy material success. When such success becomes elevated to the status of a god, it becomes impossible for man to scan his horizons without being driven to a frenzy. Survival in such a climate becomes extremely perilous and short.

Spiritual Marathon

The typical Buddhist attitude is that of the marathon race. Fret and frown brings the long-distance runner no nearer his mark. The wise pacer is he who bides his time, or else, in his anxiety to make good, falls exhausted to the ground, outdone before his goal is reached. Since life itself is long, it becomes the long-term man to develop a certain detachment in the face of tumultuousness and change. In itself man's life is of no intrinsic significance unless it coalesces. Coalesces, that is, not in the materialization of some house or car, the usual mediocre substitutes, but in the inner peace of an ultimate aim achieved.

The doctrine of rebirth (not to be confused with the Hindu variety) lends substance to the long-term view and sustains it, for without is the whole structure of the positive life of effort is rendered redundant and meaningless. The doctrine of rebirth is again complemented by the doctrine of kamma, for it is kamma by which the area of rebirth is conditioned. The twin doctrines of kamma and rebirth, therefore, serve as the mainstay, or life-giving force, for the long-term view.

Kamma - the impulses of mental, verbal, and physical activity - and its counterpart rebirth, is a highly complex and involved subject. It is complex because, for one thing, its manifestation in the world of effects is as intangible as it is spontaneous, thus giving rise to the contention that its activity is without issue. Kammic cohesion is imperceptible and complex in that it expresses itself from the shadows of the subconscious, propelling the psyche along grooves of becoming peculiar to itself. The character and condition of the psyche in the immediate life is the end-result of an innumerable complexity of causes of which the psyche itself has no inkling at all, involving a vast tapestry of time, with consciousness itself as the thread. Within this vast tapestry the psyche may explore its limits, free to act insofar as the kammic tapestry permits, the product of a past over which it has already had its say. The justification for the kammic process is that it works, for nothing is observed to emerge out of the deep without some antecedent cause which, even though unrecognized, projects its load regardless, until its impetus is exhausted in proportion to the degree that it is transmuted into effects.

The briefcase for rebirth may be presented in another context. Life's brevity renders one life on earth inadequate for the complete development of the psyche insofar as character-formation is concerned. Observation reveals that psychic development becomes inconclusive when measured in terms of merely years. Limited in advance by time's rush, and striving to attain too much in too little time, the psyche fails at once in the attempt. Long-term exposure to experience is the only laboratory in which contradictory factors resolve themselves in the crucible of life, under the impact of a protracted ferment, to issue out as a finished product. Due to the re-embodiment process of rebirth, however, the psyche is thrown out of focus by the metabolism of the new body, and as a consequence is rendered incapable of bringing its past lives within recall. The predicament is that of the new-born babe unable to adjust its vision to the external world, until such time as natural processes of development exert themselves. The recollection of former births, however, being more complex, necessitates other deliberate measures, such as hypnotic regression, or the development of certain meditational techniques.

In his search for explanations regarding the invisible world, man possesses a peculiar facility in arriving at views, which arise in many ways and through various avenues, whether through inference, speculation, personal preference, or second-hand sources of hearsay. Second-hand experience in the field of life, however, is a poor substitute for the real thing. It is when man's stock of firsthand experience is found to be wanting that distorted viewpoints and attitudes arise. It is in this context that a certain psychic stockpile, the quantitative-qualitative aspect of experience becomes a necessity. Aeons of psycho-physical development, therefore, must in this respect ensue before the stockpile proves adequate to cope with all manner of complexities and situations which may from life to life arise. In such a context quantity becomes the necessary predecessor to quality. The immense

effort in past existences of the spiritual explorer displays that life is not just one beatific smile, but rather an implicit and deliberate commitment to action in the world for the explicit actualization of a heroic goal.

Long or Short Term Goals

A distorted version of the facts has long persisted regarding Buddhism as being an explicit world-renouncing creed. The Buddhist attitude to life, on the contrary, is of more than an optimistic nature, as externally signified by the monk's sun-hued robe worn for all occasions, even concerning death. In no way is the Buddhist approach a singular retreat from responsibilities, rather it is the constant development to an attitude which possesses detachment as its subjective ground and the Eternal as its objective mark. It is the process of immediately implementing commitments and the defraying of certain psychic debts and liabilities, together with a gradual extrication of the psyche from these. Immediate commitment becomes inevitable in the field of humanity; even though the commitment is itself pitched to the ideal of an ultimate detachment, and is to be understood as such. It is the mark of the superior man that he deliberately commits himself to action in the world so as to be involved, without succumbing to any compulsive pressure from outside. Self-control is the ideal, together with a certain fortification of the psyche, to serve as the fabric for a better balanced future in other existences to come. Without such a fortification of the psyche, any progress out of the endless round of becoming would only tend to dissolve into an ignominious and continuous defeat. Such is the long-term view.

It is a point which arises for criticism, that the ascetic ideal is a closed circle, in contrast to that of the secular arm on whose structure society is held to subsist. The implication is that the layman's life is of benefit to society in general, while the monk's is not. It will be observed on closer scrutiny, however, that it is the layman's life which contains the danger of degenerating into a closed circuit, devoted merely to the acquisition and the preservation of the family structure, with charity beginning at home, and ending there. In a Buddhist environment, the society of monks serves as the backbone of the secular arm. Whether there is a birth, an anniversary, a wedding, or a death, it is the society of monks that is invited to preside. Without their presence, unobtrusive as it is, the layfolk would find themselves in a vacuum, without the comfort of some moral support. The monk, possessing no family himself, lays the ground for society as a whole to become his family. Neither is his life pressured by personal considerations, nor is it grim, for there is always humour and there is always wit. Besides, his period of incumbency is spontaneous, and may be protracted or it may be brief, since he decides that for himself. Although it is true that the goal of all endeavours is ultimately Nibbāna, it is seldom that such a goal is considered realizable even in this very life. His present existence as a monk is never viewed as his having reached the end of the line, but is merely a preparation for better things to come, in this life or the next. When he considers that he has had enough, therefore, he declares to the congregation of monks his intention to disrobe, and for them to henceforth recognize him only as a layman. They give him their blessing, and he is free.

From this it may be gathered that the layman's life is not something which is depreciated as such, but rather is something to be *polished*. The layman's existence is something which is unavoidably blurred, to the extent that he is always emotionally involved, so that he is under the constant pressure of an anxiety that any decisions he makes, under the insistence of compulsive living, may recoil unfavourably to his credit, instigating consequences over which he can have no definite control. Nevertheless, as we have earlier observed, since the Buddhist attitude to things is not a singular retreat from responsibilities but rather the development of an attitude which has detachment as its subjective ground and the Eternal as its objective mark, it is possible for a man to pursue these ideals not only as a monk but as a layman, without introducing contradictions and inconsistencies into the issue. There will always be lay-societies, because that is what man desires, and what he desires,

that he will support. There will also always be contemplative-societies of monks, because a contemplative life is what some prefer. The great weakness of the former, however, is its almost total dependence on externals for its satisfaction, whereas the great pitfall of the latter is to allow itself to degenerate into forms of self-centredness.

Popular misconceptions

The cause of all the misunderstandings and perversions which Buddhism has been exposed to in the West, must be laid in part at the door of those who, after a brief flirtation in the East with things exotic, return to their homelands to establish themselves as experts or authorities on the subject. Such dabbling deceives the uninitiated by spreading a false aura of mystery, of pretensions to be occult-masters with extraordinary qualifications. Buddhism is a highly sophisticated religion which demands much, much more than most people are prepared to take. There is a tendency in the West to approach it as though it were some wild new drug, which is able with one shot to send them on a psychedelic trip. The West is at present unprepared for Buddhism's message in many ways, and to sow upon land which hasn't even been tilled is a great waste. It is to be realized that it takes centuries to create merely an atmosphere, let alone a suitable soil. Even India with its age-old religious background proved incompatible for Buddhism to survive, so it is too much to hope that it will be able to flourish in lands where an atmosphere has yet to be created and the soil prepared. In such a situation to shovel down the throat great mouthfuls of the truth is only to make man choke, let alone digest. Buddhism, contrary to what some misguided people may think, is not a system of *anything goes*, but morality itself, and there are penalties involved in morality's abuse. When this is eventually realized, however, it is usually too late.

In so far as religion is concerned, the easy path is not always the better path. It seems that what men expect from their religion is not excellence as such, but warmth and consolation from the buffeting of life. Therefore it is not perfection as such but compassion which conquers the world. But compassion is no longer enough: in despite of it, suffering remains. In this manner a higher excellence is bypassed for a compensation which is less. The cessation of suffering, and the acquisition of a true life, still remains the ultimate concern. But here again no quick results appear for large demands. For a small investment of mere *wishing*, of mere *asking*, there certainly are no rich rewards. The heavy load of a generous commitment, of active engagement, with one's self and the world, seems to be the only method of reimbursement, of providing just returns for a capital outlay. Such is the nature of things.

If things are made easier for man in his struggle towards *the light*, the ultimate ingredients must lie within himself, in innate disposition, and in active method. In this respect there are three dominant and distinct lines of approach leading to fulfilment - the way of devotion; the way of involvement; and, the way of wisdom. The devotional attitude asks few questions and is content with little: blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed! The attitude of involvement is more demanding, and in its experiment, with life inculcates a great deal of waste. Finally, there is the attitude which is one of enquiry where, receiving no satisfactory or conclusive replies, decides to provide them for itself.

Due to natural incompatibility these three dominant types of humanity, and their inherent attitudes, possess a latent tendency to disparage the other. But disparagement is no criterion of truth, where the concern is not specifically with *means* but with *ends*. All methods of approach to the attainment of a specific objective involve the accumulation of a certain stockpile of experience in time, more or less, as the case may be. For in the matter of ultimate objectives, man is here engaged not with time equations of the order of years, but with the prospect of aeons amorphous, wherein each compulsive stream-of-life develops itself to its full capacity along its own peculiar lines, and in its own

conditioned time. A time, for which there is no substitute because, as goes the adage, from small beginnings appear great ends.

3: The Problem of Identity

It is to be observed how frantically, in varying degrees of intensity, life presents itself as an incessant struggle for happiness and identity which, when pushed to its logical limits, congeals into the hope of immortality and invulnerability. However, the very first thing to be observed regarding the psyche, whose happiness and identity is so pathetically sought, is its capacity for incoherence, for instant shifts at immense speeds. All the unnecessary (for it could be otherwise) anguish which the world is weighted with, registers the persistent fact that the psyche is by its very nature a headlong and agitated thing, jostling from one moment to the next, knocking off into chronic chaos, without ultimate direction or purpose. Each mind-instant appears and disappears in cyclic disorder, a repetition pitched to an infinity of ever-recurring cycles, impelled by the force of some obscure initial momentum. Only man's corporeality, his physical frame of reference (whose cells also arise, mutate, and perish spontaneously) prevents him from recognizing the intermittent quality of this self-becoming, jostling into fragmentary existence from second to second, and out.

Incoherent Vision

In that the universe of sense is no longer regarded as static but a ceaseless life-process, the persistent struggle for individual survival at various levels of identity becomes more explicit. The fundamental amorphousness of the basic ground of consciousness, however, refutes any of man's claims to some permanent identity, implying instead that at no moment is permanent identity ever assured, merely momentary flashings of psychophysical manifestation within frames of ever-changing reference and form. In view of this fundamental incoherence with which the psyche is characteristically besieged, man's efforts down through the ages may be witnessed as a strenuous and tragic endeavour to harness the incoherence and gain control, so as to endow life with some ultimate identity and purpose. For left to itself and its incoherence (as dreams and nightmares do significantly) consciousness, battered about like a leaf in a storm, sinks to the level of idiocy, a thing without identity.

The intensity of the incoherence prevents contemporary psychotherapy, such as is in vogue at present, from achieving the impossible whensoever psychic fission oversteps its limits. In that tension may even in a minor manner be alleviated is already a considerable boon. Besides, contemporary psychotherapy makes no pretence of resolving the basic philosophical problem, whose intricacies abound. For one thing, in that consciousness is precipitated within particular frames of reference and form which persist, it erroneously credits itself with possessing a self-sufficient identity. The psyche has always possessed certain surface attitudes regarding itself. To consider these attitudes unalterable, however, is to award them an honour which they in reality do not possess.

Such an attitude is the age-old concept of the human soul. The inherent weakness of the traditional concept of the soul is its attributed permanence and indivisibility. This concept is rendered untenable; however, in the context of consciousness being equivalent to life itself, for consciousness is not some static totality but a process of dynamic divisibility, of an incessant mutability. In this respect the body presents a better semblance of durability than the psyche, for it at least persists as a recognizable continuity, whereas consciousness is really an *unrecognizable* quantity, without a face, and (as the Buddha has observed) keeps up an incessant round of perishing as one thing and springing up as another. Its progress may be traced only through its occasions of contact, in relation to particular frames of reference and specific form. Frames of reference and form, moreover, which are themselves of ever-changing fluency and flux.

Illusion of a Changeless Soul

The illusion of a self-sufficient identity, otherwise called the soul, derives its existence and credibility through the five sense-door field of contact, which, by its peripheral function of assimilating and registering data in the psyche as memory, creates a feeling of personality and the idea of an antecedent self, to which idea it hopefully clings. This idea peeps through its private door of memory and the accumulated data which all that implies. Consciousness of the soul's existence, therefore, rests on the data of memory continuously reasserting and reviewing itself, in relation to other data originally derived from an external world. The permeation of memory in a continuous physical frame of reference such as the body, by affording it temporary dimension and form, confuses the issue further, leading the psyche to infer that it is a substantive unit in itself, a singular and unique personality, an eternal soul. Sense-contact only tends to increase the psyche's tenacity for belief, an impression conveyed of a singular personality which persists. The eternal soul, however, is in reality a non-soul affair, the momentum of consciousness precipitated from moment to moment by a random contact, impelled towards fresh fields of attraction by an objectification process. Leaving no mysterious soul-like entity lurking in the background.

The reason why psychic complexities prove of no embarrassment to the average man in the business of daily life is because even though the nature of the psyche and its processes may remain a mystery, consciousness itself continues. Since it continues it produces results, and it is only with these results, not the mechanism of things, with which the average man is concerned. By neglecting to investigate the mechanism of things, however, knowledge of the self remains a riddle, and the concept of some eternal soul persists.

Yet man is more tenuous a continuum than he thinks. His so-called self is held together in the main by a haphazard jumble of sense-contacts. Sense-contacts, and the impressions on which they subsist, are the be-all and end-all of the psyche, for it is not thought as such but the instinct to acquire impressions which dominates its life. In that these instincts and impulses are never singular but are forever at odds with each other, however, whatever kammic destiny ensues becomes a matter of mere bits and pieces, of odds and ends. In the stream of existences through which the psyche must traverse, only fractions of kamma are consumed, the rest remain potentially in a backseat capacity awaiting their active turn at the wheel of life. As all the kammic ingredients mill about in the psyche, whichever one mills nearest to the peripheral door of consciousness rushes out, as soon as it is opened, and starts to spin. Such is the overall potential of the psyche, in part a-spin and in part subdued. That it does not collapse under the tension of so many odds and ends is already a wonder in itself, but that it does divide when pressure oversteps its legitimate limits the phenomenon of schizophrenia provides material proof. In fact the psyche is always under pressure to create a split, and it is only the body which, as a gravitationally oriented centre, prevents consciousness from streaming off altogether into inanity.

If we view man merely as a physical object he appears indivisible, and as a living unit unable to function as such under partition. But if he is viewed as a psychic field of sense-impressions and divided desires, however, he automatically becomes a quantity susceptible to partition. By preserving an appearance of consistency the body deflects attention from the fact that the psyche is never for a moment singular, but is always under the impulsion of a writhing plurality. In so far as this susceptible aspect of the psyche is concerned, therefore, anything which possesses some sort of power to affect, or attract, its attention creates to a greater or lesser degree a separate and subsidiary vortex of gravity, distinct from the main stream. Due analysis reveals that it is not the brain which determines the direction of the life-force, but desire and emotion. In that desire and emotion (as forms of consciousness) serve as the motivating potential, life as an observable phenomenon of singularity issues into the developed complexity of an amorphous plurality.

It is a familiar statement in Buddhism that in the six-foot psycho-physical unit lies the world, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to the cessation thereof. The metaphysical implications, however, which are unfamiliar, to say the least, are that even from the moment of conception the complex process is set in motion whereby a fourfold stack of personality-factors begins to emerge. It begins with the personality-stream of the immediate preceding life as it descends to rebirth in a womb, which is a fivefold complex of ignorance, psychic tendencies, desire, attachment, and impulse to become. Once this rebirth-complex is fused in the womb it serves as the base for the arising of another fivefold complex, which is purely resultant in character, comprising of a newly-arisen infantile consciousness, psychophysical appendages, the six sense-door field, contact facilities, and feeling.

The interaction of these last-named fivefold factors of personality with the environment activates the assimilation of another fivefold complex, whose function is outgoing and positive, representative of man in active engagement with his environment, with desire in the predominant role, followed by attachment and its consequences, with ignorance and psychic tendencies bringing up the subconscious rear. As personality-factors this fivefold complex is distinct from the preceding heaps, although -interaction as a network persists, its hallmark being that kammic liabilities and assets are accumulated through the channels of its activity.

The assimilative potentiality of the preceding fivefold complex in turn serves as the base for the spontaneous arising of a final fivefold set of resultant components, comprising of involuntary consciousness, the psycho-physical complex, the six sense-door field, contact facilities, and the feelings derived therefrom.

Split Selves or Psychic Offshoots

Although these four streams, or heaps, of personality interact as a whole for the duration of this life, there is never a total integration of the network due to the loose character of the emotional association, once each personality-complex attains to what may be termed its developed intensity. The physical form, by accommodating all their conflicting demands and tendencies in one collective, circumscribes their liberty to function as distinct personalities in their own right. At death, however, no such restraint remains, when the gravitational network completely collapses. Due to lack of some deliberate integration of the personality structure, these four streams make a total split and go their kammic ways.

These personality-factors originate within the scope of 24 modes of conditionality, diffused into a sixfold group:

- 1) Psychic factors serve as the base for the arising of other psychic factors by the sixfold mode of momentum, contiguity, volition, association, vacuity, and process.
- 2) Psychic factors serve as the base for the arising of psycho-physicality by the fivefold mode of root causality, concentrated-absorption, means, kamma, and its results.
- 3) Psychic factors serve as the base for the arising of physicality by one mode, namely, consequence. In short, psychic factors are the support of the body, without which it would be unable to function, or so much as exist.
- 4) On the other hand, it is the body which enables the psyche to nourish itself by environmental contact, thus serving as the base for the arising of psychic factors by its solitary mode of antecedence.

5) Psycho-physicality serves as the base for the arising of psychic factors through the twofold mode of providing psycho-physical objects of contact, and acquired character. That is, the psycho-physical environment determines the flow of consciousness by its contactual support, plus the modulating power of decisive characteristics acquired from some distant past.

6) Psycho-physicality serves as the base for the arising of fresh psycho-physicality by a nine-fold mode: of the will-energy-thought-intelligence quotient, co-nascence, reciprocity, initial character, nutriment-contact-intention-consciousness factors, controlling faculties, dissociation, presence, and non-disappearance.

