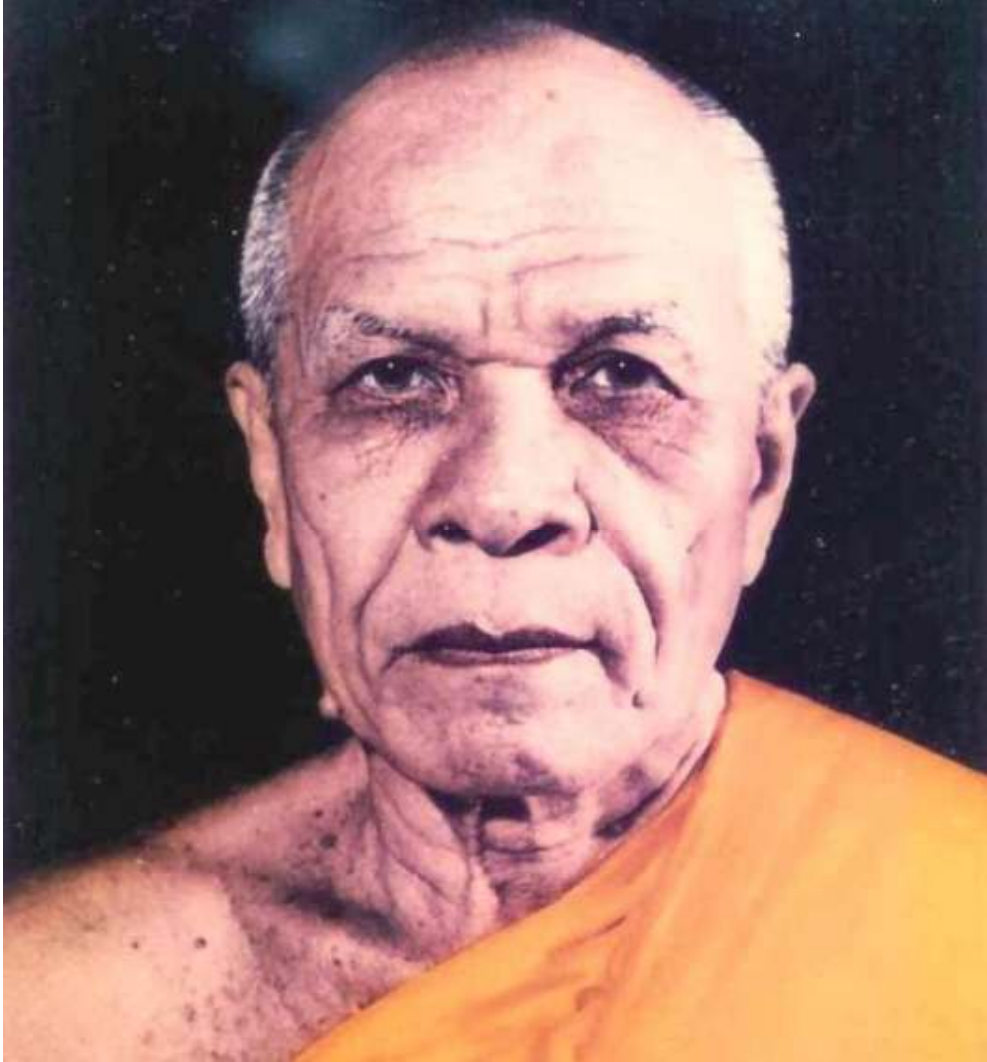




Altitude

And the Buddhist Perspectives

T. Magness
(The Venerable Suratano Bhikkhu)



The Venerable Chao Khun Mongkol-Thepmuni
(Late Abbot of Wat Paknam, Basicharoaen)

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 Vijjā 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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PART ONE



ALTITUDE

The earth looks splendid from afar. It is only proximity which reveals how paltry life can be. Not for nothing does an elevation possess a sophistication which the plain below does not contain. As the landscape enlarges with the altitude it serves to reveal, amongst other things, the degree of complacency with which the mind becomes the most cluttered place on earth in which to live. So much is this so, in fact, that it has become a matter of mere routine for minds to exist in closets, where the dust of prejudice and the cobwebs of distortion readily collect.