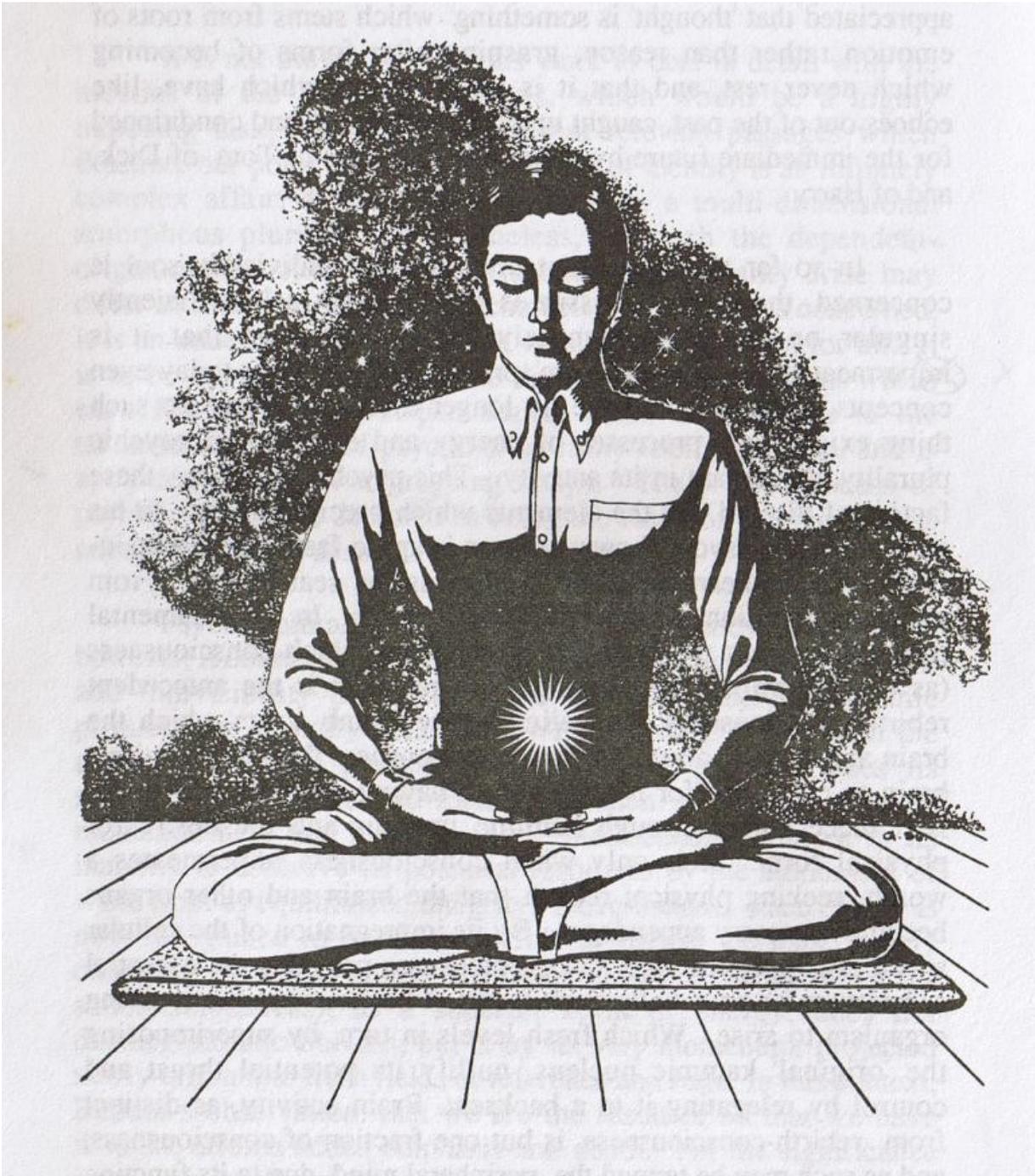
It is not the purpose of this work to deal in detail with the niceties of the Buddhist analysis, which would be a highly imposing task, but merely to present relevant passages which illustrate our point. The whole business of identity is an infinitely complex affair, a many-storied structure, a multi-dimensional amorphous plurality. Nevertheless, although the dependent-origination process whereby offshoots of personality arise may differ in detail in so far as their characteristic content is concerned, it is an underlying process which is basic and common for all. It is to be appreciated that all the diverse complexity from which each fivefold stream-of-personality takes its rise, lies in the tenacious attributes of psycho-physicality itself, glue-like, and is aptly termed the five grasping heaps. The whole process of psychic partition is deplored as being the result of ignorance as its negative root, and desire as its positive cause.

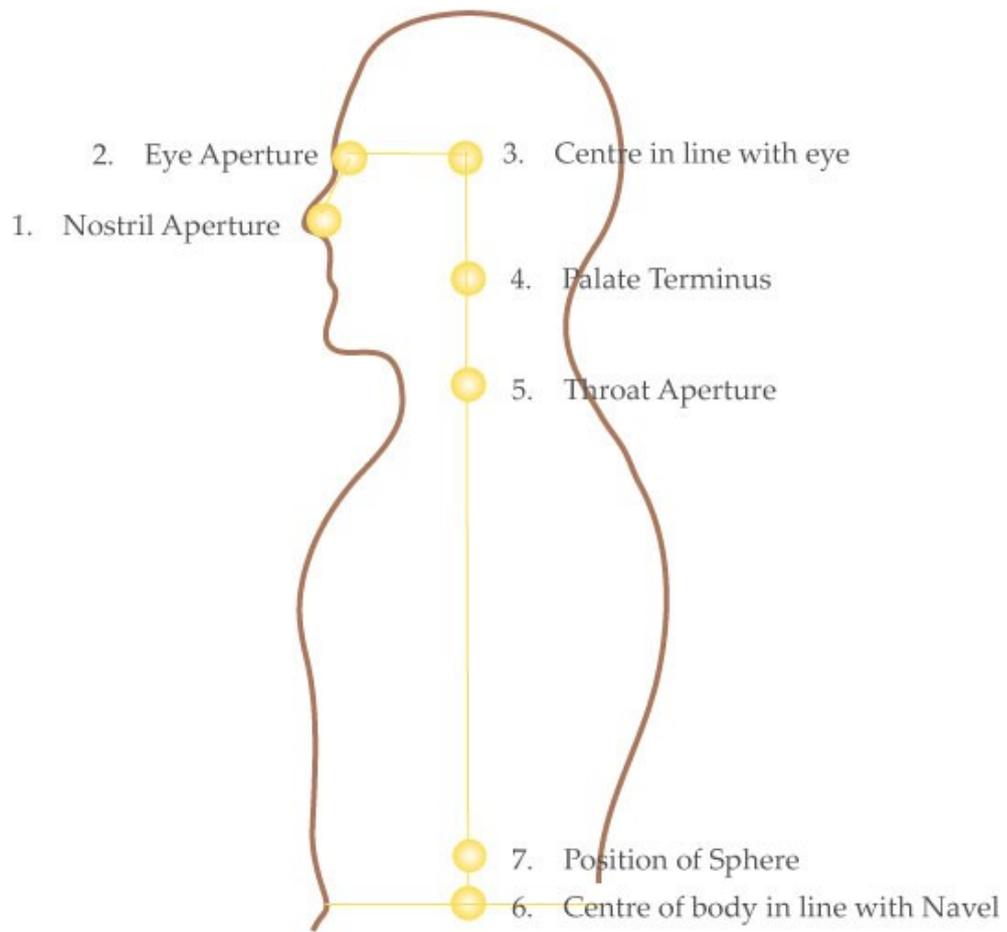
Psychic plurality suggests many possibilities. Specifically, however, it defines that the hard-and-fast distinctions of uniqueness and indivisibility (revoked in the material sphere by atomic physics) are arbitrary concepts. Which is only in line with the definition that all phenomena, physical or psychic, loses its separate significance and identity as such in proportion to its momentariness and ineffectuality! Ineffectuality, that is, in its inability to conserve its potential resources by the attainment of some form of *equilibrised integrity*. Nevertheless, since energy is now recognized to be indestructible in that it persists, merely changing its apparitional form, even so, consciousness (or sub-consciousness), as a superior form of energy, does not disintegrate into oblivion, but is by its very momentum projected newly-arisen into fresh fields of reference and form. In this context, Buddha's observation: that we are the result of all that we have thought, affords added emphasis and depth. For the significance implicit in such a statement reveals that, as a consequence of the mind's muddled thinking in the past, conditions have arisen to groove the issue in a rut of its own determining, subject to a pernicious form of kammic bondage henceforth. For it is to be appreciated that *thought* is something which stems from roots of emotion rather than, reason, grasping after forms of becoming which never rest, and that it is these *forms* which have, like echoes out of the past, caught up with the present, and conditioned for the immediate future by the materializations of Tom, of Dick, and of Harry.

Divisible Self

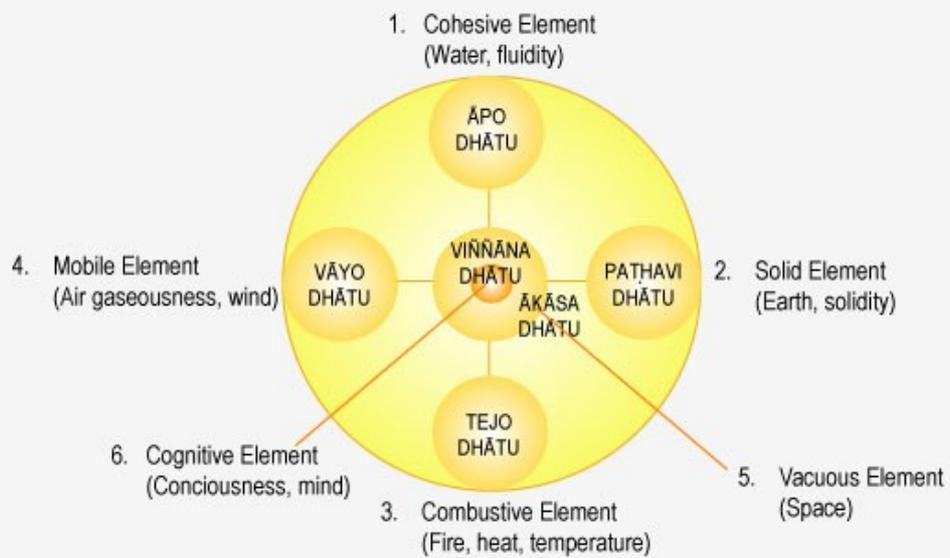
In so far as the concept of a one and indivisible soul is concerned, therefore, the issue is that it is not self-sufficiently singular or unique, but merely for the duration that it is permeated in a physical form, provisionally so. For today even concepts of static matter are no longer discussed, since no such thing exists, only processes of energy and emotion, of psychic plurality, discordant in its activity. These psychic pluralities - these factors of discord, are the elements which precipitate life. In his analysis of the psyche, however, man is apt to fasten on the brain-centre (or the heart, in many a case) as the seat of life. From which assumption all the confusion begins. In a fundamental context, it is not the brain (or heart) from which consciousness (as the life-principle) upsprings, but rather it is the antecedent rebirth-consciousness congealing in the womb from which the brain and heart evolves. In fact, consciousness does not require a brain to contain it for it to function, having acquired one in the

first place solely through kammic impetus and the desire for physical form. It is only when consciousness permeates a womb, seeking physical rebirth that the brain and other organs become necessary appendages. By its impregnation of the cellular speck at conception, rebirth-consciousness provides the essential substratum for potentially fresh levels of becoming in the evolving organism to arise. Which fresh levels in turn, by superimposing the *original* kammic nucleus, nullify its potential thrust and control by relegating it to a backseat. Brain activity, as distinct from rebirth-consciousness, is but one fraction of consciousness, and as such may be termed the peripheral mind, due to its function at the periphery of the life-pole.





THE SPHERE AT THE CENTRE OF THE BODY
IN RELATION TO THE ELEMENTS



Having disposed of the brain-receptacle as being merely the seat of the peripheral mind, the question remains regarding the whereabouts of the original rebirth-nucleus. The answer is that it remains where it has always remained, in the navel-pit, at diaphragm centre, the nether end of the life-pole. In justification of the navel-centre as being the original seat of psycho-physicality, a study of embryology testifies that the head and limbs are much later developments, evolving from the central area of the foetus only after a period of weeks, relegating these appendages to secondary status thereby. It is obvious, therefore, that psycho-physicality, far from being a one-tracked affair, is in reality a network of many avenues, with refuelling centres at brain and navel-ends.

By identifying the brain as the sole centre and mainspring of consciousness, direct contact with the individual collective-unconscious (which the navel-centre represents) becomes defused and dislocated, so that the peripheral mind and its subconscious counterpart, though existing in the same contraption; live, as it were, a completely distinct existence of their own with no perceptible interconnection. Identity, and a comprehensive penetration of it, is thereby circumscribed to the surface level, to the mere periphery of life, which eventually proves antagonistic to the harmonious functioning of the whole psychic-personality. Because where there should be some semblance of unity, a peculiar disunity has emerged, at different ends of the psychic stick.

Since with each new rebirth, consciousness is thrown out of focus by the metabolism of the body and its fresh, unadjusted brain, total integration is never regained. In that the brain succumbs to the tendency to identify itself completely with the fresh new ego it feels itself to be, all the pleasures and pains it experiences through the process of living, together with all the accumulations derived from external sense-contact, aid and abet the projection of this *heresy* of the peripheral personality being the one and only permanent ego or soul, god-given and unique.

Nevertheless, no matter how dislocated the various psychic areas may be, there is always a connection, the peripheral mind is not completely isolated from its *parent* or nether counterpart, for lines of communication exist. This is so because in sleep the peripheral mind sinks to home-base (the navel-centre) and establishes contact, to manifest as dreams. The confusion has always been to assume that dreams emerge from the brain. It is to be observed that when drowsiness sets in the head begins to nod. This is because when the peripheral mind begins to extricate itself from the brain-receptacle, it sinks to the nether end of the life-pole, its subconscious otherness, and there is nothing left to hold the head erect, it slumps and the dozing-point is reached.

Even in waking life, no matter how tenuous the connection may be, symptoms may be traced of amorphous urges and instincts, kammic in content, being peculiar rebirth-consciousness characteristics, colouring sense-perception and the outlook with their psychic dye. Since rebirth-consciousness was its initial cause, the peripheral mind is always *perfumed*, as it were, by these related tendencies peculiar to the original nucleus. In this fashion, and by such a complex process, the peripheral mind's basic character is involuntarily determined from the start. However, in that all these connections are, to a more or less degree; unconscious, the peripheral mind is always under the impulsion of becoming a victim of its kammic heritage rather than a conscious participator and regulator of it. In view of the fact that he cannot trace or pinpoint the underlying causes which dictate his life, for better or for worse, man is always under the illusion that he is able to order his destiny as he pleases, when he in reality is being impelled by kammic forces over which he possesses little, if any, control. The other extreme to which his understanding may be seduced, is the illusion that some external power is responsible for his predicament, something other than himself, when actually it is antecedent kamma that is the really active culprit, subtly concealed.

True Freewill, a Rarity

That antecedent kamma is responsible for the psyche's present predicament does not, however, dispose of freewill as a force to be reckoned with, otherwise life itself would be reduced to nothing more significant than a mere matter of machinery. Nevertheless, if freewill is best observed in the context of choice, it is not as free as it really seems, for not only is it compelled to activate within given conditions and limits, it is inevitably constrained by the particular organism, character, and space-time within which it takes its rise. Choice (or freewill in action) when reduced to its roots, becomes a form of necessity, an offshoot of habit, the product of a particular groove. A groove being what it is, any activity of the psycho-physical unit is impelled by an innate tendency to repeat itself. Thus whatever may be said for the groove, or grooves, within which psychic impulses activate, it is evident that it in reality possesses little choice. A certain collection of possibilities are presented, and it may choose whatever there is. But it cannot choose an impossibility, that is, something which is not presented for it to choose.

The point which life appears at pains to demonstrate is that man cannot choose *himself*, because he has already *chosen*, through antecedent kamma and desire, and must of necessity be burdened henceforth with the result. This is the ultimate grievance, namely, that the individual has in reality no choice regarding himself and what he is, cannot escape himself, his groove. It is not as if he, due to his groove, cannot but act, or react, in a specific and calculated way, but rather that he is pressured to do so by the well-springs of his sub-consciousness and the automatism of his reflexes. Most of the misunderstanding and intolerance which prevails in the world stems from an inability to penetrate fundamental causes so as to apprehend the mechanism of the psyche, namely, the tendency to evolve in grooves of its own entangling. If consciousness, therefore, is termed a stream which flows incessantly, the flow itself is antecedently grooved, a repetitive cycle of momentum, uncontrolled, and endlessly inconclusive.

The Buddha's emphasis on the *anattā* (amorphous plurality) aspect of existence is mainly to inculcate in man the recognition that his life is far from being within his control. And obviously so, in view of the fact that if it were self-controlled it would not, for one thing, be persecuted by the compulsive tendency to psychic-parthenogenesis. The issue, of course, is not as clear-cut as could be wished. If it were, it would have been discovered long ago, and there would have been no compulsion for a Buddha to appear and reveal the fact. It is through this factor of amorphous plurality, or self-generation (as the amoebic phenomenon in the organic sphere testifies), that the origins of life emerge, arising through the fundamental factor of contact. It is true that most contacts are too minor in their thrust to affect sentient life, so as to proliferate into plurality. It presupposes a certain traumatic structure. In that the great traumatic episodes of life are conception, birth, adolescence, and death, it is these which determine the intricacies of life's great partition.

So it is that as life is impelled on its hectic course, the multiplication tables proliferate into infinity. In this fashion, and in a much more profound context than that which contemporary psychology assumes all individuals are to a more or less degree schizophrenics. Only establishment in a physical form prevents psycho-parthenogenesis, as a fundamental factor of life, from rising into view. Clinical schizophrenia simply serves to raise this fundamental susceptibility to partition to the surface. If individuality is the process of assimilating experience (in the form of potential resources) into the orbit of a common centre, in his active encounter and engagement with life, it passes beyond man's control to remain singular, for he is always under the compulsion of plurality. As long as consciousness in its precipitate haste continues to be ensnared by a perpetual deflection of contacts, enthralled in the throes of a process which keeps falling apart into bits and pieces, singularity of the psyche cannot but remain a fundamentally insubstantial concept, and the theory of an eternal soul crumbles into the ramblings of an armchair dream.

It is to be observed to what lengths the psyche *may* proceed on its impetuous course, given the self-generating conditions with which it is endowed, resulting in the production of a fourfold-personality stack. As long as the gravitational field of force retains its pull in the organism, the disruptive nature of the psyche remains unobtrusive and submerged, even though peculiar reverberations may rumble up and down in waking life and sleep, intruding from time to time, as in schizophrenic abnormalities and nightmares. For the most part, however, man is able to live his life as though nothing in the world is out of turn. It is only at death's door, when the hinges of life begin to give, that the apparent unity of the psyche is unable to resist the pressure for a split. Disruption occurs, and each unit is detached, to fare its separate way.

Hanging Ghosts

The *original* unit, or rebirth-consciousness, is projected according to its kammic deserve. The other three offshoots usually wander about as ghosts. It is well recognized how peculiar a fascination a man's birthplace exerts over his mind, so much so that, through some magnetic attraction of past association, he returns to his earliest scenes to die. So it is that when death sunders it from the parent psyche, the next-in-line psychic-fragment returns to its roots, the scenes where it first perceived the light of day. The third fragment of the psyche, in its attachment to its former family-brood, becomes domiciled as a domestic ghost. The final fragment may haunt the graveyard, where the last mortal remains are laid to rest. Whensoever these ghosts appear in dreams, or sometimes even in waking life, to their relatives and friends, they are identified as the dear departed. Actually, however, they are facsimiles, offshoots of the *original* to which they were once attached, the *original* having departed in most cases to destinies afar.

It is informative to apprehend the context in which these offshoots of personality (or ghosts) play in the origination of life. It is to understand why men differ, not only as to character and their behaviour patterns, but in the quality and quantity of their consciousness. The popular concept of a god-given eternal soul insists that all men are created equal, the implication being that consciousness is a quantity and quality standard for all men. That there are past lives renders this conclusion unsound. Even from the standpoint of one life consciousness is unequal, for each individual is composed of a totally different set of experience. In the perspective of rebirth these differences accumulate to immense proportions, for each unit evolves and enlarges its conscious limits in various ways and for quite diverse lengths of time, in this context, some have but recently experienced the legacy of consciousness, while others have inherited it aeons ago. That is, the legacy of each individual consciousness commences with the personality-offshoot of the immediate life removed. It is the legacy of ghost-hood, the fragment-psyche reproduced from an *original* which multiplies and populates the world, without end. Since they are but mere products of the immediate life removed, they can in no sense have *eternally* existed. When they do take rebirth after a time, however, they acquire a physical life with which to identify in their own right. The error in the rebirth-doctrine is to infer (as the Hindu concept of reincarnation assumes) that all creatures have been in existence from eternity. The fact is that this penetration into psycho-parthenogenesis refutes completely the error of this view.

Another fallacy is to assume that the new-born babe is pure, whatever that implies. Although it is true that the *brain* at birth is devoid of psychic content, it nevertheless is inevitably consigned to partake of its antecedent rebirth heritage, in the form of kammic liabilities and assets. It is the accumulated overflow derived from antecedent psycho-physical contact which determines the new-born babe's individuality, and consequently endows it with distinct character as such. That new-born babes are recognized to differ even from the start renders the concept of innocence in infants as a myth.

It is to be appreciated, therefore, that although equality may be adequate as a social ideal, it proves highly inadequate in the context of psychic origins and heritage. For all creatures are transiting through different levels of psychic evolution, and the only field wherein men may be said to be equal is the equality under which life already exists from the start - the equality of transience, of pain, and of psychic-parthenogenesis.

Centre of Body

It becomes evident that if man is to consider himself a manipulator, and not a mere victim of his kammic destiny it is necessary for him to first gather and integrate whatever psychophysical resources there are at his command by a peculiar meditative technique, so as to initiate contact and establish a connection with any antecedent heritage he may possess, and depart the immediate life in one piece. The main obstacle to this project is the peripheral mind itself, which through its crudity and prejudice blocks the way. The problem lies in man's inability to evocate and exert a specific pressure on his peripheral consciousness, so as to submerge apprehension beneath the superficial layers and arrive at core. Not haphazardly, or in the incoherence of dreams, but by a direct control to recollect and reunify all antecedent experience at will. Until such reunification is established, binding the agitations of the ebullient psyche before it splits under the strain; human personality will continue to present itself as the distracted and pitiful phenomenon that it is.

The position of the so-called subconscious at navel-pit, however, is not a matter conducive to general acceptance, for the natural reaction to the claim that this is an implicit psychic-locus is that there is nothing there but entrails, and that it is an offence bordering on sacrilege to suggest that man must reduce to the level of his belly that which he most esteems. This argument is, of course, unsound, for consciousness is not a concrete affair of flesh and bone that it must of necessity be attached to something in the nature of a brain. It is in fact a matter of mistaken identity. The reason for the false assumption is that, in its expression and utility, consciousness makes its mark upon the world through the medium of the brain, thus leading the mind to believe that the brain is the only responsible authority there is. The natural tendency to bestow all the credit on the brain is because it is a concrete substance which can be identified, forgetting all the while that the origins of consciousness itself, in relation to the brain, continue to remain an unknown quantity and a confounded mystery.

That man must continue to remain the victim of psychic-partition, however, does not appear to create any great harm, and may even be a healthy thing in so far as the multiplication of the species is concerned. But when, in retrospect, the immensity of offshoots that the individual psyche has been the unconscious agent of is considered that they must wander on henceforth in ignorance of their origins, begetting more idiotic offshoots in painful turn then the issue becomes a solemn one. For, if offshoots possessed a flying-start, with beneficial resources at their command, the issue might even be an asset, in so far as populating the world with intelligent beings is concerned. But as it is, offshoots start off on their long trackless journey into space-time with enormous liabilities, a pile of inadequacies and defects, so that their destiny in the Great Beyond becomes perilously fraught with the burdens of life's long-term travail.

The problem of identity, the struggle to gain control, is a real one, very much so. In view of the diffusiveness and effervency of the psyche, some attempt to limit its anguish to a minimum, by a curtailment of meaningless emotional stress, begs attention, an effective form of psychic birth-control, whereby the multiplication of the species may be drastically reduced. The problem of arriving at a solution is always complicated by the individual himself, for it has to be admitted that the average man is not dismayed by the diffusiveness and effervency of his psyche. On the contrary, he finds it to

be an asset rather than a liability, and would consider any curtailment of his moves as an infringement on his liberty and an escape from reality.

It is the inevitable misery of consciousness that, in its traverse through diverse frames of reference and form, it should become so enmeshed in its environment for its clarity of vision to become impaired. In fact, the obliviousness of the individual to fundamental discords, the thoughtless resiliency with which he pursues his life, is a marvel in itself. It is only when a crack occurs that the fundamental vacuum in which he lives instantly appears. Even vacuums, however, are salutary, in that they may be productive of reflection and self-discovery. In that reflection is never conducive to man's peace of mind, whensoever it lays bare his fundamental lack of resources, it is for this reason instinctively shunned. For it reveals the heart-breaking futility in which the mind exists, its inherent insignificance in contributing to its own and others' essential happiness, never having possessed the opportunity to attain that most significant of objectives: the coming to terms with self.

The general deficiency to which the psyche succumbs, of being installed in a groove, in no way condemns it to remain at the mercy of a kammic push. For, as life unfolds with all its stock of liabilities and assets, the wise mind regulates and trims itself accordingly, with no regrets for what has come to pass and with no perturbation at that which yet must come, accepting it for what it is, as pertaining to the order of things which if it is unable to be cured must be endured. The mind is buoyed up by the realization that, embodied though it be, and subject to all the instability and inadequacy of the immediate condition, potentialities of transcending an embodied condition by the avenues of *purposivity* and extra-sensory perception always hopefully exist.

If existence in all its forms is an incessant struggle for individual survival at various levels of identity, for invulnerability, prospects for its attainment, however, remains dim so long as consciousness is unable to attain to some measure of equilibrium. That equilibrium is perpetually being sabotaged by desire there can be no doubt. The marvel is life's tenacity, for fragile as it is it clings tenaciously to the objects it grasps. The so-called mysterious life-force is merely the psychic tenacity of desire as it drags and propels the individual's whereabouts in space-time. That the chaos of the psyche is something to be assuaged and subdued by certain techniques of tranquillization involving conscious control, is a subject which lies open to research, as it is of indisputable value, not only in the realm of supernormal apperception, but more fundamentally in matters of mental health. The need for understanding the problems of identity is rendered even more poignant by the realization that the concept of the world's brotherhood is hereby retrieved from its insubstantiality as a pious armchair-dream by the justification to the psycho-parthenogenetic process, through which the species multiplies, finally establishing and elevating it to its rightful status of primordial fact. By this argument individuals may encounter their re-embodied fragments in some future life, and in some other guise, and not so much as recognize the connection, yet experience a peculiar and unexplainable affinity for their erstwhile long-lost line and psychic kin.

If it is a mark of life that all creatures cherish their own happiness and welfare, the problem, of identity and the psycho-parthenogenetic process becomes the greatest pivotal argument for a reorientation of humanity's basic concepts where global understanding and happiness are concerned. For the development of individual understanding attains its peak and fulfilment whensoever it passes on from the private into the mass, and all the wellbeing that such a psychic movement brings. If nothing else, the failure of man to arouse himself from his smug complacency and innate lethargy exposes him to the charge of being a lout, as when opportunity to awaken his understanding comes his way, yet lets all pass in vain.

When a goldmine lies underfoot, to spurn it, straying in search of goldmines elsewhere, becomes the greatest waste. This applies with a peculiar relevance to the problem of identity, for man searches uneasily for his identity in all directions, all the while allowing the effort to gaze within pass

away. By ignoring the wellsprings of his psyche, consigned to a backseat as it usually is, the individual is unconsciously preening his peripheral self at the expense of emasculating his inner psyche, so that whatever avenues of insight it may reveal are side-tracked, and by the wayside unaccountably lost.

But the mind has always been prone to provide excuses for its chronic debility. Yet if a superior plane is to be attained, the mind must be prepared to reduce the gratifications of sense-excess for a more durable recompense. The mind's greatest problem has always been the vacuity of not knowing what to do with itself, drifting distractedly with the tide. Until sentient life attains to an ascendancy over this peculiar form of spasmodic causality, however, the enemy of equilibrium, the antithesis of identity, anguish must walk the stage. As long as the hankering after fundamentally irrational objectives persists, impotence must multiply. That is, discontent will increase, futility will increase, helplessness will increase, desperation will increase, and violence will increase. This is a great shame.

4: The Ascent to Equilibrium

It is suggested by philosophers that bodily pleasures be abandoned and the mind devoted instead to wisdom, thereby decking itself, not with a borrowed beauty but its own. In that man is a creature of desire, however, it is obvious that the suggestion to abandon immediate delights for a remote and dubious good can merit only scorn. Life abounds with all manner of seductive sights and sounds, and not only is man's whole existence inter-textured with the desire-principle from the start, it is the structure on which his very origins exist.

Nevertheless, if equilibrium as an ultimate ideal is to be attained, if the tendency of the psyche to split is to be rendered extinct, the eradication of desire must automatically precede. For as Lao Tzu observes regarding the eternal Tao: *he who is ever a slave to desire can see only its outer fringe*. But desire is not something which if left to its own devices disperses of itself; on the contrary, it only augments that which it is supposed to subdue. Equilibrium as an ideal, therefore, remains a possibility beyond the immediate attainment of the average man, for its attainment would render him beyond the average.

Search for the "real" self

The question is whether man is nothing more than a consistency of desires. Or rather, take away his desires and what is left? It is safe to say that a certain nucleus of consciousness is left, and awareness of wellbeing is not lost. For wellbeing as such does not necessarily involve any process of desire, to participate in the activities of life. In fact participation, in this context, is an aspect of consciousness which, possessing acceptance as its stand and recognizing the inevitabilities of life, minimizes active attachment, that foster-mother of becoming, of deprivation and pain. If it is true that pain is an inevitable part of life's legacy, it need not be *overwhelmingly* so if only its constructive aspects are utilized and its destructive forms drastically reduced. The point which remains, therefore, is that it is disadvantageous to desire anything which possesses underlying deleterious repercussions, and which it is fundamentally impossible to attain without an overload of unnecessary pain. When such ends as are attainable, without deleterious repercussions, present themselves, then the capacity for participation is in no way emasculated or impaired but comes spontaneously into play. Thus, even if the individual may revolve in a characteristic groove, immediate escape from which is dim, there always remains one possibility within his reach, of reducing desire to a minimum so as to achieve the greatest immunity from pain. If complete immunity belongs to an order of things which lies beyond his immediate grasp, for the moment even some form of partial immunity may well suffice, as it may later serve in the manner of a bridge whereby complete immunity may be attained. Observation reveals that the centripetal force which integrates atomic structure is matched by a counter-force centrifugally based, with its impulsion to disorganize and disrupt, and that this centripetal-centrifugal axis represents the dynamics lying at the core of life, driving through all things. Wallowing in the vast immensity of the world's gyration, the mind finds itself enthralled in this vortex of teeming life, amazed and ensnared. The constant struggle for survival which ensues amidst this aimless becoming, distorted perspective, and shifting horizons, consumes energy and purpose not merely from without but more devastatingly from within. With the odds against him from the very start, the struggle for immunity, even partial though it be, becomes for man a losing battle and a hopeless dream.

The weak, of course, succumbs. The briefcase for defeat lies in the argument that if creatures must exist under the constant compulsion of life's whirl, then they may be excused for having no choice if they succumb to the compulsive swing of the unwholesome round. Although it is true that

disruptive forces exist, the other side of the argument asserts, there is always the alternative pole wherein survival lies. To which end, therefore, the gravitation into the human unit of certain fortifying resources becomes compulsory, without which the psycho-physical unit on the storm-tossed sea is as an engine with diminishing push, eventually sputtering out into the cold.

In religious terms, the life-process for its development and growth, involves a constant heaping up of potential resources, gathered in the field of beneficent deeds, so as to balance what is depleted under the erosions of repeated rebirth. For psychic resources, not unlike their physical counterparts, are not static for all time but are expendable, being depleted with continued expense. If a stockpile in reserve is not readily available, therefore, consumption soon outweighs supply, and the psychic vessel is to a state of barren infertility eventually consigned. A high productivity ratio is of the essence of the spiritual life, possessing an integrating force which proves effective in counteracting the disruptive powers besieging the psyche on all sides. Moreover, for the attainment of projected objectives in time, it becomes essential to rely upon a substantial pile of stock, the combustive fuel under whose thrust the mechanism of evolution may forge ahead to produce the required result.

The situation is complicated, however, by the fact that man always tends to confer upon himself the honour of being the master of the world in which he lives. Even if this is granted to a certain extent, it is obvious that the terms of the matter prove to be limited in the extreme. History, in fact rejects man's ambitious claims, for it depicts the human species as being tossed upon the stage (between breathing spells) from one inadequacy to the next. Historical heroes strutting on the stage appear as tools to further some ambiguous end, after which having outworn its utility the tool is tossed aside like so much dirt. That the world evolves under the compulsion of bipolar forces which cannot definitely be defined is a devious matter which is, in materialistic ages, seldom awarded the consideration it deserves. If the matter is explored in depth it may be revealed that the director of life's play is, after all, really being played upon behind the scenes by invisible hands of which he has not even the faintest glimpse.

If real mastery is to be an established fact it is for man so to prove, for such mastery involves the reduction of disequilibrium as a preliminary step, and a self-generated power able to project him beyond the jurisdiction of any external force. For the causes which render him a victim, rather than a victor, lie within his inherent vulnerability to internal-external forces over which he has no say. The sad fact which must be conceded is that man is far from being the master of the world in which he lives. The brevity of life precludes even the conquest of self, not to mention other ambitious claims. Buddhism maintains that a single life proves inadequate to attain any enduring objective, although a beginning is always to be made. The intrinsic value of experience is always accumulated the laborious way, absorbed in repetitive grooves of becoming, involving countless lives to merely wriggle out of some characteristic kammic rut.

Mental equipoise a pre-requisite

The ascent to equilibrium and self-mastery prospers in proportion to the quantity of desires reduced. If even partial immunity is to be attained and tension tranquillized, all the psychic resources available are needed, of which the most rewarding and far-reaching in their effects are undoubtedly those of morality, concentration, and wisdom, which in their collective weight confound the centrifugal forces which disrupt.

If morality and wisdom are to a great extent self-explanatory, concentration is an exercise which must be defined. The value of concentration rests upon a one-pointed intensification process. Whensoever the mind is trained to fix its attention upon a given object for protracted periods, until it becomes second nature so to do, the goal of equilibrium hovers into sight. That this is not as simple as

it sounds is clear, for the mind flickers from one thing to the next without pause. To relinquish this random engagement and entanglement with any haphazard data which impinges, therefore, it must be induced to fixate itself upon an object which attracts. The fixation of the mind on a prescribed object congenial to the individuals temperament, to the exclusion of all else, is merely a preliminary stabilizing exercise to stall its distraction, after which it is eventually enlarged to encompass a psychic field of considerable range. In the realm of expanded vision, the objective is to be in possession of one's faculties, and not to be exposed to the seduction of every sight and sound that ensnares. By thus narrowing the intake, paradoxically, the field of vision is enlarged.

The mind is an offshoot of moments. If there is ever to be a hope for integration, therefore, it must lie in something other than the peripheral personality which at a particular moment prevails. The peripheral personality, such as it is, presents itself as nothing more than a bundle of affectations which hardly do man justice, deserving a better fate than this. The ascent to equilibrium, such as is envisaged, can scarcely prosper in an environment of reckless abandonment dedicated to a glorious waste. If equilibrium is to be achieved psychic energy must be conserved, and this concentration provides, a state in whose field a conservation process implicitly lies. It is a process which activates along another frequency than that under which consciousness normally is borne, and although appearing to be motionless is really an intense activity suspended within particular frames of reference and form. In so far as concentrated refinement is concerned, the more intense the pitch the greater the penetrative detail, being the margin whereby sensory and extra-sensory perception is bridged.

Extra-sensory perception, however, is merely a by-product of the ascent to equilibrium, of which complete immunity is the result. As a vehicle of experience, equilibrium necessitates a form in which to be embodied, so as to be adequately sustained, for disembodied intelligence does not exist in splendid isolation without an orientation centre from which to operate. The reason why the human and celestial forms prove inadequate in this respect, falling far short of the mark, is due to their subjection to the disequilibrium of desire and kammic collapse. Some kind of transcendental form is required, able to, sustain itself and offset the erosions of rebirth even in this very life. This is provided by the Dhammākaya form, so called.

Form of Good as Vehicle

This Dhammākaya is in no way of a kind with the traditional concept of an eternal soul, with all its ready-made claims attached. There is nothing ready-made regarding the Dhammākaya, for it is something which is strenuously to be won. Its appearance arises through an intensification process, as consciousness is pushed to its most translucent limit. It may be viewed as the personification of the ultimate good, and is in essence composed of the accumulated resources (parāmī) arising from meritorious deeds. It is not individuality, as humanly conceived, which survives in this context, but perfect qualities of consciousness concentrated and equilibrated in a specific field, of essence impermeated and fused in form. In no way does it represent a state devoid of active content, but rather implies a refined intelligence existing in transcendental state. As such the Dhammākaya is capable of expanding and contracting its field-of-force at will due to the cognitive element of which it is composed.

Mundane forms in their various degrees of brevity may claim only a momentary identity in so far as eternity is concerned, for nothing in nature supports or assures life an identical singularity, riddled through and through as it is with amorphous plurality. Since the goal in mind is not the random proliferation of an amorphous plurality (which is already a process of life) but ultimacy of identity, it follows that the immunization of consciousness by the attainment of permanent equilibrium is no vainglorious dream but a possibility worthy of exploration and respect. And in this

context it is to be appreciated to what extent the ascent to equilibrium is something to be initiated rather than to be merely speculated upon.

The schizophrenic discord which litters the contemporary scene only displays the inevitable failure of society to discover any ultimate significance embodied in temporal fact. Since all progress in the world of affairs becomes anti-climatic if at heart man remains vulnerable and afraid, human dreams of earthly splendour fade into insignificance as life flounders on towards the Great Unknown. Only a means of breaking the endless circuit, this deadlock of the drift, can regenerate hope.

The regeneration of hope, in the Buddhist scheme of salvation, is made possible by the initiation of some resolution, a peculiar form of psychic-projection (*adhiṭṭhāna*), with its promise of consummation through the full force of the conscious directive. Even in daily life the extent to which determination plays its part in the affairs of man may be observed. By willing hard enough a centripetal force is created which attracts and gravitates to the mind's centre the anticipated objective. If this is true for the mundane plane of things, it applies with equal force to supramundane objectives, with their projections of ultimate direction and purpose. Although it is true that consciousness revolves in its peculiar groove, escape from which is dim, and despite the effervency and disruption to which the psyche is habitually subject, the resolute projection towards the goal of equilibrium by an act of will, serves to establish a major trend in the psyche, over-riding lesser trends, as it reverberates towards its distant mark.

The degree of concentration is a decisive factor in the projection, serving as the basic nucleus whereby definitive impulsions commence to activate, and due to the very force of which directive constructive identity begins to accrue. With the establishment of the necessary ingredients in the here-and-now, which is actually the initiation of a fresh groove, some dimension of definite destiny is assured, and existence ahead may as a consequence be envisioned as losing a great deal of its sting. For even if it is true that mishap is in no way eradicated or reduced by these directives, the fact remains that life, with all its peril and its pain, is sublimated to an immeasurable degree. To the extent that man remains for the moment an unfinished product, the accompanying presence of pain in his long voyage through space, no matter how minimized, must always remain for him an unavoidable liability, for such is the nature of things.

If psychic projections of will appear a simple process and effective at all times, the impression conveyed is a misleading one, because it is in reality a highly complex affair, not necessarily productive of result, dependent as the matter is on a whole series of factors beyond immediate ken. For one thing, it is always complicated by the fact that once an act of will is established in consciousness, it is eventually rendered *unconscious* by the very process of birth and repeated rebirth. Since life is a continuous transit, the recollection of past acts of will becomes lost in a haze. Although it is true that continuity is assured through the factor of psychic momentum, its activity and thrust is subterranean, rising to the surface only when the native (through concentrated-absorption or hypnotic regression) is able to recall his former lives.

Besides, it is a prerequisite of any form of mechanical projection that it be supported by the necessary ingredients. In the psychic sphere, any directive unsupported by the requisite resources is tantamount to a cheque endorsed, but without the funds available to honour it on demand. Since a mortal can endorse only to the amount for which his balance is good, an augmentation of resources becomes necessary to ensure and establish the endorser's credibility. The individual psychic field and its sphere of influence is always inextricably involved with the extent of resources in hand, and to function adequately must constantly be restored with the requisite fuel, so as to burn on its luminous course without slack. Thus, even the ascent to equilibrium, with its overload of hope, is beset with the problem of withdrawals and deposits.

The infinitely laborious project of developing the psyche into a finished product, or supramundane masterpiece, is the process of gravitating specific qualities of consciousness into a common field, and as such is not merely a means to an end but is in itself the end. The struggle to accumulate resources is in itself the anticipation of acquiring such identity as is possible under the circumstances through a conservation process. As such, an individual, activating relentlessly in the context of a vast perspective, may be said to endure from life to life only to the extent that his qualities of consciousness are preserved intact, with the vision of an ultimate selfhood definitely assured.