A throwing open of windows and a broadening of views, in such a context, becomes a highly complicated action to achieve. The tendency of the psyche to be overwhelmed by its own perversity is, moreover, always aggravated by the machinery of life itself, which possesses no scruples in kicking it around from one illusion to the next. Bullied even from the very start by his birth (over which he has no choice), by his hopes and fears, not to mention the manias and power-drives of his fellowman, it is no cause for wonder that the half-crazed look appears so often rolling in man's eyes. So much has civilized bullying become a way of life, however, that its victims have come to take it as routine, to almost like it, and to even ask for more.

In situations such as these, a life without altitude becomes a constant humiliation without hope. Yet it is to be observed with what a measure of persistence the pursuit of happiness moves on, as if it were forever within reach. The main ground for this euphoria seems to lie in the mind's never having had enough, so that anticipation becomes its own support, titillated by the perennial promise of a thrill. If the impulse to enjoy, understandably, heads the items on life's shopping list, the thrill-seeker never seems to comprehend the meaning of the word enough. As a consequence, a desperate habit becomes formed to seek excitement at all costs, even at the expense of much unnecessary pain. Sex and drugs, to this end are lauded as possessing 'psychedelic highs', whatever that implies, a commodity in large demand. The drawback lying in such 'highs' is that psychedelic 'lows' also play their part in the psychic scene: for where a peak appears so does an awful abyss gape below. In such a situation, frantic becomes the psyche once it has exhausted all its peaks and has only its abysses left it to console. Badgered on all sides by this psychedelic treat, evolution beats an ignominious retreat.

Man hoards his pleasures as misers do, in the hope that they will last him for all time. Of physical pleasure it may be said that it possesses the shortest life. The fact that pleasure subsists mainly on feedbacks of the mind, and endures in proportion to how mental it becomes, is rarely accorded its due deserve. The value of the cultured mind lies in its capacity to content itself, after having had its fill of peaks, without falling into the inglorious blunder of an abyss. The regret has always been the mind's inability at holding to its peaks, a perch from which it is forever falling off. Plagued with this inefficiency from the very start, merely to have something left in reserve becomes a boon. Witness the old, yet eager, trot around the globe, in search of one last peak before life ditches them. A revealing sight, with a handful of snapshots packed in life's bag to take back home.

It is not an over exaggerated claim to make that, for the majority of men, ultimate prospects remain a myth, immediate happiness a dream. With morsels off the table, it appears, the psyche must content itself to be summarily confined. The pathos of fiddling life away from one moment to the next exacts its sorry toll. The hope with which man yearns for something *more* from life (which never seems generous enough in this respect) is a demand which is forever thwarted by life's large invisibility. It is only in the nature of beleaguered man to press life for a more decent deal, and may be to even get it, yet to watch it finally fade away into a mere memory. That it seems is what life is all about.

The hope for something more from life, however, for it to justify its promise, should rest, not upon the paltry provocations of the passing scene, but on the assurance of some futurity which endures, even if its actual existence remains, in terms of the present, merely in the realm of invisible fact. Whether these invisible facts actually exist is, of course, a matter for the seeker to explore. The fact is that happiness itself has always been an ambiguous word, whose terms have rarely been defined. It is never deduced, for one thing, how it simply lifts into vision, or how it merely passes out of sight. The heart of the matter is that, in his hopes for more, man simply transfers his inclinations and expectations onto something which cannot support. Sensibilities are always affected disparately by the conditions under which they are imposed, and colored in proportion to the culture of the mind concerned.

The value of psychic culture, and its altitude, is the degree of refinement it brings to the contemplation of even the most ordinary of things. Whatever significance the splendour of the stars, or the ministration of the moon, upon a peaceful summer night may in reality possess, is always outmeasured by the mind itself, in whose depths inhere the aphrodisiacs of another vision and another gleam. Of psychic culture it may be said, therefore, that it possesses the longer life, for its advantage lies in its ability to elevate itself without the extravagance of superfluous areas of support. It is in the activation of processes such as these that some enduring perspective may be found, as life ascends from its lowest rungs, with the smell of earth clinging still thereto, up to the highest levels of psychic elevation, with neither cloud nor thunder, and with no earthly strings attached.

If life is to measure up to its expectations, therefore, it must be translated into terms which ultimately make sense. As it is, in its passage through space-time, the psyche merely skirts upon the edges and fringes of reality, not comprehending where the head lies, or the tail. That it is being systematically plundered of its very marrow by intangible forces over which it possesses no control, with each moment, is not something upon which it is accustomed to regularly reflect. As each moment contracts relentlessly within, so ebbs the opportunity for coming to grips with an adversary who, if often felt, is never seen. Man's fascination with the good life inefficiently conceals the fact that with each breath his grip upon his possessions loosens its clutch, relinquishing that which never really was his. The ultimate hollowness of things, when it is discovered to be so, results in an extremely hollow feeling indeed. It is at this juncture that the need for something substantial, to populate the gnawing vacuity, becomes alarmingly acute. It is an ironic twist of life, however, that when affluence leaves nothing to be desired that the real desire appears. To survive merely on memory and dreams is as insubstantial a diet as any to be found, as life drifts slowly down the drain, unable an adequate diet to obtain.

That the trials and tribulations through which it may pass is really the stuff of life, from which the soundest form of experience may be wrung, and as such provide an endless source of strength, is not something, however, with which the psyche is easily consoled. Little credit is ever accorded the fact that happiness is something which does not rest upon the passing scene for its reality, but proceeds from an inner source, based upon a long-term view. Even less credit is accorded the fact that the life of morality and restraint presents more enduring satisfactions than the paltry pleasures which pass by the name of human happiness. To expect physical pleasure to endure, in a scheme of things which by its very nature does not endure, is merely to invite defeat. That other alternatives exist, even if not visibly embodied in external fact, is something which may provide consolation enough, ushering into life's relentless passage a limitless content.

The prospect of endless struggle, without an enduring object, erupts into inanity. To every game must come an end. An endless game of life is something which the mind cannot conceive. Constant movement in a circuit only serves to wear the well-springs down. Even if changes of abode and scene reduce surfeit, or excite the mind, the euphoria never lasts for long. Only giddy youth can afford to be always on the bound, ensnared by each seductive sight and sound. The test of maturity, however, lies in the balance it has reached between aimless movement and senseless immobility. The degree of

liberation in a mind does not rest upon the number of freedom slogans it can shout, but lies in the measure to which it has its superfluous wants and needs drastically reduced.

The vacuity within, and lack of something purposeful to do, makes of time man's heaviest load to bear. Even when occupied otherwise, the vacuity within lies ill-concealed, peeping forth in-between the framework of hours left to spare. The much utilized excuse that there is never time to spare, is a sorry disguise for concealing a vacuity which becomes more vacant as the hectic race to fill it flounders on. Without sufficient motive for carrying on its life, the mind perceives no other recourse but to turn in on itself. Fallacious philosophies add to the confusion by implying that time and tide will automatically succour all of mankind in the end. The implication becomes fallacious in that nothing ever materializes of itself, nor does a race of supermen exist who possess the capacity to lift up the whole world by its boots. The fact that life must be consigned to no future worthy of the name, therefore, becomes a ghastly reverie.

Without a mark an arrow quivers to an empty fall. If no satisfactory cause for living may be advanced other than dreams of superficial success, arrows will continue to quiver to their empty falls. The dreary emptiness with which whole societies stagger on attests the pathetic lack of some resource to bolster them at all. In this context, time becomes the greatest killer of the race, for it is always there, on the job, one step ahead. In seeking polite diversions to kill time, therefore, man comes merely second best, for time is always there to kill him first.

The fact is that so few possess the necessary psychic-banks to fall back on in times of emptiness and stress. Entanglement in life's litter dislocates the mind from any higher destiny that may exist, a distraction which only leads to the agony of schizophrenic abnormalities, unable to make head or tail of what life is all about. Yet it is in man alone that an instinct lives to aspire and reflect. Reflection upon the problem of what he is to make of his life, with no fundamental significance in terms of an enduring futurity, becomes a sombre meal for the aspiring mind. On the other hand, if the thoughtless mind has no conception of what this may mean, it is because it is completely alien to its enclosed vision of the mechanics of life. Failing to grasp its impact, such a mind has not even begun to cross the threshold of that which starts life on the path to earthly transcendence.