If anything in the world, with its internal and external fret, is most salutary and yet most evasive, it is the ascent to equilibrium and its inner expanse of mind. In no way does this projected objective incite the destruction of all that is wholesome in life, but rather embodies an enlarged perspective, a happier horizon of things, a transcendental hope. It depicts man's vision of an eventual laying down of life's load, of a great relief of mind, of a mastery in peace, of the sure heart's release. As it is, the beleaguered psyche has already lived too long and seen too much; a victim without choice. In this context, even if life's traverse is aeonic in extent, the end-result whether swift or slow, is not some forlorn hope, but germinates unseen, to burgeon forth in other space and other time. The anticipation of these possibilities transcends for man all the erosions and instability of life as such.

5: The Void Centre in Time

Ever seeking diversions to kill time man forgets all the while that with each fleeting moment it is he who is being killed. If time appears liberal with its favours it is an ambiguous liberality, for man's problem will always be what to do with himself in the context of a time which never seems to stop, and as such becomes a favour with a weight heavier than lead. All forms of human activity are gestures devoted to the problem of filling in this vacant weight. The pursuit of pleasure is believed to be one form of activity which populates time. But since time is by its very nature spectrally adrift, attempts to capture and prolong delight relapse into a grasping at straws. In his efforts to keep the pace and possess his pleasures man is beset with the desperation of trying to marshal up fresh objects of enjoyment, which dissolve into a haze as soon as they loom into reach. The dilemma is how to take advantage of time's opportunity without its vicious cycle pounding him in the face. The desperate flurry to refuel delight and outwit the undertaker becomes a lost encounter as time relentlessly nails the coffin down.

Conquering Time

The suggestion of the sages, however, is not to hack time to pieces, but to leave it as empty as it originally was. Emptied of time's rush the mind becomes as open and as indestructible as the cloudless sky. For if it is true that man cannot on empty space subsist, to empty the mind of time's rush is in no way to reduce it to a barren void. The utility of a house, Lao Tzu has observed, lies in the empty space within. The vacuity of outer space contains an immeasurable built-in resource. The mind's internal space is a hollow which preserves experience accumulated through many an age. Voids, therefore, may be informed with immense value if only they are adequately utilized. In such a context, to build with brick outside is of lesser scope to man than to build with space a mind inside. For utility is to be finally measured, not in terms of the rotting flesh but of the mental space which within man lies.

The problem of not knowing how to take advantage of time, therefore, mirrors the lack of some inner resource. Without a centre of gravity life's anchor lifts and the mind drifts. Due to this inadequacy, the hope of concentration lies in a pulling together of the mind's drifting selves. Although alterations in man's concepts of space and time have been ushered into his mind, a sense of inadequacy remains, for much is left unexplained. These concepts are inevitably conditioned by the psycho-physical unit to which he is anchored down, for of whatever his visions are composed, and wherever his thoughts and fancies may roam, it is to the orientations of his unit to which his conscious limits must eventually return.

Nevertheless, if it is relative in so far as psycho-physical limitations are concerned, space-time is also absolute in its transcendental aspect. It is relative in that it is contextured to events in particular frames of reference. It is absolute in that the universe (tantamount to the Void as a whole) endures. Within the vast frame of reference which spatiality is, there exists room for all manner of events to manifest themselves in particular frames involving relative time, which events and particular frames eventually dissolve into the larger whole, the absolute from which they emerged. The main supports for relative time, therefore, are events manifested in particular frames of reference, whereas the chief claim for absolute time is that the universe, irrespective of its individual parts, continues to endure.

The sense of inadequacy which space-time leaves in man is considerably reduced with the concentrated development of the psyche. The argument is that if space-time circumscribes the body it need not necessarily limit the mind. From factors already observed by man a theoretically reliable

universe of sense has been constructed, sufficient to hold its own in comprehensive terms. It proves inadequate and illogical, however, when it comes to details. That is, the concept of a universe and its so-called laws of behaviour are not so much false, so to speak, but merely incomplete. If the universe as a whole is in its generalities, physically speaking, sound, it is no symptom of irrationality if it also offers scope for variability (like the electron) and modification in its details.

It is the psychic factor in the universe, however, through which clarification comes, revealing that an expansion of the cognitive field by extra-sensory perception channels vision into a vaster perspective. The implication is that space-time is possible of being transcended by extra-sensory reach, for it may expand or contract its *field* to apprehend phenomena in distant space and witness things at first hand without the expenditure of time-travel. If this claim is genuine, human aspiration to travel to the stars in physical forms of vehicular transport proves to be primitive and superfluous, when they may be achieved with less trouble and expense by extra-sensory extensions of self.

The *field* of extra-sensory perception is inextricably connected with the fundamental *voidness* in things, for physical phenomena prove to be no obstruction to its transmission, being able to pass through matter with ease. The whole concept of matter has to be radically revised before a true grasp of this may be attained. In that consciousness has become so habituated to the apparent solidity of events in space-time, it requires a considerable effort of mind to appreciate that appearance may not always be the only reality. As a matter of fact, human knowledge of things rests on the arbitrary interaction of a six-fold amorphous structure, namely, extension, cohesion, temperature, mobility, vacuity, and cognition. What is worthy of note is that from the heart of the nebulae spiralling in outer space down to the microcosm, life is at core a matter of voids. In the vast and interstellar night, within the eye of the spiral storm, the central axis on which all atomic integration turns is one vacuity and calm, motionless and void. The very nature of electrons establishes this, for an electron at any given instant is next to nothing, requiring a whole period to manifest itself. Intermittency involving voidness, in fact, is life's hallmark, its connecting link. Coming closer to home, in man this link establishes itself in the incoherence of thought, the psychic metabolism of being perpetually precipitated into something else without a pause, the inevitable consequence of the void within.

The "Aperture" of Life and Death

There is one specific method whereby the void inherent in things may be appreciated, and that is by delving down into the psycho-physical unit by a concentrated technique. By sinking consciousness down into the navel-area (the most integral of centres for man) it may be observed to what an extent the mechanics of life floats within a void. It is the receptacle wherein rebirth-consciousness fused in the mother's womb to form fresh life, the crucible providing the necessary vacuity whereby consciousness and the other constituents may interact to produce the organism that eventually appears. At conception rebirth-consciousness rises and falls within the womb in a condensation process, manifesting as a small translucent sphere. As integration intensifies the sphere (or living nucleus) it drifts up an inch within the womb, to sink again as it condenses into the void below. A parallel process occurs at death's approach in the navel-area of the dying person. Consciousness gravitates from brain-level to the navel-pit, where after a series of rise-and-fall the sphere-like nucleus of life reintegrates itself within the void, whence it issues out through the respiratory orifice to whatever kammic destiny it deserves. Integration, however, is never complete, so that from the residue which is left offshoots of personality arise. The fascinating process whereby life appears and disappears, if it is to be appreciated, is something to be seen.

Though the void aperture from which life emerges may appear minute, the navel-area of its emergence is the axis on which the psycho-physical unit turns. By adverting the peripheral mind to this crucial locus a significant contact with subconscious origins is established, retrieving from

dormancy the greater substance of life's mystery. The technique when expedited regularly produces, besides, a healthy effect on the total psychic personality, whose function is thereby strengthened and enhanced. As concentrated penetration into the navel-area sinks consciousness deeper into a void, it accomplishes an ascendancy over external supports as localized by conventional space. In the mastery of this technique, the *elasticity* of conventional space becomes appreciated for what it really is. Conventional, or explicit, space overloaded as it is with pervasive gravitational tensions, proves intractable in so far as clarity of vision is concerned. Internal, or implicit, space as revealed by in-depth concentration is devoid of elemental tension the deeper it is plumbed. The more refined consciousness becomes the deeper its penetration over the sense-door spatial field. The minds profundity and excellence is a natural consequence of this developed *elasticity*, in contrast to the functional fumbings of sense-oriented contact. Whensoever consciousness having attained to concentrated clarity, becomes established within this primordial void at core, freed of elemental tension, it becomes deep, immeasurable, profound, hard to plumb, like the great ocean.

Voidness, therefore, is at the very core of things, and as such has always played its invisible part in the affairs of life, the crucible from which all things emerge, have their momentary existence and utility, and dissolve into a void again. It is in view of this very amorphousness and elasticity, as it were, of the void that extra-sensory phenomena, so-called, may coexist with their material counterparts without either of them encroaching upon each other's manifest domains. And this is also why, without any sense of contradiction once the facts are known, extra-sensory perception, as represented by psychic-projection, may be situated in the physical form, though exercising its field of extension to limits and dimensions out of proportion to the form itself.

The void in the navel-area is of crucial significance for the human unit because it is the only *loophole* through which life is able to make its entry and exit out of this tensioned world. It is the alignment centre, and the invisible forces which exist can exert their gravitational pull on the embodied psyche only through this loophole around which the gross enfolds. Were it not for this loophole consciousness would never be able to extricate itself from the incessant round of birth and death, precipitated in the world-spheres without end.

An argument which may arise is that the fundamental voidness in things, instead of aiding progress, serves only to prevent life from attaining any objectives, whatever they may be. If this is true in a certain respect, it is also a fact that it is voidness which makes objectives potentially possible, for voidness is a presence which is indispensable to the germination of things. To the extent that no void is present nothing could ever come to be. In so far as the attainment of aims and objectives are concerned, therefore, the possibility for their fulfilment depends to an immeasurable degree upon the factor of the void within and the void without. Whensoever the necessary ingredients implicitly exist within a given subject, it becomes only a matter of time before a subjective cause culminates (in the basic crucible of voidness) into an objective effect. The fact that the subject under consideration is alive, with all the psycho-physical impulsions of projection intact, necessarily determines the process of germination, so as to achieve the prospective result. It is no *mystic* prediction but an empirical attitude which asserts that whatever possesses the constituents of immediate motivation and will in any given subject must inevitably evolve, through kammic impetus and momentum, to something. It is only left to establish whether the necessary ingredients are sufficient for its projection, and the outcome is resolved by the factor of the greatest probability.

The capacity to detect all the ingredients present in any given subject, of course, is not something with which the undeveloped mind is basically endowed. Nevertheless, there are always certain dominant and characteristic grooves which activate within the psycho-physical unit, the cumulative result of a whole host of antecedent causes and effects, pushing it on in a particular path. Once these dominant characteristics are determined, the end-result is to a more or less degree assured.

Life is observed as an ever-persistent process to cohesion, to conserve its resources, to preserve equilibrium and identity, no matter how tenuous or momentary that may be. If this was otherwise, all things would possess a tendency to split apart without much ado, a fact which it is observed nature abhors. In so far as the life-process is concerned, however, it is maintained that it involves, among other things, a certain conduit of voidness, within which it may evolve and conduct itself.

As the whole process of psycho-physical development arises from the basic ground of a specific commitment in the world of temporal fact, insight into reality gathers momentum, and knowledge accumulates under the long-term track of life's impact. In such a context, ultimacy of identity is rendered possible when the substance of temporality is transmuted and transformed onto another level, on which it may continue to activate as a stabilized unit, devoid of the tensions of conventional space time. It is in view of this that the emancipated mind, even as it dwells within earth-bound limitations is to be explained in other than the conventional terms to which ordinary life applies.

The argument for emancipation is that the very factor of uncertainty and exposure to mishap, characteristic of existence in the world, persuades man to seek transcendental aims and ends, recommending him to consider in earnest the insignificance of that which passes on for life, while encouraging him to accomplish his very best so as to put an end to its vulnerability, once and for all, by nothing less than the attainment of invulnerability.

6: Commitment and Concern

If the ascent to equilibrium, involving the cessation of pain and the acquisition of a true life, remains the ultimate concern, it nevertheless entails a generous commitment, a long-term engagement in the world of temporal fact, before it can ever be attained, fundamentally so. This commitment expresses itself as a certain concern on the part of the individual in his relation to the rest of the world, and possesses what may be termed an emotional content. The emotionality consists, not of a movement hysterically expressed, but of an intuition that there is something more to life than just the mere gratification of self, and that a broad horizon of commitment in relation to the inner and outer world is of the essence of the mature life.

Resolve to Conquer

The nature of commitment in the Buddhist scheme is not readily appreciated even by the orthodox Buddhists themselves, for it is only in the nature of the worldling to seek his own glory and welfare, even at another's expense. That there exist forms of commitment and concern, in which the self plays only a minor role, lies far beyond his interest to so much as visualize. No where is commitment and concern best exemplified than in the lives of those (Buddhas and Bodhisattas) to whom its implementation attains precedence over all else. This, however, is a long story, receding into the dim past, upon which we in passing can but only touch. For, they are those who in long aeons past have made vows, relinquished life and limb, with the goal of commitment in their minds. Without luminaries such as these, from age to age, man sinks to the level of a beast, lost in the quagmire, without a star to illumine the dark pitch of the spirit's night. No publicity is theirs for they come into the world and the world knows them not, receive not even the barest of dues, passing upon the scene as objects of scorn rather than of praise, without a place to even lay their heads. Yet commitment and concern become the purge out of which is ground the priceless gem.

If it is so on earth so is it with them above, for even their abodes do not to the highest plane belong. Not because they may not higher rise, but because it proves sufficient for their needs, being neither too far above nor too low, the life-span not too long or too short. The convenience of living on the foothills rather than the peaks is that, should the necessity arise, at short notice to descend and implement an age-old commitment of service before self, it may be done with promptness and dispatch. It is an act of suicide which must be accomplished every time a descent is made, for the celestial host descend only with the exhaustion of their meritorious stock, whereas the *committed* not having exhausted theirs, must perforce summarily terminate their own for a descent to be made. But with an eye upon the troubled world, and the moment opportune, the remaining span of life is revoked and in a decisive gesture cut.

The significance of gestures such as these is immense, being the very corner-stone of long-term goals, the master-key to commitment in the world. Even if it is not in the nature of the worldling to become a saviour of the world, unless some effort on a less impressive scale is made to fortify the psyche, unless a stage is reached wherein he begins to question the purpose and meaning of his life, he has not even crossed the threshold of that which leads to the creation of self-liberating vows, so-called, consigned to wander aimlessly on in some maze, at the mercy of every ill wind that upsprings.

The Psychic Explorer

In the life of the psychic explorer struggle and suspense are the order of the day. That the attainment of transcendental objectives evades even the most strenuous of efforts is a well attested fact, for even one of Buddha's stature required six years of fruitless struggle to consolidate his aims, not to mention the aeons of effort which preceded it. The common ground is there, disciples desert, the struggle must be carried on alone, and obstacles overcome without external aid. In this context, man may live for certain projected goals, and even perish for them, without knowing the final outcome. But steps in the dark may turn into steps towards the light in the endless perspective of things, if the psyche plods on. The significance of life as struggle, however, to preserve its essential meaning and impact, must culminate not merely in earthly ends which pass away like all the rest, but in the vestiges of some unique experience which, projected in transcendental form, signify some definite futurity. In this promise of some definite futurity does the essence of struggle lie.

It is not merely by *thinking* on life's problems, however, and seeking intellectual solutions, that these problems are ultimately resolved. Without an underlying principle to guide its step the psyche stumbles on into inanity. It has always been in the nature of the psyche, for not knowing anything better, to seek solutions in areas external to itself. As a consequence, nothing appears to ease itself in this respect. For in the external world no stability exists, merely a repetition of what has gone before, the same old thing, futility. If the psyche is to possess a future worthy of the name, another avenue of approach must be pursued, and a journey made within the inside world to explore. It is here that the starting-point for any worthwhile search becomes productive of result. Indeed, a harvest rich awaits the psyche that mines the world within itself to find.

The external world as it presents itself to the senses conspires, as it were, to mock all efforts at penetration and arrival at the ultimate essence of things, for it synchronizes so effectively as to make sense, *common* sense. The great drawback of common-sense, however, is its tendency to accumulate complacency and conceit. By keeping his faculties as open as he can, it is probable that something *uncommon* may in due course impinge upon man's psychic field, throwing common-sense out of joint. So it is that the true seeker after knowledge, and not mere appearance, must wallow on through life's rubble before he can for himself the crystal find.

In view of the ambiguousness of sense-percepts, and the amorphousness of life in general, a man may be quite justified in claiming the existence of an extra-sensory world, even though it remains unseen. The claim is justified because a thing may exist even without immediate knowledge thereof, just as America existed before its *discovery* in fact. In the search to discover what knowledge really consists of, therefore, there must be some genuine criterion or principle of judgement whereby a just standard of values may be established, applicable for all men and for all time. Even if ultimate essence is not self-evident, it is observed that man regulates his life in accordance with a collection of values. In so far as nature is concerned, non-killing is not a morally self-evident law, nevertheless it holds good in human affairs. It is not sense-percepts as such but a sensitivity to values which determine man's insight into reality. For without the moral values existence would be impossible, deteriorating into an intolerable nightmare.

Much has been made of extra-sensory perception in these pages. This is so because it appears to be a last resource for substantiating the claims made for religious commitments and concerns. It is true that knowledge revealed through the avenue of extra-sensory perception appears improbable and strange. This is so, however, to the extent that it is approached from the angle of common-sense, which is one of the greatest obstacles to insight. And this again reveals that the *common* level of consciousness, upon which man so prizes and elevates himself, can in no wise be classified as a reliable guide, but is rather in the nature of an inferior article, of states in the gross, attached through lifelong habit to sense and tactile concepts, which when marshalled into extraordinary perspective fail

to apply, being out of place. What is really a pious hope is that the day will yet arrive when the attainment of extra-sensory perception becomes a possession as common as common-sense. Until such day arrives, common-sense must reign supreme.

Extrasensory Means

The world of extra-sensory perception is perceived, not with a step *forward*, but rather (as a mirror is faced) with a step *back*. With its face pressed flatly against the mirror of life it becomes impossible for the psyche to observe itself and the mechanics which make it pulse. Its harvest of past lives lie beyond recall because they are submerged in the amorphous flow of the subconscious stream. To recover this subconscious *otherness* the peripheral mind must infiltrate the navel-area and edge up the random data it intends to explore, which is in the manner of a hand stretched out to retrieve floating objects within immediate reach. The brain by itself is incapable of recollecting this data because the brain is merely a recent offshoot, and ere this did not so much as exist.

The problem of comprehending extra-sensory phenomena is complicated by another devious adjunct, the problem of communication: how to communicate, if at all. With all the media at man's disposal today, the problem of communication remains an ancient one. The Buddha's situation is a case in point for, after six years of solitary strife beneath the tree, he is observed as debating within himself whether to proclaim his newly-won knowledge: whether it was advisable, if indeed opportune, to forsake the satisfactions of solitude for the dust and disbelief of public life. Even after the decision was made, the problem of communication and the inadequacy of words remained, for the first person he encountered on the road, though impressed with his bearing, shied off at the first mention of his enlightened state. His five companions in asceticism who left him before this received him coolly; and, were convinced eventually more by the magnetism of his personality than the words which he had to communicate. On another occasion, he had to perform supernormal feats for a good three months before his audience was impressed enough to capitulate.

The problem of communication remains a real one, very much so. It remains because reality is generally confused with sense-percepts. If a man is attributed to possess knowledge or experience, the implicit understanding is that the whole baggage is sense-derived. Sense-percepts and knowledge, however, need not necessarily be the same thing, for today even such gross externals as tables and chairs have lost their solidity and shape under the *scientific eye*, and crude concepts such as these have become refined into atomic space-time continuums, whatever that implies. Existence has always been accepted at face value, not through knowledge but through habit and mere custom. In such a situation the more a man thinks things to be self-evident, the more does it become unsure.

The problem of communication is inextricably tied with that of commitment and the concern for the reduction of pain, together with the anticipation of some form of ultimate immunity, in so far as it is possible. It was in view of this concern, and the inherent misery in things that Gautama, the young prince and prospective Buddha, rode out on a night twenty-five centuries ago, leaving all behind to seek a way out of the endless round.

The necessity for inherent concerns, for some commitment to the general welfare, a generous involvement towards a collective good, is at the basis of the mature life. Which maturity, once achieved, in no way signifies commitment's end, for the relinquishment of personal satisfactions and comfort is not too high a price to pay for the general good. The spirit of commitment and concern, such as it is, remains its own justification, even when the personal necessity for it has ceased.