The legacy of a reflective mind is that it is the one sure resource, wading out from life's rubble to the crystal find. It is, moreover, a priceless possession in that it is able to exist upon a diet so frugal as mere thought. The value of its reach is manifold, comprehending as it does that, in so far as an enduring futurity and any higher destiny is concerned, the surest way to savour its reality lies in the capacity, not to jog around the world in search, but to settle down as best it can, and *still* the mind within its erstwhile home. This, it seems, even the ancient Chinese used to know, so as to simply say that without moving a step (out of doors) the whole world may be known.

If earth has manifold joys to spare, it is also true that in the inevitable pattern of things these joys, through endless repetition, pall, and delight the mind no more. That which once was splendour in the first cloud-burst of spring, was joy and thunder, becomes with age just frost and hunger, with no enticement whatsoever in the winter of life's days. Since of pitfalls and anxiety, of transience and mortality, does the very design of earthly things consist, it seems that a total form of liberation from this fatal inadequacy is to be envisioned, to rectify the capacity for loss. A liberation with no thunder, and with no earthly strings attached.

The rude fact remains, however, that it seems to be a matter of compulsion that the overload of life must drag itself through the primordial slime, all the way up, before the sorry truth of things can sink into the mind. First to crawl, then stumble and fall, discovering the difference between black and white, and all the shades between, with nothing more left to imagine, this it seems is the sorry lesson which life would have man learn. Since the earthly plane is not for perfection made, but merely an

operational base, attachment to it serves no useful cause, because perfection once attained translates the mind to a less distressing plane.

Meaning and purpose may be written into life only after some otherworldly vision has revealed a satisfactory reply, being the only reliable tonic which can stimulate man's jaded appetite towards a loftier reach. Failure to possess this vision only consigns man to crawl on ant-like in his lowly fate, forfeiting the opportunity for achievement of a supreme kind, of being admitted to the highest forms of society, of transcendental minds, enduring within the everlasting tenure of the overall expanse.

Between the rugged elevation of nature in the raw and the man-made molehills of the plain lies an immense gulf. Yet there are worse places to be consigned to than the lowly earth, which is the supreme testing ground for inner worth. In such a context it becomes a waste of spirit to rebel, for if life is neither heaven nor is it hell. Endowed with its singular resource the mind may soar aloft, regardless of the sorry landscape which it is dumped within.

To live in the knowledge that life has meaning, that progress is being made, that some enduring goal awaits ahead, is man's greatest peace of mind. It endows hardship with a purpose, provides compensation for present inadequacies, makes of life a continuous ascent, and affords to approaching age some solace and a measure of content. That this is possible is already a wonder in itself, for man is first and foremost a product of the earth, not some special agent sent from outer space. And for a local product to be able to transcend its mere locality and launch itself into an otherworldly frame, is a feat which only man and mind can do.

If man cannot upon a mountain live for long, therefore, but must retreat down to the lowly plain again, to do battle, his one sure recourse is to do the best he can to regularly recall his singular destiny, and hold up high his head above the swirling shrouds.

ORIGINS

From of old the origin of life and the universe has fascinated enquiring minds. With the speculations of science concerning this subject we are not here concerned, considering that its conclusions are based upon a purely physical interpretation of the evolution of life. Since it is not in the domain of science to shed light upon the psychic realm, its high-priests and devotees not being on the scene from the start to observe the origin of life at firsthand, any speculations to this effect become tiresomely futile.

First Cause Speculation, et al

More touching are the attempts of religion in its manifold forms to resolve the issue by the production of 'authoritative' revelations, and so forth. It is customary for the majority of religions to postulate a First Cause, as well as claim the pre-existence of inherently immortal souls, which proceed from their Source originally pure. This purity becomes sullied through passage in the world, although the souls themselves may return to their source of origin once rehabilitation has been achieved. Even religions which uphold the belief in reincarnation claim that immortal souls, after their initial contamination in the mundane sphere, may return to union with the supreme principle. The puzzle, however, is why these reincarnating monads, even if they infinitely abound, appear to increase rather than decrease. If it is to be assumed that the universe is immeasurably old, reunion of these monads with the primordial source should have achieved such purpose by this time. The population explosion demands substantial explanations in this context.

The inadequacy of concepts such as these lies in staking their claim for *original* purity, considering that if the soul was a pure creation its incorruptibility should have been assured. If the origin of the soul is credited to the craftsmanship of a master-hand, the existence of corruption in the world demands substantial explanations once again. If the immanent First Cause is assumed to be by nature good, or even neutral, there must be some sound explanation how corruption arose in the first place, and why it was necessary for souls to expose themselves to life in the world at all. At least it needs to be defined in a more sophisticated sense than the summary assertion that angelic rebellion sowed the seeds of discord. On the other hand, philosophical arguments which assert that good and evil are merely relative to a context, being only different sides of the same coin, are simply not sophisticated enough to bear sustained analysis.

Human speculations regarding the origin of life are inevitably conditioned by the inadequacies of the life situation. It is in the nature of man to seek, and even demand, the universe to explain itself in terms of an order which console. In matters of religion, this has led to exaggerated claims, to much emotionalism involving projections of Father figures, and other theological concepts upon which religious structures are based. It is a moot point whether religious pioneers, were they alive, would be willing to accept, or prepared to admit any connection with, the crude distortions which even today are proliferated in their name.

If the speculative instinct of humanity is at fault in attempting to populate the vacuum, it is not the business of a sound religion to vouch for its validity or underwrite its claims. In any case, any sound religion could do better than fall a prey to the exploitations of speculative minds, by whose conduct religious values become ensnared, so as to foment discord, when their real purpose is to promote concord.

The Buddhist attitude, in this context, is that even if the truth is bitter, as it usually is, confrontation still remains. Rejection of more perspicuous alternatives does not remove factual evidence from the scene. Even if it is the common preference to accept only what the individual mind desires, agreeable to certain predispositions and conceits, the consequences of mere geography and custom, the fact remains that all speculation regarding a First Cause is derived from the second-hand context of hearsay.

The obsession with concepts of the universe as emanating from a First Cause stems from the human desire to resolve all difficulties by postulating ultimate unity in diversity. Even when persistent duality or “triplicity” (good, evil, and neutrality) stares man in the face he resists accepting the fact since it conflicts with his cherished notions of universal order, the passion to perceive only what affords consolation and hope to his afflicted sensibilities. Outraged sensibilities, however, are no certain gauge for the penetration of ultimate realities. A structure of the universe would be a poor product if based merely on the vacillating emotions of the heart. If the inherent duality in things is a difficult fact to accept, it is not something which it is in human power to eliminate, strive as it may.

The Realistic Perspective

Buddhism's stand is not a rejection of Creation as such, because creation is always in process. It is only in matters of First Causes that it begs not to express opinions which cannot be substantiated in fact. To claim knowledge of absolute beginnings would be a farce, since for Buddhism all beginnings are related to their contexts, and only in such relative contexts emerge. In fact the familiar Buddhist response to those thirsting for an explanation of absolute origins is to state that a man pierced by an arrow and lying on his back is in no condition to enquire regarding the origins of the arrow. His first concern would be to extricate the arrow and heal his wound. Since the life situation is such, an enquiry into absolute origins at this juncture, incapacitated as he is, degenerates into total irrelevance, dislocated completely out of context. Until such time as man has completely recovered from his incapacity it would be ridiculous to assert claims which there are no way to substantiate in fact.

It is true, however, that Buddhism asserts the existence of celestial beings who from the higher realms descend to earth as the aeon evolves anew, to repopulate the world. How they subsist on bliss at first, but after having partaken of coarse food how gradually their condition deteriorates until they become ordinary human beings. Never, however, is all this origination attributed to a First Cause. The present aeon, and the beings therein, are only left-overs from the preceding one, projected afresh by the continuous process of interrelated causes and effects into an inevitable futurity. When reference to a world-beginning is made by Buddhism, therefore, the beginning is only relative to a context, since no absolute origins can be traced whereby beings (becomings) mazed in ignorance and fettered with a thirst for being stray and wander.