7: And Everlasting Peace

It is to be historically observed that in his attempts to attain perpetual peace on earth man perishes in the attempt. Not merely man, however, but the very nature of things is responsible for this impotency. It is man's failure to understand the very nature of transience, which defeats objectives even before they have begun to formulate. It is the failure to comprehend human nature itself, suffering as it does from the fatal flaw of a self which has yet to come to terms with itself. Given conditions such as these, it is presumptuous to suppose that peace on earth is a possibility perfectly to be realized.

It is here that the necessity for a long-term view of things again becomes the argument. The need for man to level his sights, not upon wayside mirages beckoning to nowhere, but on some form of process over which he can maintain some semblance of control. The error has always been to seek and maintain mere forms of historical peace, a peace in time, when only that can be satisfactory which has unhistorical peace, a peace beyond historical transience, as its objective mark.

Psychic Crucible

This argument for a peace which lies beyond historical limits involves a certain projection of consciousness, the capacity to extricate itself from the coils of human brevity and frailty, attaining its consummation in some form of existence which endures. If the ruins of civilization littering history signify anything, the subject of universal transience becomes an object lesson, holding out no hope whatsoever to the finite fumbblings of humanity struggling to an immediate happiness on earth. If transience is viewed in the context of a deeper reality, however, it may be allowed that although it is true that those civilizations, and the people of which those civilizations were composed, have passed away like so much dust upon the wind, yet in the perspective of rebirth and the experience that is garnered from rebirth, this transience may not be devoid of a certain value. That is, the concept of civilization is not to be regarded as a mere matter of mortar and brick piled picturesquely on high, but lies in certain values derived from hard-earned experience in the world of temporal fact and transmitted on as a live potential in the psyche as it traverses through space-time. For, it is the psyche which, in its leaping course through space-time, infuses the insubstantial concept of civilization with life, endowing existence with specific qualities peculiar to itself.

Civilized records preserved on parchment never outlast their recorder for long. It is a happy principle of the cosmic scheme, therefore, for a civilization's records, the hard-earned legacy of time, to be otherwise preserved, imprinted indelibly upon the parchment of the evolving psyche faring on its way from birth to birth. Even if it is true that the individual psyche is a nonentity in so far as its origins in amorphous plurality are concerned, nevertheless a preservation process, in terms of an active containment of experience, continues to accumulate, conserved as potential for some specific futurity. The whole point of the cosmic theme, therefore, may be regarded as an endeavour to elevate this process up to conscious level as a concrete aim of life, and not just to let the psyche forever drift ghost-like upon a sea of aimless anarchy.

Before the concept of processes such as these can take root in consciousness and pass into the psychic inventory, however, repeated orientation through the rebirth process becomes compulsory. For unless embodied in flesh and blood, so as to afford the psyche an effective life, these processes lack indelible impact. Life viewed as a commitment to transcendental goals, in this context, becomes a matter inseparable from flesh and blood.

If the very nature of transience condemns peace on earth to be fragmentary, a thing of bits and pieces, it is nevertheless the basic attitude which counts, for peace is not merely a matter of reclining dreams but a strenuous ascent towards some deeper finality. If *otherworldly* peace is the real goal, however, it cannot materialize unless it is provided with a suitable soil in which to develop the psyche for the ultimate ascent. Otherworldly peace, therefore, is inextricably textured with that of worldly peace, the germinative ground which is to culminate in otherworldly ends. On the other hand, the process to worldly peace, to be effective, cannot endure without a certain commitment to otherworldly values serving as the spine. If man's efforts to attain world-peace are conditioned by the projections of this overall attitude, then whatever setbacks he may encounter will not be in vain, so long as his sights are unwaveringly set upon this enduring goal. It is only when viewed in this perspective, that all man's dreams of peace become spared the humiliation and dismay of leaving to later ages nothing but a legacy of emptiness and despair.

One primal area which prevents the realization of peace is the tension which exists between the good-evil polarity, and which is older than history itself. A neutralization of this tension can be made effective only by a corresponding increase in morality, under whose weight the possibility for peace begins to shape. In the heat of strife, a certain contemplative detachment has to be induced to take the antagonist's measure, and it is in this context also that the power of meditation may serve as an intermediary for peace. The initial impetus for peace arises not from able leadership alone, or at the instigation of the qualified, but gathers to a head as it passes from the individual to the collective. Religion and morality are inseparable from this leadership, in so far as they persuade man to unworldly ends. For if individuals are persuaded to augment within them strains of *unworldliness*, greed, hate, and delusions are proportionately diminished in degree.

If religion persuades man to unworldly ends, however, it defeats those very ends in so far as it degenerates into dogma and deceit. If theistic religion is having a difficult time holding its own against the onslaughts of the new knowledge, the vulnerability lies in its institutionalized attachment to dogmatic interpretations of theological edifices involving personal saviours and divine incompatibilities. In so far as the concept of Divinity is concerned, man is confronted with a dilemma, for each religion professes to possess a special line of communication thereto. Which line is valid, since they cannot all be, becomes dubious as the messages which purport to descend the line fail to coincide. If each party calls on its special line of communication to extirpate the other, things get out of hand, and religion instead of becoming a salve becomes a scourge. If Divinity is all that it is claimed to be, then it must cut itself to bits and spread the crumbs around to satisfy the various invocations and demands, or else go out of its mind.

That the time has arrived for a general extrication from immature attachments to divine impossibilities, and a cessation of relegating responsibilities to a Divinity which may or may not exist, is indeed a pious hope. Unless it arrives, however, it becomes an armchair-dream to expect that the holders of one section of beliefs may meet on urbane terms another sect without a senseless shaking of the heads.

It would be more convenient for religion to content itself with the concept of a Moral Force inherent in life itself. Without displaying any superiority over less sophisticated concepts, the Buddhist concept of kammic function renders this moral force explicit. Here we arrive at the matrix of things, a momentum for cohesion, with kamma as the underwriting agent. Its appearance in the matrix of things presents kamma, not as a meaningless force appearing out of nowhere to vanish into nowhere, but as significant of a persuasive power implicit in the core of life, even though the mechanism itself remains unseen and beyond man's imagination to create. The case for kamma is that any psycho-physical activity creates a pressure which, irradiated with structural elements specific to its contexture, propels it on to its finalization in effects. The factors of cohesion, extension, temperature, mobility, vacuity, and consciousness representing the latent universe are by kammic momentum

invested with the impetus to distribute and redistribute themselves into specific areas and apprehensible forms. Kammic momentum characterizes the function of any higher power, of manipulator, which may be deduced from the cosmic scene, ensconced right in the hush and epicentre of the cosmic storm.

Since in any case, whether higher powers or manipulators exist or not, the avenue to peace must lie in man's kamma itself, a direct channelling of energies in a constructive direction, of commitment and concern, without which peace becomes a lost cause, finalizes in effects. The restraints and reductions in personal satisfaction which commitment and concern impose upon the individual, in reality give rise to other more enduring satisfactions, making the argument for commitment not one of loss but of eventual gain.

Active Commitment to achieving Eternal Bliss

Buddhism has often been condemned for its seeming attitude of indifference to the social situation, of making no active commitment to social progress. Commitment, however, possesses various levels and grades. The commitment of the sage, moving far from the public eye, is commitment nevertheless, even if too subtle for the worldling to appreciate. In that the sage is not primarily concerned with immediate transience, but long-term goals and stability, in which the worldling's activities appear nothing but a buzz of bees, the impression the sage creates is one of indifference and lethargy. Meditation, in which the sage spends most of his days, has been referred to as a constructive intermediary for peace. If meditation for effective control necessitates a secluded scene, it is not in itself an isolated activity, but is in an implicit sense the highest form of sociality. The sage in his retirement may be a power for abiding peace in his radiation of compassion and goodwill, a healing force to eliminate friction and deplete discord. To the extent that he is able to achieve this end, the meditator in his secluded seat must always be a potent factor to be reckoned with in man's advance towards legitimate goals, whether or not he is accorded public recognition as such.

The vulnerability of his position confronts man at every turn. Efforts in the various endeavours to overcome this vulnerability possess nothing ultimate to their record. Insofar as the destiny of the world is concerned, it can hardly be viewed as having been mastered or controlled decisively by the secular arm, for such an arm has left no enduring mark upon the image of the human race. The race remains indebted to a different breed of man, the religious pioneer, a singular example of the detached mind with its sights levelled upon otherworldly ends. If the sages of old moved in society to establish their impress, it was supported by a singular solitude of mind, and that whatever force for good they may have had upon that society emerged from the adumbrations of that very solitude.

The benign climate for peace that meditation can create, if it is afforded the opportunity, is only another instance of the basic ascendancy of the mind over the palpitations of the flesh. For, more metal is a better conductor of heat than brick, so the mind is a more efficient conduit of power than the flesh. If the argument holds that permanent peace is possible only in an especial context, and that meditation is the highest form of commitment, in that through its mediation the mind arrives at an elevated pitch where it is able of giving of its best without any ulterior stain, then it is in this form of unpublicized activity that the legitimate hope of mankind lies, in so far as peace everlasting is concerned.

Until the realization that the thoughtless life, as one of peril and of pain, becomes a fixed warning to steer clear, it will be the fate of man to eat the bitter fruit thereof. If concessions to human infirmity exist, of not being able to accomplish in a lifetime all that there is to be accomplished, a certain loyalty to life should remain for having propagated the psyche thus far. If man is to be upheld

as life's highest creation, it follows that he should rise to the occasion and prove himself to be in fact what he at present only is in form. This, however, can originate only within the mind itself and not from any external agency, with persuasive power and not compulsive force. As an object gathers when the initial impact is high, so it is that the psyche, projected under the momentum of a meditational-wisdom context attains in time to a propulsive force and an ultimate ascendancy over things.

In this light strife and harmony converge. For if the whole universe of consciousness drives towards greater and ever greater refinement by evolutionary means, the process either culminates in involutory ends of psychic harmony and equilibrium, or else the aeonic struggle would all have been in vain. But this challenge of process only some great and fundamental experience can justify. If this is indeed the blueprint for success, then success becomes assured and everlasting peace.

APPENDIX 1: Amorphous Plurality (Anattā)

“Form, O Bhikkhus, is self-devoid. Feeling...perception... aggregates...consciousness is self-devoid.”

This doctrine of the Buddha without being really understood is accepted in perplexity by the faithful and no further pursued. In a certain sense this is wise, because if pursued to its logical conclusion it would deteriorate into the concept of annihilation. A conclusion which would be a delusion, considering that there is causality (kamma), whereby whatsoever a man sows that he also reaps. On the other hand, if it is insisted that personality endures from existence to existence, it would be tantamount to asserting the principle of permanence. A conclusion which again would be a delusion, in view of the fact that nothing in the world, not to mention personality, ever for long endures:

“The world, Kaccayana, is for the most part attached to two extremes... Transcending these extremes (eternalism and annihilationism), the Tathāgata expounds dhammā (factors of existence) by way of cause.”

What cause?

“Bhikkhus, if you are asked by non-believers about the dhammā, you shall answer them as follows: The root of dhammā is will. All dhammā arises whensoever attention is focussed thereon. All dhammā appears through sense-contact. All dhammā combine aided by perception. All dhammā culminate in the jhānas. All dhammā are by attentiveness controlled. All dhammā are by wisdom overcome. All dhammā have release as goal. All dhammā are in deathlessness submerged. All dhammā ends in Nibbāna.”

That the doctrine of anattā goes deep it is obvious, beset as it is with amorphous complexity, and inextricably involved in the twelve links of Dependent Origination (paticca samuppāda). That this process of dependent origination is not easy to comprehend is borne out by the admonition to Ananda:

“Profound, Ananda, is this origination by way of conditions, even in its appearance profound.”

The causal process goes thus:

“With ignorance (avijjā) as a condition aggregates (sankhāras) accrue”

What does this imply? Not that ignorance is a causal imperative, but merely that it is a latent condition of negativity, and that because of not knowing the processes by which life is perpetuated and the way to its control, aggregates of impulsion arise, and multiply, even as bubbles in a stream. The aggregates are not ‘dead’ matter but are in themselves instinct with life, as impressions and as fungus of growth. They give off their own peculiar radar-like sensitivity, which is nothing less than consciousness:

“With aggregates as a condition consciousness (viññanam) accrues.”

Consciousness here is not only impregnated with ignorance but all the aimlessness and ‘uncontrolledness’ of life. It is propelled on not by direct volition but merely by haphazard conditions

which arise from moment to moment. Nevertheless, it is caught up by the centrifugal-centripetal force active in the world-sphere and is propelled to birth in some form or shape:

“With consciousness as a condition name-form (nāma-rūpa) accrues.”

Whensoever the aggregates of consciousness are caught up into a womb, they impregnate the cellular foetus and serve as the base for the arising of part intangible data (nāma) and part tangible substance (rūpa). From which the prospective organism evolves.

“With name and form as a condition the six sense spheres (salāyatana) accrue.”

Here it is the mind that is the sixth sense sphere complementing the other five, for as the embryo develops, the five sense organs and mind-element (mano-dhātu) evolves correspondingly. However, it is not the identical aggregate of consciousness which descended into the womb, but is the fresh arising of another level altogether. The original aggregate of consciousness has in the meanwhile sunk to subconscious status. This is so because resultant (vipāka) consciousness of a past existence has only three functions (kicca), namely to proceed (cuti), to relink (patisandhi), and to sink to subconsciousness (bhavanga). Thus, when consciousness proceeds to rebirth in the womb and relinks there, the only thing left for it to do is to sink to subconscious state, having completed its functional cycle. It is submerged by the fresh level of mind-element which forms, which is the level that from henceforth comes to the fore.

“With the sense spheres as a condition sense-contact (phassa) accrues.”

As environmental data impinges upon the sense-door field, impressions register and are absorbed. These impressions create their own fresh levels of consciousness, even as they accrue. That is why it is said that although consciousness is a condition for the arising of name form, name and form too is a condition for the arising of consciousness. This is so because what is implied is that fresh levels of consciousness arise through environmental contact made by the newly born name and form sense-door field. The rebirth consciousness and its fresh offshoots are not the same, even as the past can never be identical with the present. And why?

“With sense-contact as a condition feeling (vedanā) accrues.”

These feelings (whether they be tangible, gross or subtle, painful, pleasant, or indifferent) are fresh feelings and not the same as those experienced by consciousness-aggregate in a previous life. They, therefore, originating from environmental contact serve as the base for fresh levels of consciousness and memory, attached to another stratum of aggregates other than the previous life aggregate. However, it is to be understood that all these processes of dependent origination are not just a one-way flow but a traffic of reciprocity and duality, of ever interactive and composite nature and blend. There is never a total split between functions as long as the organism holds together. When the organism dies, however, a split does take place, as will be seen later.

“With feeling as a condition desire (tanhā) accrues.”

Feeling begets the impulse to re-experience feeling, especially when the feeling is pleasant. This desire to repeat sensations of bliss initiates the outgoing propulsive force which drives the subject on to its futurity. Up to this point (beginning with ignorance as a condition) the causal process is merely negative. With desire the positive aspect comes to the fore. All the preceding conditions are preliminary in scope as it were; for, it is actually desire (or will) which is at the root of the process, in that its function is outgoing and positive.

“With desire as a condition attachment (upādāna) accrues.”

Attached to what it wants the flow of consciousness gravitates accordingly and the direction of its futurity is thus determined. Insofar as consciousness is concerned that to which it is attached, that it eventually becomes.

“With attachment as a condition becoming (bhava) accrues.”

What is attached in this context, is of course the five aggregates of personality (pañcupādānakkhandha). Namely, form, feeling, perception, sensorial aggregates, and consciousness. These are by their very origins and nature an interactive and intricate force. Form is attachive in itself, and so is feeling, perception, the aggregates of impressions, and consciousness, and they interact so as to form personality, which is forever in a state of becoming. Which serves as the potential for birth.

“With becoming as a condition birth (jāti) accrues.”

The very propulsive potential of becoming begets the conditions for a fresh arising in a womb, which eventually runs its course ending with decay and death.

“With birth as a condition decay and death (jarā-marana) accrues.”

Followed by the whole host of ills which flesh is heir to.

We have used the term *as a condition* throughout, because each stage alluded to above is a flux, one flux in a whole series of fluxes, which are too numerous to enumerate, and have to be considered in conjunction with all the other twenty-four modes of conditionality, already dealt with in the chapter on suffering (*Chapter 3: Of Universal Suffering (Dukkha), Sammā Ditthi – A Treatise On Right Understanding*). Also, it cannot be too often repeated that all these links do not rigidly and arbitrarily follow each other as a one-way flow, but are reciprocally based in an ever-interactive process.

Thus, for instance, as each feeling arises, consciousness arises, and is automatically absorbed in the strata of sensorial aggregates (sankhāras). These aggregates, in turn being a living flow, fructify perpetually, giving off their radar-like sensitivity called consciousness, which doubles back and forth and is always perfumed with ignorance of its origin, unable to realize that life is nothing but a process of self-creation, of doubling back and forth from one moment to the next. The arising of strata of aggregates is due to the process of ‘perfuming’ initiated by the rebirth entity descending into the womb, which even as it perfumes the fresh aggregates which arise is perfumed in turn.

We note the profundity of the process stressed. And why is it profound?

Because it concerns the capacity of the cognitive element (viññāna dhātu) to multiply by contact (phassa). Even as biological science observes that one cell multiplies into two, through environmental contact, even so in the psychological sphere the process develops on corresponding lines. Thus it is said:

“Consciousness arises by way of occasion, and without occasion there can be no arising thereof.”

The occasion, of course, hinges on environmental contact, which gives rise to feeling, to desire, to attachment, and to becoming. Environmental contact it is which adds strata upon strata of experience and impressions, resulting in a plurality of levels of consciousness, superimposing each other in relative assertiveness and dominancy. This process of self-creation never becomes assimilated deep enough so as to activate as a functional unity but as an amorphous plurality. That to

which consciousness most clings for the moment dominates, and the personality which at any moment prevails is nothing more than that to which consciousness most clings.

Now it is normally understood that it is the force of will which activates and directs consciousness on its everyday course. However, observation shows that it is not will as such which dominates the psyche but rather the momentum of propensity. The will is, in the normal individual, largely inoperative, not the dictate of an overlord called self but actually the impulsion of resultant forces and antecedent determinates. The life-process flows on of itself and is only partially determined by subjective will. As Spinoza observes:

“Men deceive themselves when they regard themselves as free, and this view merely results from the fact that they are aware of their actions but do not know the causes which determine them. There is in the mind no absolute or free will, but the mind is determined to will this or that by a cause which in turn is determined by another and this again by another, and so on without end. Every man comes into the world without knowledge of the causes of things, but with the instinct to seek his own benefit and full awareness of this. From this it follows that men consider themselves free, since they are aware of their own wills and instincts and do not even dream of the causes which determine them to desire and to will, because they are ignorant of them.”

Since desire plays a dominant part in the determination of the life-process, and since it is recognized that desire is not to be depended on but shifts and drifts from one thing to the next., it is obvious that the conclusion to be drawn is that the life-process, as pertaining to any given individual, is rather in the nature of an ever incessant process of split-selves and identities. For with desire arises grasping attachment, and to what the mind is attached to that it is impelled. Becoming itself is never single but a disunity, being diversified among a host of sense and psychic supports. Consciousness, the life-process, is through and through imbued by this fundamental tendency to separate, of parthenogenesis, to go off at a tangent, to fluctuate between an incompatibility of tensions strung together in a particular field, the splitting of identity into psychic amoebae.

It is to be understood that the human psyche with its seat in the organism is restrained by the organism from splitting off into incoherence by a continual reference and reorientation process. As Whitehead observes:

“We trust to memory, and we ground our trust on the continuity of the body. Thus nature in general and the body in particular provide the stuff for the personal endurance of the ‘soul’.”

The life-process is prevented from splitting off into psychic amoebae by the centripetal force gravitated in the organism. However, it should be understood that with the approach of death the centripetal force loses ground rapidly, and with the consequent arrival of the death-moment is no longer able to gravitate the life-process to a singular identity, but splits off into amorphous plurality, according to the repressed desires instinct in the diverse strata of consciousness of the given subject.