By its stand that all life lacks a unique soul Buddhism avoids the pitfalls and contradictions attendant on these speculative concepts. The familiar argument for the existence of a permanent soul is that its essence lies concealed behind the external sheath or sheaths of self. Buddhism, however, while recognizing the multifold nature of the self's plurality sees no basis for postulating the existence of something substantially more. Whatever self arises is only the apparition of a momentary mode. The sense of a soul-like identity is created by sense-contact, whereby consciousness is automatically multiplied, its multiplication in diversity dependent on the projection of preceding moments. When anyone of these modes is in action it is not to be reckoned as another, it is only recognized by the name of that particular personality which prevails.

In the Hindu systems the life-monads (purusas) are claimed to be inactive, separate, and eternal. They do not move, it is only their presence which ‘excites’ matter (prakriti) whereby the world of movement is created. To the enlightened Buddhist this can only remain an unsubstantiated claim. The Buddhist

experience is that this so-called life-monad is a subtle 'excess' which itself arises through the ferment of sense-contact. To the eternalist concepts of the Hindus Buddhism supplants a dynamic universe whose nature is characterized by psychic incoherence, of psychic plurality rather than individual singularity. The jumble of sense-impressions called self inevitably disintegrates into psychic fragments and sub-selves, at death departing their separate disembodied ways.

The reincarnating life-monad remains constant in the Hindu systems, only its mask of personality is changed. In the Buddhist rebirth-context the mask is all there is, the product not of a single life-monad but a split of four. Moreover, this quadruplicity arises in the present by way of occasion, and it is incorrect therefore to claim that they existed heretofore. It would be the height of arrogance for this quadruplicity to claim that they know anything of the beginning of things, since they did not at that distant time exist. A re-embodied consciousness can recall only what has been experienced, to the extent of time when its existence became a fact. The futility of speculating upon the ultimate origin of things lies in the universe's age, because no matter how old the individual rebirth-consciousness may be in its traverse through space-time it is still merely a drop in the ocean in comparison with the overall expanse. Since the origin of the individual stream of consciousness springs up as a psychic-offshoot from some other stream (which may have attained emancipation since), even if it possesses total recall, it can recollect only to the point of its own origin as an offshoot, limited in depth and range as such, before which it did not exist.

The emergence of plurality – Streams of Selves

In its delineation of the process of dependent origination (*paṭicca samuppāda*), which is generally accepted at face value by the orthodox without grasping the implications, Buddhism states its case for the emergence of personality, commencing with ignorance. In the Hindu systems ignorance (*avijjā*) is also recorded as being at the root of human bondage, accompanied by *kamma* and rebirth. In this respect, therefore, Buddha was making no original contribution to the generally accepted knowledge of his times, and because of this it is usual to refer to Buddhism as being merely an offshoot of the older tradition such as it was. Since it is not the purpose here to refute this claim, in view of the fact that Hinduism itself borrowed from Buddhism, it is clear that Buddha by his formula of dependent origination was out to reveal something which had to deal not merely with the representation of matters already in the air, but to provide a fresh insight into the origination of personality, fourfold in scope.

The First Stream

The first stream of personality is composed of ignorance (*avijjā*), psychic tendencies (*sankhāras*), desire (*taṇhā*), grasping (*upādāna*), and becoming (*bhāva*). This 'first' personality signifies the rebirth entity which relinks in the womb, providing the basic material from which the fresh organism is to evolve, without the presence of which no magnetism exists to attract the physical elements to coalesce around. When it is said that this 'first' stream is composed of ignorance it does not imply that ignorance here is a causal imperative, it is merely a latent condition of negativity. It is in view of its not being aware of the processes by which life is perpetuated, and the way to its control, that this 'first' stream is impermeated with ignorance. When it is said that the stream is composed of psychic tendencies it implies that through ignorance aggregates of impulsion arise and multiply even as bubbles in a stream, the froth of life. The aggregates of psychic tendencies being in themselves instinct with life emit their own peculiar radar-like sensitivity, of consciousness. In the first stream the relinking-consciousness (*paṭisandhi viññāna*) is not mentioned because it is taken far granted, since there can be no psychic life without consciousness being present as a lode. These psychic tendencies are impregnated with qualities of desire, grasping, and becoming in the sense of perpetual change.