When a man dies, the main stream of consciousness, or life-continuum process (bhavanga sota), though it continues to activate as a stream, has off-shoots. That is, under the force of the grasping impulsions which accumulated from antecedent environmental contact (but constrained by the centrifugal-centripetal gravitational force in the organism) the main stream is split into sub-streams, each instinct with a separate life-continuum process of its own henceforth (not unlike the divided amoebae). Thus what is perpetuated is not static identical singularity but rather amorphous plurality. Each separate life-continuum process is then propelled to its own kammic destiny, sometimes taking rebirth immediately. Once separated thus, it would scarcely be to the point to say that one such life-continuum has any identification with another. The logical conclusion to this is that a man may meet one of his former life-continuum fragments incarnate and never so much as

recognize the connection. This is what is implicit in Buddha's admonition to Ananda: *'Profound, Ananda, is this origination by way of cause, even in its appearance profound.'* And, one of the factors which demonstrates why the population multiplies but not the reverse. Thus also is it said that insofar as the individual is concerned he can be said to endure from existence to existence only to the extent that his parāmīs (perfect qualities of consciousness) are preserved intact. As it is said:

"When any mode of self is going on it is not reckoned as another. It is only reckoned by the name of that particular personality which prevails."

This is why we witness Buddha rejecting the absurdity of the doctrine that the five aggregates of personality (pañcupādānakkhandha) are in any way worthy of being identified as the self, when in fact it is merely something which arises by way of occasion, by desire rooted in ignorance. The way to release, therefore, is a unification, integration, and purging of all rebirth factors, so as to eliminate any further reproduction of the amorphous plurality which perpetuates existence in the world spheres, without end.

Strangely enough, the truth of anattā was glimpsed to a certain extent by the Kahunas (native doctors) of the Polynesian islands, of which Tahiti is one. It is generally understood that human personality is something unique, in composition singular. But even the natives of Polynesia knew that individuality is not something activated by identical singularity but by amorphous plurality. Contemporary psychology, too, has groped in this direction, but, unfortunately, it is constrained by the technique it employs, which fails to penetrate beyond the spheres of the living psyche as disembodied from the organism, and thus refusing to proceed to extra-sensory limits and to all manner of rebirth ramifications. As Jung observes:

"Psychoanalysts even claim to have probed back to memories of intra-uterine origin. Here Western reason reaches its limit, unfortunately. I say 'unfortunately' because one rather wishes that Freudian psychoanalysis could have happily pursued these so-called intra-uterine experiences still further back... As it was, the psychoanalysts never got beyond purely conjectural traces of intra-uterine experiences, and even the famous 'birth trauma' has remained such an obvious truism that it can no longer explain anything... That is to say, anyone who penetrates into the unconscious with purely biological assumptions will become stuck in the instinctual sphere and be unable to advance beyond it, for he will be pulled back again and again into physical existence. It is therefore not possible for Freudian theory to reach anything except an essentially negative valuation of the unconscious. At the same time, it must be admitted that this view of the psyche is typically Western, only it is expressed more blatantly, and more ruthlessly than others would have dared to express it, though at bottom they think no differently. As to what 'mind' means in this connection, we can only cherish the hope that it will carry conviction. But, as even Max Scheler noted with regret, the power of this 'mind' is, to say the least, doubtful."

Even in ordinary waking life it must dawn upon the intelligent man that he does not consist of one personality but of personalities, each at odds. However, it takes great depth of perception to recognize that at death what was once 'himself' splits off into 'selves' no longer adhering together under the impulsion of a centripetal force of common centre, each leading henceforth a separate existence of its own, usually as disembodied ghosts. These disembodied ghosts, each in its own time, takes rebirth in a womb, to serve as the base for a future split of personalities at death. It would seem that this is the only way by which creatures may develop and evolve (after repeated birth and rebirth) from the lower forms of consciousness to the highly developed and integrated consciousness of ultimate perfection, ending in release.

The process of anattā justifies the varying degrees and levels of intelligence which manifest in the world at large, each disconnected life-continuum possessing its own peculiar set of sense-derived memories, desires, tastes, and spheres of environmental contact. Although the permanent persistence of a particular entity is not in keeping with the doctrine of anattā, there is a main stream or life-continuum which continues, as distinct from its by-products or offshoot streams. This main stream integrates at death and is set free from the sub-streams. It is this main stream which carries with it the potential of antecedent lives, its kammic liabilities and assets. The offshoots, however, have no recollection of past lives except the immediate one removed, being the product thereof. These offshoots are obsessed with their immediate mundane associations and thought-forms, and hover about their former abodes or haunt the graveyards, the main entity usually having long left such parts. These disassociate spirits may go on for a long time in this manner of life, even for thousands of years, absorbed in their version of attachment, before rebirth ensues. It is spirits such as these which are the glibbest liars whensoever they are contacted through a medium. If these ghosts often manifest to the naked eye it is because of their proximity to the physical plane, still partaking of the crude elements which go to compose their consistency, and attaining to degrees of visibility as favourable circumstances provide.

When the organism is still in function these separative personalities exist in the subconscious substrate (bhavanga), restrained by a centrifugal-centripetal force therein. In dreams or reveries, however, it is possible for these subconscious states to arise and, taking momentary form and shape, to project themselves outside their habitual state. And the manner in which these disassociate personalities arise is through the registering (tadarammana) of impressions in the subconscious continuum, being their residue.

This is what is implied when it is said that some have but recently experienced the mystery of consciousness while others have done so aeons ago. However, each offshoot of personality when reborn considers itself to be unique, god-given and eternal, when as a matter of fact it is but a recent product of environmental friction and contact. This offshoot personality will, when it finally is reborn, partake of certain qualities of character common to its parent root, developing along those lines. If the main stream was of an intelligent type, this offshoot too will partake of such qualities. If energetic, the off-shoot will be likewise. The offshoot of a Plato, for instance, would be of a philosophic turn of mind, due to the factors of characteristic dependence (nissāya paccaya). And so forth. Whether favourable or unfavourable, it is the parent root which determines how the future offshoot develops, with certain characteristics ingrained in it from the beginning, being *perfumed* thereby. That is why it is said that there is no eternal self, but that consciousness arises by way of occasion (through the process of the dual-reciprocal sense-sphere field, after which each arising consciousness is called) and without occasion there would be no arising of consciousness, and that all things depend for their arising on initial environmental conditions, without which nothing would upspring.

These offshoots of personality are termed *Pathama viññāna*, or cetabhuta, being the first consciousness, before which they never existed, and that is why whensoever rebirth recollection is instigated recollection can only go as far back as this.

In the amoebic sphere of parthenogenesis, each offshoot is imbued with a *separative* existence henceforth. In the psychic sphere, the process develops along corresponding lines, and each offshoot stream of consciousness can no longer be regarded as identical with the original base from which it sprung. That is why it is beside the point to say that it either existed previously or does not exist henceforth. It cannot be too often stressed that all things spring from causal occasions, and without these nothing would come to be, and that whatsoever these causal occasions are, after them are the things called.

The life-process, as pictured thus, possesses the capacity for infinite reproduction and to ever increasing degrees of refinement. Consequently, there are classifications of crude and refined forms, and they are susceptible to serial pluralisation, *ad infinitum*, by direct and inverse process. This is the fundamental chain-reaction basis from which life springs, in reciprocal style.

The cognitive element (viññana dhātu) which fashions the collective psyche is not proscribed in its limit, but is a field of latent potentiality whose nuclei of cognition may be reproduced according to the subject's capacity. This is witnessed in the supernormal (manomayiddhi-abhiññā) function of miraculous multiplication (pātihāriya) by the adept in jhāna, whereby one (form) is instigated to become many, and many to become one.

It is a fact of analytic research that the cells in any given living organism multiply by self-replication, reproducing themselves in chain-like sequence. The replication goes on *ad infinitum*, and each fresh cell although it had a previous base nevertheless is not confused therewith but possesses a *separative* potentiality of its own. It seems that this is how life generates itself in specific fields of gravitational organisms, each cell in turn serving as the nucleic base or 'template' for future reproduction into amorphous plurality (anattā).

If this is true for the organic aspect, it is also pertinent for the psychic, since nature has a tendency to activate from basic principles which, although seemingly simple in base, nevertheless on investigation reveal themselves to be extremely amorphous and profound, as the developed combinations and infinite complexities of life bear witness.

Each individual stems from a diversity of backgrounds, which experience when absorbed and gravitated in a specific field of personality becomes instinct with a chain-reactive force. So even as a cell in an organism splits and multiplies, absorbing surrounding nutriment so as to augment in size and re-split again, even so in the psychic field the nuclei of consciousness split and multiply, absorbing psycho-physical environmental data so as to augment in experience and re-split again, *ad infinitum*. And as in the organism a cell, or group of cells, may be cut off and isolated, and artificially cultivated, so as to acquire a distinct existence of its own, even so a nucleus, or nuclei, of consciousness may be isolated from its parent centre and cultivated on its own so as to acquire a separative field-existence of its own.

This discovery is a radical one, and prepares the way for the realization that the cognitive element in nature is a chain-reactive process without static identity, each antecedent nucleus of cognition serving as the base, or 'template' for future reproduction. Even as each molecule in the organism possesses its own structure and composition (of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, etc), no two groups, of molecules possessing the same ratio of composition, even so consciousness possesses its own structure and composition, no two groups thereof possessing the same ratio.

The ordinary waking five sense-door consciousness is characterized by a 17-instant cycle, 10 of which are resultant-functional and 7 volitional. Whereas isolated mind-door activity is characterized only by a 12-instant cycle. Again, death's door consciousness is characterized by only 5 volitional instants, whereas the consciousness of deep slumber is devoid of volitional instants at all, characterized only by the negative flow of the resultant life-continuum. Also, even as in the physical sphere no two organisms are exactly alike, even so due to the chain-reactive background from which it stems, a continuum of consciousness retreats in perspective and perpetuates in futurity, into all manner of combinations and re-combinations of an intense and unlimited experience complexity.

All of which emphasizes the psycho-physical reciprocity of the functional process, and that no rigid line divides one from the next, but that even as the complete organism is a reflection of the

individual cells which go to compose it, even so consciousness permeated in the organism is a reflection of the individual nuclei of past-present occasions of experience.

The process by which life is perpetuated, splitting from one centre of orientation and gravity to the next, shifting to infinity, is symbolic of the ignorance, desire, and passion, which ceaselessly activates existence in general, splitting forever into fresh formation and horizons of futurity. And this is so because each nucleus of experience is in itself a possessive force. Being alive and a feeling force it is propelled by its own kammic potential and momentum into ever fresh fields of reference and form.

Thus, this origin of that most amorphous of quantities, not-self (anattā) or impersonality, comes to be. And why is it so called? Because its very origins are in question, an amorphous and ephemeral thing, lost in the endless maze and tracery of space-time. Splitting thus into infinity, these nuclei of cognition, each endowed with separative 'personality', form and reform in diverse fields, in complete ignorance of their origins. If this most profound of truths (Buddha: *profound is this arising by way of cause, even in its appearance profound*) is realized in its ramifications, then Buddha's injunction to Potthapāda may also be understood:

"When any mode of 'self' is going on it is not reckoned as another. It is only reckoned by the name of that particular personality which prevails."

And in this vast ocean of becoming, what 'personality' can ever be said to for a moment, not to mention a lifetime, prevail?

With its parallel in the amoebic phenomenon, offshoots of the life continuum substrate develop in amorphous plurality, which is a universal process. As each offshoot is no longer identical with its parent, even so it would be delusive to claim that this process of psychic parthenogenesis, so characteristic of consciousness, endows life with an enduring personality or soul. However, as already alluded to, even if there is no further connection between the parent-field and its offshoots, the offshoots nevertheless partake of characteristics peculiar to their common origin, having become perfumed thereby.

Now if it is true that the personality-process instigates a split at death, then how is a life-purpose preserved? What happens, for instance, to an earnest resolve (adhiṭṭhāna) for ultimate integration and release, made in a remote past?

There is no difficulty. It is preserved in that portion of the continuum which served as the base for the resolve, indelibly impressed therein, until fruition is reached. As for the sub-streams which split off into separative disassociation, they know nothing of such a resolve, because they belong merely to the superficial straw of the psyche, being the by-product and surplus of this present life through environmental permutative contact (pañcadvarvajjana-manodhātu and sampaticchana-manodhātu). It is thus that in the Chain of Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppāda) it is said that the aggregate of antecedent impressions (sankhāras) serves as the base for the arising of consciousness (viññānam). Which in the Pali goes: *sankhāra-paccaya viññānam, viññāna-paccaya nāma-rūpam*, etc.

If these sub-streams, however, happen to initiate a resolve for ultimate integration and release in the future, then they too have to process themselves thereto by accumulating a separate field of perfections of experience (parāmī) until culmination is reached. For each separative personality is responsible for its own destiny and not another field, and although all substrates differ in the origination and breadth of their potential, the opportunity to ultimate integration and final release (not something peculiar to a main continuum) is always there, open to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

It is in view of this phenomenon of amorphous plurality with which the universe is beset that suffering emerges and is perpetuated without end. And that is why ignorance is deplored as the root of all ill. Buddhism is regarded as nihilistic by the uninformed because the uninformed are so beset with their own identity and selfhood that they are unable to pierce beyond the veil of peripherality and witness things in their true perspective. A perspective which stretches endlessly into the past, and even more endlessly into the future. For one who has attained to such perspective, life is perceived as suffering indeed and not something to be grasped as an end in itself, but only as a means. The means, that is, to greater and ever greater integration, and release. If this were the goal and the attempt of all, then amorphous plurality will be transcended and suffering cease. This is the goal, no more. Namely, suffering, and the ceasing of suffering.

We have observed (*Appendix II - Sammā Samādhi II*) that in the interval when the process of death is culminating, the aggregates of perception, memory, thought, and knowledge pertaining to the dying person begin to gravitate to the seventh position, where they integrate and unify, sinking to the sixth position at the pit of the diaphragm (in line with the navel). It sinks there because that is where the collective life-continuum substrate has its negativized seat. It cannot be too often stressed that when a man thinks or acts, he is only employing a fraction of his whole collective experience, and that for the most part the major portion remains submerged in the subconscious base.

When death approaches, however, it becomes essential for re-contact and reunification to ensue so as to depart from the body in complete shape and experience, leaving no residue behind. That is why from the seventh position the aggregates sink to the sixth position, to fuse and unify with the antecedent, collective continuum there. After which it rises to the seventh point again. This is necessary, because when consciousness is at the sixth position (bhavanga) it is beyond immediate positive apprehension. It has to be lifted up a step before subjective apprehension becomes possible. Thus, the dying man may at this moment be able to recollect or witness his life in review, a partial glimpse of a collective view.

However, after this unification is made, the aggregates sink once again to the sixth position, and take off from there. This again, is necessary because the departing entity does not take off unless freed (together with its collective experience) completely from the organism. It is not freed at the seventh position, but only at the sixth. As it sinks thereto, it extricates itself, leaving the dead carcass behind.

There, however, is never a *total* integration and departure at this moment. Due to the activating stresses of attachment (upādāna) the original life-continuum leaves behind residues derived from environmental contact in the immediate life, and these derived residues (possessing their own grasping attributes of personality) henceforth wander on in a separate existence of their own (paralleled in the amoebic process, as already alluded to). These split residues, or sub-streams, are to be regarded as surplus, and it is only at the departing (cuti) instant that this psychic parthenogenesis occurs.

Now, insofar as the recollection of antecedent (rebirth) experience is concerned, it is to be understood that it is the original life-continuum which preserves the record, being ingrained therein. The split-residues or sub-streams know nothing of former births or lives, being only the by-product of this immediate one.

As for the recollection itself, it does not necessarily require jhānic methods to activate it to perceptive immediacy, for it may arise through accidental contact. Normally, however, accidental contact through the sense-door field is too superficial to affect the life-continuum substrate, so as to activate any submerged impression to recollective immediacy. Nevertheless, whenever any significant contact is established (such as the meeting again of someone once dear) then that particular

resultant (vipāka) impression of a remote past is shivered from its submerged (bhavanga) state and arises to recollective immediacy.

The aggregates of past experience (sankhāras) have their negative (vipāka) existence in the collective substrate at diaphragm pit, and are capable of being sparked to repercussive activity in the brain by some especial vibrative chord evoked through the functioning process of the sense-door field. This clarifies to some extent the fact that without any apparent cause whatsoever a person on first acquaintance is either liked or disliked, according to the processes of previous rebirth association. However, these matters cannot be too generalized, since each has its own peculiarities, and what may be true for one instance may not apply for the next, each such case being dependent on a whole set of primary and subsidiary causes.

The process of anattā asserts the selflessness of all things component (sabbe dhammā anattāti). Each stream of personality manifested in organic physicality serves as the base, through the five sense-consciousnesses (viññāna dhātu) of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, five sense-door elements (pañcadvaravajjana-manodhātu) and contact-receptacle elements (sampaticchana-manodhātu), for offshoot streams, which in turn serve through rebirth contact (phassa) and attachiveness (upādāna) as the base for further offshoot streams. Even so does the life-process multiply in diversity, *ad infinitum*. Even so does the whole universe become peopled with separative continuums and identities, the process of which knows no definitive beginning and end, except one of relativity. Due to this it is said, that life is impermanent, is suffering, is not-self, and that whatever self arises, arises with the five aggregates as base, conditioned thus.

Thus, although many attain release, the universe of continuums does not diminish or abate, but on the contrary augments. The origin of life hinges on the precipitate power of attachive contact, reproducing the multiples of becoming in the world-spheres, without end. Which brings Plato to mind:

“That anything which possesses any sort of power to affect another, or to be affected by another even for a moment, however trifling the cause and however slight and momentary the effect, has real existence. And I hold that the definition of being is simply power.”

Which, in the psychic sphere, is substantiated by the Buddhist definition:

“All that we are is the result of what we have thought.”

If, then, an answer to the question of what can prevail is to be advanced, it will have to be one in which a state of equilibrium is the essential characteristic. This entails that each life-continuum is to integrate the debris of its aggregates, and by the very force of will and effort attain to self-control. This is initiated by the process of one-pointed (ekaggatā) concentrated-absorption (jhāna) and by cessation attainment (nirodha samāpatti). When cessation attainment is instigated, the exhaustion of all longings ensues, and eventual release as a unified unit. When attachive contact has thus been rendered null and void, all offshoots of personality peter out and finally cease.

APPENDIX 2: Split-selves and Fractured Kamma

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About two years ago quite unexpectedly, I received in the mail one day from Mr. T. Magness of Bangkok - a person totally unknown to me, even though I had spent a full five days in Bangkok in 1958 - two paper-covered volumes entitled *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (Right Understanding) and *Sammā Samādhi* (Right Concentration). Immediately, I began to read one of them, being intrigued to find a Theravada Buddhist quoting from Alfred North Whitehead, but then they got somehow displaced from my mainstream of reading. And thus it was not till this past winter that I actually got around to reading them straight through. And not till I was well through my second volume, the *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, did I realize that I was encountering something brand new, at least to me, in Theravada Buddhism.

When I discovered this I wrote to Mr. Magness, who promptly and generously gave answers to my questions about this doctrine of split-personality or psychic-offshoots and their relation to the Buddhist doctrines of karma and rebirth. From his books and letters I will attempt to present something of this doctrine.

But first it will be best briefly to present an outline of the basic Buddhist doctrine of selfhood as a background before dealing with the psychic-offshoot doctrine.

1. The Traditional Buddhist Theory of Selfhood

According to this doctrine each of us sentient individuals is one life-moment of an endless chain of life-moments of individualized existence, which has been projecting itself anew, moment by moment, life by life, and age after age, in many forms from some primordial but unspecificable beginning about which Buddhism refuses to speculate. This chain-of-being will continue to project itself forward into an indefinite future eternity, propelled by the blind will-to-be (or *tanhā*, the thirst for existence), unless it achieves an absolute detachment from all desire-to-be in some new form, and thus gains Nirvana.

This process may be viewed from two somewhat different perspectives. We may take it in cross-section, i.e. by an analysis of an existent sentient being at any one moment of its existence. In this perspective Buddhism holds that there is no integral self to be found in the final analysis of self, though of course there is an empirically perceptible being-of-sorts. This conviction it states in its doctrine of *anattā*, non-self, no-self, or no-soul. What appears to be a personal individual, says Buddhism, is actually a composite bundle of five loosely related factors, one of tangible form (including physical form) and four others comprising the feeling, volitional, and consciousness components. These have no true centre, be it repeated; the so-called persons which we conceive our selves to be, are of dependent origination, i.e. formed by the momentary association of our component factors which together make up a kind of "person" of illusory substantiality. But this person is never a true unity and comes completely unglued or unwound at physical death. It is more like a stream, to use another favourite Buddhist analogy, which is contained within the rough limits of its banks, i.e.

individualized form; but it is really a fluxing, momentarily changing current of mental-physical events, rather than a substance; an “amorphous plurality”, to use Mr. Magness’ excellent phrase. It is only an impersonal blind will-to-be that thrusts forward from moment to moment and life to life, taking unto it ever different sets of five-fold factors to form a new pseudo-being at each rebirth.

There is also another way of portraying this essential unreality of the so-called individual being. And this is the doctrine of the “four heaps” or streams of personality. This differs from the above view of the individual as a five-fold bundle of constituent factors, only in emphasis and context by describing individuality in its formative process. Each heap or stream is one of four successive and causally relaxed stages of development, but each state, heap, or stream is itself five-fold. And secondarily, in some sense that I am not fully certain of, these heaps are also constitutive levels of being.

The first heap or stage, and basic ingredient or fundamental level of a new being, is “The aggregate stream of the immediately past life which descends to rebirth in a womb” at the moment of conception. It is comprised of ignorance (of its former births and its own illusory nature), desire, grasping tendencies toward new life, and “mental impulsions of becoming.” These comprise the basic karmic deposit from the past, as yet only potential but reaching out hungrily for new form. “The bulk of kamma is condensed into the first heap; the other three heaps preserve only the residue. For it is the first heap that is to be built into the parāmī self.”

- (1) The second heap, stage, stream, or level of personal being, is the receptacle-vehicle comprising the empirically perceivable “substance,” as it were, of the five-fold body-mind individuality which each one of us is. It comes into being as a result of the combination of the first-heap karmic thrust or stream with the male and female physical elements. The thrusting-desiring-grasping impulse of the first stream draws to itself the as-yet-dissociated second-heap elements of new being, as a magnet attracts iron filings. The elements of this new five-fold being at first are “purely receptive and negative, and at birth are devoid of immediate ethical responsibility”
- (2) The third heap, stream, or level, represents the past karmic inheritance of the first heap or stream, having received its renewed actual embodiment in the second-heap elements; and “it is this third stream which accumulates fresh kamma (karma) and condenses it down into the two preceding streams, leaving an impress therein.” In other words, this third stage or stream of becoming is the new “self” in active engagement with its environment in thought and action, taking into itself at its deepest levels abiding influences and characteristics which will thenceforth be components of its essential nature. This is the dynamic-positive aspect of the new sentient being, in qualifying, altering, and interactive relation to what has been given it by karmic inheritance and to its new mind-body form (i.e. the sum of the first two streams). These two first streams, interacting with the individual’s environment, form the enlarging, karma-accumulating individuality of the third heap, and comprise the ongoing base of personal process.
- (3) From the third stream or heap or stage, as active and dynamic, arises the fourth one which is “futuristic in content. That is, a negative group for future rebirth and reception of impressions.” This stage, or this stream, in confluence with the other streams and resulting from the other stages, represents the total “self” of successive states interacting externally with environment, internally with its own component streams, and all together thrusting forward in time by futuristic intention thus accumulating a new karmic destiny.

Now whether or not we grasp all the subtleties of this analysis, it is clear that it emphasizes in a second way the non-integrality of personal being, by portraying it as a bundle of streams or levels of energy-for-becoming, neither more nor less. But it brings into play another factor which represents the second perspective from which we can view the process of selfhood, namely the longitudinal-section view which calls attention to the factors of continuity. Now this continuity, even if not continuing identity, of successive states or stages of stages of becoming, is fully as important as the non-integrality (according to the cross-sectional view) of the becoming-process (or person) at a given moment. For it is their continuity that gives the successive states their significance. And that continuity, within the individual life stream is absolutely integral, with no mingling side-streams, no confluence of separate personal-being streams with each other. There may be a slight porosity of the banks of that stream of being that is "I" - that is, "outside" influences may penetrate my consciousness and influence my course but the central identity of the forward thrust into new being, moment by moment, life by life, is purely my own; and this, not in the sense of an identical soul or self that passes from life to life, but in the sense of a self-contained Karmic stream of forward-thrusting-into-being, whose new states or positions in time are the result of one and only one linear set of previous body-mind events. To repeat: The karmic integrity of this individualized stream of being is absolute through the ages.

Now it is important for our purposes here to observe briefly the ideal perfection of the factor of continuity as achieved in the lives of the saints and Buddhas. They are initially subject to karma as other men, and are composed of the same four-heap and five-factor selfhood. But theirs is a superior use of karma. For they are the embodiment of a victorious and ever-cumulative will-to-perfection. Whereas the lives of ordinary beings describe an indecisive see-saw of varying karmic fortune and uncertain will, those who become saints and Buddhas do so by the unceasing performance of worthy and insightful deeds which cumulatively bear their fruit in an increased capacity for spiritual accomplishment and self-control that finally achieves a superior kind of cohesiveness. One may say that with such persons, the longitudinally-viewed cumulative continuity of their will-to-liberation becomes dominant over the cross-sectional quality of individuality as *anattā*, or "amorphous plurality." The forward-upward tending dynamism of this will-to-perfection is the essential quality of their karmic life-stream; they represent self-created centres of dynamic power for good. The mere blind thrust of karmic energy into a new existence is progressively transformed into a fully conscious, deliberate and irresistible drive toward the perfection of enlightenment.

In passing, it may be observed that the only difference between the saint and the Buddha is the relative thickness, so to speak, of the sheaf of capacities composing this dynamic new self which each carries on into the future. Sainthood (as seen in Theravada Buddhism) is composed of a sheerly individualized will-to-release of the thickness of a needle-pointed thrust toward Nirvana. Buddhas, because of a million-fold number of existences lived under the compulsion of a vow to achieve ultimate Buddhahood, are by contrast massive forward thrusts of moral-mental perfections (*parāmīs*) which enable them, upon their final enlightenment, to teach and sustain others in the way to Nirvana, besides achieving their own Nirvana. And such is the force of these accumulated perfections that they somehow remain as a mystical and dynamically present force in the world after the Buddha has entered in to his own inaccessible Nirvana.

2. Split-Personality Karma and its Cure

We are now ready to turn to the split-personality doctrine proposed by Mr. Magness. This doctrine may be stated thus: The loose congeries of factors that make up the pseudo-self of the cross-sectional view (*anattā* or non-self stream of being) may become dissociated into new selves, especially upon death, each of which splinter selves or psychic-offshoots then takes its own separate course of karmic being, though it takes some time for such a self to accumulate much self-being even of the

illusory sort. (It may wander as a disembodied spirit for long ages.) In such an interpretation of The Three Faces of Eve, had Eve died when the three selves within her were struggling for mastery, she might have split into three new sub-selves who might not have recognized each other at their next encounter in their next lives. A quotation or two will give Mr. Magness' account of this situation¹:

“At death, due to lack of integration and purification at one firmly poised and oriented centre, these four heaps of personality make a total split and go their ways.”²

DIAGRAM I



“When a man dies, the main stream of consciousness, or life-continuum process (bhavanga-sota), though it continues to activate as a stream, has offshoots. That is, under the force of the grasping impulses which accumulated from antecedent environmental contact (but constrained by the centripetal gravitational force in the organism) the main stream is split off into sub-streams, each instinct with a separate life-continuum process of its own henceforth (not unlike the divided amoeba).

Thus, what is perpetuated is not static identical singularity but, rather amorphous plurality. Each separate life-continuum process is then propelled to its own kammic (karmic) destiny, sometimes taking rebirth immediately. Once separated thus, it would scarcely be to the point to say that one such life-continuum has any identification with another. The logical conclusion is that a man may meet one of his former life-continuum fragments incarnate and never so much as recognize the connection”³

¹ All quotations from letter of July 13, 1963

² Letter, July 13, 1963

³ Sammā Ditṭhi, p.69

Here then is a variant form of the anattā or four-stream conception of being. It emphatically asserts that there is no true self-identical person at any moment, not any identity carrying on from life; that dependent-origination-identity is not true identity. Yet it is different from the assertion that the five factors simply come apart upon death, in its statement that the pseudo-self comes apart into subordinate selves, or split-karmic streams each of which becomes a new five-factor pseudo-self. For Mr. Magness this neatly explains or confirms two tangential Buddhist doctrines: (1) the seemingly infinite perpetuation of the number of selves to be reborn, though the “original” total number has been reduced by those attaining Nirvana; and (2) why it is that the memory of one’s past lives attainable by psychic discipline peters out in the far past into an indistinct haze. The unperceivable beginning of a “self” represents its split-off point into sub-selfhood at some past time. Of course each splinter-self, though “but a recent product of environmental friction and contact,” containing only a fraction of the parent stream’s qualities, nevertheless as a proud pseudo-self “considers itself to be unique, god-given and eternal.”⁴

Such is the negative side of psychic off-shoots, so to speak. Must one then consign himself to be thus forever split and re-split into an infinitude of sub-selves? most distressing to self-respecting Westerners! “Where in all this is the hope of Nirvana? for Nirvana for all its seeming negativity is not a mere zero-end of self-fragmentation, but the maximization of one special sort of self-becoming. The whole point of Mr. Magness’ work is the delineation of the positive prospect of achieving “True self-integration,” though this phrase is distinctly not Theravadin:

“Thus also it is said that insofar as the individual is concerned he can be said to endure from existence to existence only to the extent that his parāmīs (perfect qualities of consciousness) are preserved intact...”⁵ “The way to release, therefore, is a unification, integration, and purging of all rebirth factors, so as to eliminate any further reproduction of the amorphous plurality which perpetuates existence in the world spheres, without end.”⁶

The way of release is then a genuine integration of those factors found in the ongoing stream of pseudo-selfhood, which is only a series of successive states, causally related to each other but otherwise discontinuous, into a new self of genuine integrity, a self capable of salvation in Nirvana. It should be noted that this is the maximization of the element of continuity, observable in the longitudinal-section view of life and which is best achieved by the saints’ and Buddhas’ will-to-perfection. It is the creation, along the way, of a non-splitting, true selfhood composed of an enduring entity of spiritual deeds. (See Diagram II)

Before speaking a little further of the religious implications of this new and integral salvation-self, it is of interest to observe Mr. Magness’ interpretation of the psychological process involved in the creation of this new self. Briefly, it is a process by which there is deliberately formed an integrated self-consciousness which is superior to, i.e. more deeply central and more tightly unified than, all of the separative self-fragments which compose ordinary and peripheral selves. It is a process in which all levels of the self are united into an integral unity; from the ongoing sub-conscious life-stream (bhavanga-sota) which flows onward even during sleep and is the lowest common denominator of all life, up to and including the highest levels of explicit consciousness of saintly and Buddha awareness. In response to my question as to whether some of his descriptions of the action and interaction of consciousness and sub-consciousness during the process of self-remaking were Freudian or reverse-Freudian, Mr. Magness replied in part:

⁴ Sammā Ditṭhi, p. 72

⁵ Ibid, p. 69 (Italics added)

⁶ Ibid, p. 70

DIAGRAM II



"The collective experience of the parāmī-self cannot be to the fore of consciousness in its completeness at any given moment. What is not to the fore is sunk and collected in a receptacle which is the bhavanga, its sub-conscious otherness... When it is said that the peripheral mind must be sunk down into the bhavanga, what is actually meant is to sink it down and then edge it up two fingerbreadths above the bhavanga... If it is not edged up, there will be no full awareness, there will be only submergence into the ceaseless random flow of the subconscious stream. It is edged up thus so as to be near the bhavanga stream, so that it can dip into it at will, just as one dips into a stream and retrieves flowing objects therein. It is correct to say that by so doing the peripheral mind is deepened and made aware of experiences unplumbed before (brought over from other lives, as well as opening new horizons which may arise). It is also correct to say that it is the redemption of the subconscious by making it conscious."⁷

Now some of the imagery here is esoterically Buddhist. The two-finger distance above the bhavanga-stream centre, located near the navel, goes back to art ancient Hindu-Buddhist theory of psycho-physiology and its appropriate meditative techniques; nor is the picking up of the memories of past lives particularly Freudian no matter how vast the sub-conscious realm is conceived to be. But the psychological bearings are clear. Conscious and subconscious levels of awareness are broken open to each other, and by their interrelation a new integral unity is created, containing elements of both. Not only is the superficial ordinary consciousness brought into vital contact with its own inward roots and hidden sources, but the turbid irrational currents of the sub-conscious life-force (or Id) are brought to clarity, redeemed by consciousness, and made part of a new self-consciousness which is neither sub-nor super-but integral. As Mr. Magness goes on to say:

⁷ Letter, July 13, 1963, p. 1

“Because his subconscious is pure the arahatta (i.e. the saint ready for Nirvana) has no delusive or morbid dreams.”⁸

But of course for the Buddhist the result is far more than the merely psychological renewal and integration of the person. It is a salvational process as well. This new self that results from the intermingling of the bhavanga-sota (subconscious continuum) and rational consciousness under proper auspices, is the parāmī-self. Its unification and purification of the ordinary fractionated pseudo-self’s impulses and drives, constitutes a self capable of liberation from the impersonality of karmic being, and preserves it unto true Nibbanic selfhood with no further fractioning.

As a consistent Buddhist, Mr. Magness is very emphatic that this new self is not the Hindu *atman* or primordial transcendent soul in disguise:

“The nature of the transcendence of the new self that arises... is not to be considered as inherent in individuality, for that would be tantamount to championing the doctrine of a permanent soul flowing on unchanged, from some primordial source. It is indeed created by self-action, but by no means is the self which created it originally transcendent. It is not a matter of original transcendence but *transmutation*.”

And every human self has at least a latent capacity to thus take the elements of its anattā (non-or pseudo self) and transmute them into a finally transcendent self.”⁹

Now does this integration or transmutation of self, which results in Nirvana’s attainment signify the utter cessation of selfhood? Mr. Magness quite emphatically denies such a conclusion. For, were annihilation the case:

“It would be a contradiction in terms, for one does not integrate oneself through a process of aeons merely to disintegrate again into some ocean of forgetfulness. Super selfhood (my phrase) is just the end-result of the aeonic process, and Buddhas at the moment in Nibbāna (Nirvana) are certainly imbued with consciousness or they wouldn’t be what they are. Their radiance fills the ocean of Nibbāna”¹⁰

3. *Postscript*

What is the significance of this doctrinal statement of Mr. Magness? Writes he: “I have proposed nothing new at all, but rather these doctrines have been imposed on me as the result of prolonged investigation. It is not book-learning which clarifies doctrines but the understanding which one brings there to revealing old doctrines in fresh light.” Nor is he concerned with whether “Buddhist orthodoxy” finds him “heretical” or not since that ‘orthodoxy’ is a body of inconsistent doctrinal variations, in his opinion.¹¹

At present I have only the view of one member of that orthodoxy, the Venerable Nyanaponika of Ceylon who, on the basis of a very short quotation from Mr. Magness’ writes:

“Therefore I agree with your correspondent that ‘various of the component elements in a given human personality may split off into an independent existence and karmic

⁸ Letter, July 13, 1963.

⁹ Letter, July 13, 1963, p. 2

¹⁰ Letter, July 13, 1963, p. 1

¹¹ Letter, September 15, 1963

career, though I do not favour very much that rather coarse metaphor of “splitting off.”¹²

To me also, as an outsider, Mr. Magness doctrine seems to have considerable Buddhist logic about it and to make more rational the doctrine of the karmic inheritance of personal characteristics. For I quite agree with him when he writes: “It is always wrong in Buddhist circles to reduce everything to a naked karma-thrust.”¹³

To me it also seems that Mr. Magness has courageously made explicit what is largely implicit and subdued, and somewhat illogical, in Theravada orthodoxy because of its deep addiction to negative language, namely, the dynamically positive quality of Buddhist salvation as a process of building a higher, more integrated self (For “self” is always an evil term in Theravada no-soul orthodoxy.) But actually “self-building” has a significant parallel in the widely received Theravada presumption that the infinite store of the Buddha’s accumulated merits (his parāmī self) remains as a presently available and dynamic force for good and salvation among men, though the Buddha himself, as an empirically perceptible self has passed on into theoretically inaccessible Nirvana. And as I see it, the forging of an enduring parāmī-self, wrought of good deeds done in a meditational wisdom-context, is the essence of saint-making or salvation in Buddhism. It is therefore Mr. Magness’ great importance to attempt to rescue the anattā (no-self) doctrine from its sheer negativity; and the conception of karmic thrust from its sheerly naked characterless propulsion into new being.¹⁴ And it is of great interest and perhaps significance, that this no doubt represents a manifestation of the new experiential emphasis in Theravada Buddhism, consequent upon the layman’s very recent venture into the former exclusively monkish preserve of meditational discipline.

¹² Letter, July 3, 1963

¹³ Letter of note 9

¹⁴ Part of the “characterlessness” of the Kammic thrust into new being may arise from my own misinterpretation of Buddhist Karma. In any case I had not been so sharply aware, before reading Mr. Magness’ writings, of other alternatives to the seeming bareness (i.e. devoidness of personal qualities) of the Kammic thrust of one into new individuality.

APPENDIX 3: Sequel to Split-selves

by Suratano Bhikkhu (T. Magness)

A Matter of Integration

In Western man's approach to the Buddhist analysis of 'self', or 'not-self' (anattā), various pitfalls present themselves, so obscure and strange are the implications involved. Even for the 'orthodox' Buddhist the doctrine of not-self remains a perplexing mystery, readily accepted rather than actually understood. So when an impartial critic such as Dr. King spiritedly attempts to assemble the bits and pieces, so as to resolve the dilemma which besets the patient investigator with meagre tools at his disposal, and is amply compensated for the attempt, it becomes no mean feat which he has accomplished. It only serves to illustrate the fact that although the process of arriving at a mature interpretation of the Buddhist structure may be exhaustive, it is not an impossibility.

In so far as the origination of psychic-offshoots is concerned, the fact that men differ is relevant, for it cannot but be so. The wide divergence in men of dominant characteristics, the infinite variety of people in the world, each with his own mental make-up, remains a riddle to psychology. Resigned to live with riddles, we say that such and such a person is so by nature. An ambiguous term. In the offshoot context, however, this divergence is explained by its aspect of psychic-heritage. That is, a given stream-of-personality traces its origins to its 'parent' root way back in time, and its basic character is determined (not by God or the immediate parents) but to the extent that its psychic ancestry underwrite it as such from the very start. That a man is devout by nature, or energetic, or intelligent, in this context, varies in proportion to the qualities transferred and transmitted unconsciously by the 'original' nucleus of personality from which the psychic-offshoot derived its origin or 'becoming'.

With this consideration in mind, therefore, it would be presumptuous, not to say unfair, to make depreciative comparisons between persons at each others expense, because all individuals are at the very beginning of their offshoot-origin not what they are by choice but by necessity, as it were, the psychic surplus of the parent psyche's outflow. In dealing with origins, therefore, psychic perspective is germane to the issue, for no sympathetic understanding or communication is possible unless one proceeds back to root-ancestry for it would conduce to mutual appreciation to understand that, psycho-physically, a man is never a choice-product but the victim of a psychic assembly-line, and as such is obligated for his existence to others even from the very start.

Only when an offshoot-stream, by virtue of repeated birth-death, becomes "itself" in its own right, can it be said to have begun to actually shape its own destiny, for in the beginning the factors involved are involuntarily derived, becoming positively structured and inclined only after rebirth in physical form. The Buddha's emphasis in applying negative terminology to the not-self doctrine is merely to illustrate this aspect of fundamental interdependence, or dependent-origination, in no sense to depreciate individuality as such.

The basically sense-oriented man, however, expresses instant irritation whensoever he stumbles over the Buddhist analysis of self. And this is so because it fails to conform to his version of life, his appetite for self-gratification, which prefers spontaneous indiscipline to restrictive control. Since man's major instincts are all wrapped and dressed-up by the body, the natural reaction to the

ideal of celibacy, for instance, is ascetic: what would happen to the world if everyone were to become a monk! To which the sensible response would be that the question is academic, for such a probability, by the very discipline involved, renders it select.

It would seem that the Buddhist attitude towards life breeds a certain negativity towards social problems, as though viewed in the light of ultimacy (Nibbāna) the world is not worth bothering about and must be left to slide, as it can never really be improved. History, however, speaks for itself. Under the impact of the long-term passage of time any improvement of society in social terms, no matter how salutary, is of necessity only a temporary affair, declining from its peak to become a phenomenon whose ruins may appear casually picturesque but no longer possess any inherent utility.

Proceeding from two such divergent attitudes, the short-term and the long-term views of life, it is only to be expected that a fundamental misunderstanding prevails. The greatest anxiety to man is the brevity of his life, whereby instant-grabbing becomes a must. Given this fundamental malaise, therefore, it is the supreme folly to expect that some earthly paradise can be at hand, so long as apes have taken over the park. On the other hand, it is too much to hope that the Buddhist attitude, with its origins in the hoary past, is possible of being appreciated by mere sophisticated chat across a coffee-lounge. It is extremely naive to infer, besides, that in the Buddhist view the world is not worth improving, because it is viewed as always to be improved, in so far as it is possible so to do. The aggravation of appetite, as sane men have always upheld, is hardly the answer to the basic problem, as it conduces in no way to emotional equilibrium, but rather defeats its own purpose when supply fails, unequal to the demand.

In the popular stereotyped interpretations of the anattā doctrine, it is customary to attenuate the human self to a spectre. Although there is justification for this in some respects, to lay undue stress in all contexts merely elevates the negative aspects at the expense of the positive implications, distorting the underlying facts. The negative aspect of anattā is emphasized to counterbalance man's tendency to identify himself as possessing an eternal soul, plus the six-fold field of sense-contact, and all the transience which that entails. By this negative over-emphasis, however, the nucleus of character dormant in the subconscious is never given the adequate treatment it deserves, left to dwindle into a nonentity without ultimate direction or purpose. The positive aspect of the anattā doctrine is that the everyday self is part of a larger collective, and as such something to be developed and enlarged. Dr. King has perceptively extricated this very important point for general attention in his book *"In the Hope of Nibbāna"*:

One of the most significant results growing out of the kamma-rebirth context, and the most closely related to the nature of the self, is what we may call the quantitative enlargement of the self and its qualitative intensification. By the quantitative enlargement of the self I refer to the long process of character-formation which, according to Buddhism, has preceded the appearance of the saint or Buddha, or for that matter, even the more than average good man.

Character-formation is the be-all and the end-all of the true Buddhist ideal, and there is nothing negative in the implications of this, for the true identity of the psyche's endeavour is a continuous ascent from strength to strength in this respect until:

the quantitatively infinite has been transmuted into the qualitatively transcendent: the successive multiplication of ordinary virtues, plus the compound interest of the kammic process, has produced the absolute good.

It is always salutary to keep our perspectives clear in dealing with Buddhist doctrines, for as long as the mind shuts the open door of exploration on itself an unhealthy atmosphere eventually results. In the anattā doctrine, specifically, the tendency is to take the presented man of five senses for

what he is and nothing more. Not much credit is accorded the fact that other dimensions are involved, primarily the factor of kammic time:

To the concrete historical being who stands before us in visible form, or whom we know more directly in our own persons, we must add the invisible but very potent aura of his kammic past, a margin of unexpected unpredictable tendency or power for good or evil.

Good and evil in Buddhism are not merely relative (as proposed in some fallacious philosophies) but possess certain standards basic to all, where the former is to be augmented integrally by the strenuous life of the self, and the latter drastically reduced. There is nothing negative about the discipline involved.

For the Buddhist teaching is that each type of action stirs up and attracts the latent potential within ones kammic heritage... The self is not merely the empirical not-self of our direct observation: there is a larger and hidden self which can contribute to our salvation if only we exploit its hidden treasures of power and goodness by appropriate disciplines.

A man's "self", therefore, is not to be underestimated, for beneath the periphery of everyday sense-contact there underlies a subconscious area of which very little is known, and of which the native himself is seldom aware. In this context, attitudes between individuals could become tempered by feelings of compassion or esteem, because for all they know there may be some psychic-connection between them both, unlikely as it may seem. It is a fallacy, however, to infer from the doctrine of rebirth that all men have possessed countless past lives, because there are an enormous quantity of recent offshoots, or split-selves, rampant in this latter age, who possess no such life-stockpile worthy of the name, and the reason why, because of their limited extension, no interest whatsoever is expressed regarding the higher-life. For interest in such a higher-life appears only after experience in space-time has been excited to such a repetitious extent that it has climaxed into a world-wearied peak. On the other hand, even in this very age prospective Buddhas may walk the streets in ordinary guise, preparatory to a remote rendezvous in time. For a Buddha is not born but is, if anything, a quality self-made.

He is a self depending only on self, built up consciously and deliberately out of millions of former selves, a super-integrated self, integrated about a centre of nibbanic awareness. Though bodily still a kammic individual living in time and space, such a super-self, inwardly self-centered, actually lives far above the whole kammic realm in his transcendent selfhood.

The word transcendent has become so facilely popularized in recent times, however, that its usage evokes great hesitation, for it no longer conveys anything of intrinsic value. In this context, what is implied is that a transmutation process has been initiated which has transformed the superficial-personality into an internally finished-product, a qualitative-quantity over and apart from the vulnerabilities to which all sentient existence is heir. Here we have in explicit terms a basis for futurity: the developing-self of the wisdom-aspirant (bodhisatta) has gradually and cumulatively been transmuted into the completely developed-self of the emancipated one (arahat):

That larger and hidden self has now become the real and actual self, as visible as it is possible for ultimate spiritual realities to become in space-time. The pure, the true self or mind is now in complete control, i.e. the-saint is fully atta or self, save for the body, and that will soon pass away.

There is a major misconception, however, into which the unwary Westerner (and Dr. King is no exception) may fall, and that is to infer that a fundamental tension of incompatibility exists between the spheres of kammic and nibbanic life. It is to be understood that the accumulation of

wholesome or “*experiential*” kamma is an essential requisite for Nibbanic attainment, which kamma can be accumulated nowhere but in the kammic sphere of saṃsāra, so that whatever interaction that exists between the nibbanic-samsaric spheres cannot but be complementary, therefore making it inappropriate to state that such a basic tension exists. Nibbanic-life, contradictory as it may seem, is not something which is attained on the basis of lethargy, a sitting-down and doing nothing, for its arising is necessarily conditioned through struggle and the overcoming of boundaries. It is only when the thoughtless worldling grasps the samsaric world with its pitiful baubles as an end in itself, not recognizing that life is really a spiral ascending to an apex, that the situation becomes something to be deplored, the spiral having deteriorated into a vicious circle, a psychic cul-de-sac.

The Nibbanic plane embodies a qualitative principle which has experiential wisdom, or cosmic perspective, as its minimal requisite. Which prospectus cannot specifically be fulfilled other than in the sphere of saṃsāra, where lessons in the school of pleasure and of pain, of good and of evil, leave an indelible impress upon the long-faring psyche, so that it falls no more into error at its own expense. It must be stressed, even at the risk of appearing repetitious, that the classic error is to infer that life in the world, Buddhistically speaking, is something to be depreciated or condemned. The fact is rather that existence in the space-time world is an aspect of actuality, the condition in which life originates itself through amorphous plurality, and since Nibbāna is not something which is god-given or ready-made to man, but a potentiality to be actualized, it behoves man to apply himself. In short, the space-time world of sense is the only launching-pad there is from which the projection to Nibbanic heights may be achieved. It is, in fact, a start from scratch, and an assembling of individual parts, no matter how scattered and entailing a process no matter how long. Until this task has been accomplished, a process of qualitative psycho-synthesis, it would be presumptuous to assume that some form of juvenile gymnastic may drug its way through psychedelic doors into transcendental hopes, whatever they may be.

Tension of the Good-Evil Axis

We have maintained that the tension attributed to exist between the kammic and nibbanic spheres is a hypothetical claim rather than an established fact. To elaborate: kammic life is at the very basis of perfection (*parāmī*) building. That is, quantitative psycho-physical action in the space-time context is germane to qualitative psychic issue - a condensation process, gravitated in terms of ultimate character, a purging of the gross and a retaining of the fine, all projected to the actualization of a supreme objective over and above the space-time world. In that the Nibbanic objective is presently a remote project, however, contemporary compensations, irrespective of the ultimate bonus, accrue - such as fringe-benefits, being in the nature of current coin, in no way diminish the accumulated capital, or impoverish the drawer’s potential power (since only the interest is drawn), all the while it remains deposited in the psychic bank. In this light the kammic-nibbanic axis presents itself for what it actually is, with a fine distinction drawn between nibbanic-capital and kammic coin.

Although the kammic-nibbanic ‘*tension*’ is disposed of in this context by its interaction as a complementary process, however, there remains one area in the samsaric sphere in which an inherent tension actually exists. And that is in the good-evil polarity. It is here that a reality of singular proportions is to be witnessed, whose pitfalls cannot be over-emphasized. And the tension may be presented in a specific way.

There whirls along the universal axis of life a centripetal-centrifugal force, of integration-disintegration, spinning all sentient existence haphazardly before it. Even molecular life is not exempt, for as the tests of Louis Pasteur have revealed, it is a peculiar fact of structure that some microbes turn to the left and others to the right. The left-right structure of such minuscular items is only another manifestation of the destructive and constructive aspects in the polarity of values. In

man this tension is evidenced in the whirl of conflicting emotions and impulses which hurl him upon a psycho-physical rack, whose origins are as obscure as they are acute. Western psychiatric jargon disposes of this phenomenon glibly as neurosis, an ambiguous term. The typical oriental explanation, on the other hand is to resignedly shrug it off as the individual's kammic heritage. Although there is justification for both these attitudes, they fail to do justice to the complexity involved. Although it is true that neurosis and kamma play their parts in the jigsaw, they are only fragments in the welter of causality. The situation is somewhat more complex than it at first appears, for we observe that a man even in the best of circumstances and with the best of kmmas is still not exempt from mishaps to his person. The root of the problem, therefore, lies in some fundamental predicament in which all sentient life finds itself plunged even from the very start, and without any choice, and that the individual's neurosis or kammic background are only subsidiary appendages, merely diversifying or accentuating it.

The situation resolves to this: visible or not, a duality of "live" power exists, uplifting on the one hand, and subjugating on the other, holding life in thrall. What this power for upliftment, and its opposite of debasement, is called is a matter of indifference, a mere matter of terminology, of darkness or of light. That powers certainly exist is beyond doubt, and the miscalculation is to infer that insofar as evil is concerned, its origins exist somewhere beneath the earth. The opposite is true, unfortunately, for evil reigns above, very much so, for if its source existed underground, the potential to exert control would not be as effective as it is seen to be, a whole vortex of potential destruction powerful enough to blow the world to bits. The actual effectiveness is rendered more complete by the fact that man, through basic prejudice, rejects as an ancient superstition the idea that such powers exist, thus playing into their very hands. For when man considers himself 'licensed' to do as he pleases, without fear of consequences, then darkness is free to wreak its havoc without check. To sow the wind and reap the whirlwind, is not as empty of content as it would contemporaneously seem to be, for literal whirlwinds actually blast the ant-like activities of humanity scurrying in the vale of life below.

The first thing which strikes the bemused observer is man's innocence in the face of catastrophe. There is something extremely naive and child-like in his reaction to something which he cannot comprehend, and which he as a consequence refers to as 'acts of God'. Although this phraseology is taken seriously only in a limited sense, it nevertheless signifies the mentality of man in a rudderless plight, casting about for a sensible reply. But sensible replies are hard to find. Thus when man falls into the position of being paralyzed by circumstance, it is only to be expected that he succumbs to the idea of acts of God, of circumstances technically beyond his control. This dearth of answers, and this casting about for sensible replies, is well illustrated in the crucifixion of Christ, upon which the whole structure of Christianity subsists, and which is rendered meaningless when viewed as a saving gesture for mankind, because mankind remains unsaved. If the matter is viewed in another light, however, as the principle of non-violence paying its price, even to the very death, then the crucifixion possesses contemporary impact, driving home its point even to the final bloody nail.

From the orthodox Buddhist viewpoint, on the other hand, it would be simple to complacently dispose of the good-evil polarity as the manifestation of an impersonal kammic activity implementing its way through matter and mind. What is seldom taken into account, however, is that kamma although it does in part partake of mechanical properties, is not as automatic and facile in its activity as it may seem. For kamma can be activated only in given circumstances and under the proper auspices, by a coercive force, otherwise it remains dormant and to all purposes innocuous. What does this imply? That agencies exist which expedite kamma for good or ill, kamma being the opening or channel through which such agencies may activate, without which agencies kamma is rendered null and void.

Nevertheless, the individual's weakest spot is where his evil kamma lies, the fatal flaw within his psyche which proves his wreck. Vulnerable as he is, however, disbelieving and incredulous, scornful and defiant, with no inkling whatsoever of ultimate sources and origins, he continues to aggravate the situation by accumulating that which in turn becomes his own worst enemy, spinning him on the wheel of a rudderless destiny. The psychology of man congratulates itself that it is able to produce offspring, although possessing no idea of the intricate processes whereby life itself appears. In that it is produced at an enormous rate, the risks of birth, fraught as it is with all the possibilities of shipwreck, never occurs to the mind, least of all dismays. The precariousness of the situation to the man in the street, for all he cares, might as well be non-existent, so able is he to carry on in his walk of life without a qualm.

Courage of a certain sort, however, is germane to the man with a knowledge of root-causes, walking ahead in the knowledge of how easy prey he can become to diabolical forces swirling behind the cosmic scene, even more diabolical in that they channel down the corridors of mind unseen. It is in view of this precariousness, not aversion to life in the world as such, that religion advises that the surest means of reducing the relentless pressure on his mind is for man to extricate himself altogether, and as soon as possible, once and for all. For although it is true that life in the world is a test of strength, where obstacles are to be overcome, the fact remains that without a shepherd in sight the flock is basically too vulnerable to stand on its own, and scatters, so that the rallying point is lost. As it is, the world already owes an irrepayable debt to its psychic pioneers, for had they been found wanting in this respect the world would be in an even worse predicament than what it is in today. It is evident, therefore, that the ethical mode, whatever the inadequacies involved, has held the world together, no matter how tenuously, up to date. Without losing sight of the fact that this tenuousness is always cemented not merely by empty words and gestures, but with the price of blood and life itself.

In the last analysis, it is some central vision, the searching power of light, which is needed to penetrate and dissipate the inexorable momentum which precipitates and flings sentient creatures on from life to life, with its thrust of agonizing pain. This central vision and light, the strenuous accumulation of potential might, is the means whereby the impulses of darkness out to swamp the psyche may be redressed. The supreme test of long-term survival demands morality, concentration, and wisdom, the ablest vortex of energy for good, the armour and the guard. Disease, catastrophe, and conflict are only visible results of invisible avenues unleashing their lethal load, by which man is pitted against man and left to destroy themselves thereby. However, the power of insight, of beneficent deeds, and of the mentally alert, sets up a ring around the psyche and interdicts the infiltrations of darkness from disrupting it. Mental vigilance (sati) is its own defence against the dark, the armament forestalling wreckage in the ceaseless warfare between darkness and light which has plagued the universe ever since it began.

Life is forever buffeted by the powers that be. In that so much unnecessary misery could be spared, the wonder is why life's lessons are never learnt in any but the laborious way. As it is, before even a simple truth can be grasped with the entrails, as it were, incredible repetition and anguish must first ensue. Indeed, the integration of experience is an aeonic undertaking, until it is stamped unforgettably on the mind and, in this context, it becomes hopeless to expect that a shorter route exists, because not only is a short-cut rare, it would seem that man himself has no inclination for such a cut, so engrossed by the wayside is he in his superficial selves. For selves delight in the giddiness and headlong zest of becoming, fraught with liabilities though it be, so that when a putting an end to becoming is heard their minds do not respond. With the steady strength of being, and its changeless assets, the superficial mind is not concerned. The issue appears unattractive because the effervescence of everyday life seems an immediate good, whereas any distant goal suggests only a dubious hope. The stamp of the immediate self is its vulnerability from head to foot, rendering whatever

compensations there are into a knife with a two way edge. Considering himself better off with the happier choice the worldling whistles on his way, until he stumbles over his own bankruptcy.

The anguish which litters the wayside gives rise to the reflection whether the long road is after all worth all the expense. But integration is possible, and it is in this possibility that life's hope lies, condemned otherwise to writhe endlessly beneath the lash. For the integrated-self, being what it is, extricates itself from the tug of the good-evil axis, and its reflexive states are purely neutral as a consequence, the end-result of a gravitational process into a specific field of personality all that is essential to equilibrium and immunity from psycho-physical upset. If the everyday consciousness of the worldling flits on the periphery of sense-contact, the integrated-self withdrawn within and unflustered at its peak, is a power-house of absolute worth.

In dealing with the whole business of integration, however, it is understood that mere knowledge is not the only factor leading from darkness to light, but that a host of other psychic potentialities play their part. The whole operation is strategic, for as a single troop would be effectively outflanked, so it is that the whole battery of psychic forces must be deployed to subdue the foe. When this psychic arsenal is focused at the navel-centre, the ensuing impact is immense. It was to the extent that he failed to contact this crucial-centre, containing the nucleus of all his inward worth that the Buddha, groping in the psychic dark, strove for six weary years in vain. When finally the connection was established, all problems were resolved, bringing to the surface a whole reservoir of light.

Although the integrated-self involves aeons to achieve, therefore, it is a matter most edifying in scope, for it signifies a signal contribution to the sum total of human experience, with its own particular hallmark, measured in terms of cosmic endeavour, and the prospect of universal welfare. To plumb the universe within, to unravel its roots in space-time, from what obscure origins it sprang, what its collective potential contains, and in what direction its futurity lies, remains the challenge of utmost and immeasurable significance to man.

Contemporary Impact

The deeper that Buddhism is delved into, however, the more evident it becomes that it is a subject which does not lend itself to general consumption, especially in a meditational-wisdom context. For one thing, the literature concerning the subject is either of the popular variety or the negative orthodoxy of the traditional approach and, it soon becomes apparent that both these accesses are neither adequate nor profound. There is, besides, the tendency of the over-zealous to evaluate things Buddhistic in the glare of contemporary science, as though such evaluation endows it with some special distinction in itself. The great licence with which this naive zeal advertises itself serves merely to display a complete lack of sophistication and depth. Nothing but confusion and perplexity results from an unwise meddling in a subject which, profound at core, easily lends itself to distortion or oversimplification by the conceited or unripe. Again, to be lured into any heated debate as to the veracity involved, pro or con, is as irrelevant and ridiculous as getting involved in an argument over the relative merits or demerits of coffee or tea.

The fact is that it is neither advisable nor necessary at this stage for the initial explorer to attempt to grasp the implications involved. It was enough if he could at this juncture make some attempt to abide by five moral imperatives, and live within their bounds as best he can. For he cannot hope to grasp anything about himself, not to mention universal truth, if he cannot first abide by even five fundamental principles of restraint. The elimination of violence, theft, sexual promiscuity, lies, and intoxicants from life is not too much to expect from man at any time, and if he finds it beyond him so to do, then his bid for supremacy in the field of knowledge would be like trying to step up a ladder

without steps, with feet clawing at empty space. For it is indeed a peculiar form of conceit which seeks to scale airy pinnacles without the necessary credentials of foothold. Only true morality is able of uplift, in this context, without fear of ridicule.

A crucial point remains. As long as Buddhists (in their bid to demonstrate to the world their concept of truth) continue to stress merely the negative aspects of Buddhist doctrines (such as impermanence, suffering, and not-self), at the expense of their positive opposites (permanence, bliss, and self) the results will be disappointingly dismal. And this is so because contemporary man is not of a humour to indulge himself in something as overdone as the stuff which they across the counter are attempting to push. And thus has been the great dullness of Buddhist exposition for the last two thousand years, proliferating contradictions in terms. It would seem, from the vigour with which latter-day exponents broadcast their views, that the Buddha never seemed to know the meaning of the word affirmative, scarcely is reference made to the three positives which he indeed rejoiced in making plain, by extolling the self as the refuge of self, and Nibbāna as permanence and as bliss. Indeed, in their thousand years of one-tracked ardour, Buddhists have done their Master little service and their religion even less.

Thus, although at first sight the pursuit of perfection and truth would seem to be ideal for mankind, the present condition appears premature, to say the least, for the distillation and exportation of anything but a humdrum repetition of booklore. The time is yet to come when man, within himself and without, sits down to his subject prepared, necessarily prepared. Failing these basic ingredients, it would be presumptuous to claim that Buddhism, as a religion and as a way of life, will possess any favourable or lasting impact upon the psychology of contemporary man.