The Second Stream

The second stream of personality is composed of a newly-arisen consciousness (viññāna), psycho-physicality (nāma-rūpa), sense-organs (salāyatana), contact (phassa) and feeling (vedanā). Consciousness here is newly arisen, because once the 'first' stream relinks and fuses in the womb it becomes dormant, its activity being relegated to the evolving embryonic consciousness which, like a second torch, is lit by its predecessor's flame. Psycho-physicality here implies in this second-stream context the arising in the womb of the embryo's part intangible data (nāma) and part tangible substance (rūpa) which evolve into the sense-organs, which become sensitive to contact and the feelings which arise therefrom. This second stream is purely negative in nature, but as it evolves in the womb it is laying the groundwork and structure for a more positive position due at birth.

The Third Stream

The third stream of personality is composed of desire, grasping, becoming, ignorance, and psychic tendencies. With this third stream the positive aspect of life comes to the fore, and represents the life-force in active engagement with the external world. The five sets of factors involved would seem to be similar to the first stream. However, the difference lies in the line-up. In the first stream, ignorance heads the list, due to the fact that in that context the life-flow is negative, where desire is contained merely in a muted form. In the third stream desire heads the list, with ignorance and psychic tendencies relegated to the shadowy background. This is so because in the everyday business of life it is desire which predominates, enforcing its will upon the psycho-physical scene. Feelings (whether they be tangible or intangible, gross or subtle, painful, pleasant, or indifferent) beget 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. Attached to what it wants, the flow of consciousness gravitates accordingly, and the direction of its futurity is thus determined. Whatever factors go to make psychic life possible are represented by the five aggregates of personality (pañcupādānakkhandha): namely, form (rūpa), feeling (vedana), perception (saññā), psychic tendencies (sankhāras), and consciousness (viññāna), and are not to be detached therefrom, attached together like glue and functioning as a unit. If there is form there is consciousness of it. A feeling is always a conscious feeling, as a perception is always a conscious perception. Even when the physical form perishes some astral form arises to replace the deceased. The fivefold factors are attached in themselves and their interaction produces personality. It is only for purposes of analysis that the Buddhist scheme divides them into five, when they actually function as a whole. To be ignorant, to desire, to grasp, to become, to contact, and to feel obviously imply a conscious strata active in the manifold modes and forms. In the line-up of all these streams of personality stress is laid only on the predominant characteristics of the particular set involved to emphasize its basic thrust, with its dependence on a preceding link. If the factors in different streams coincide it does not imply a repetition of the same but signify a distinct set.

The Fourth Stream

The fourth stream of personality is composed of consciousness, psycho-physicality, sense-organs, contact, and feeling. This fourth stream arises as a consequence of the third stream's continual impact, and is the subtle reflex signified by the sleeping self and dreams, the shadow-self of the positive third stream's everyday push. As environmental data impinges upon the sense-door field, impressions register and are absorbed, creating their own fresh levels of consciousness even as they accrue. That is why if consciousness is a condition for the arising of psycho-physicality, psycho-physicality in reverse is also a condition for the arising of consciousness. Dependent origination is never a one-way flow but a traffic of reciprocity and duality, of interactive and composite blend. The line-up of the fourth stream's factors, although similar to the second stream's, differs in that it is the direct result of the third stream, whereas the second stream is a direct descendant of the first. Since all these aggregates

interact they fructify as a living flow and emit their radar-like sensitivity called consciousness, doubling back and forth perfumed with ignorance of their origin, unaware that life is but a process of contact and self-creation from one moment to the next. In the case of the second stream its arising is due to the 'perfuming' initiated by the rebirth entity as it descends into a womb, which even as it perfumes the fresh organism that arises is perfumed in turn. In the case of the fourth stream its reproduction arises through the third stream's contact with the contemporary scene and differs considerably as to data when compared to the embryonic potential of the earlier second stream.

"Quadruplicity" - the Norm

It has been customary to interpret the complex structure of dependent-origination only in the context of a single stream of life, pursuing its course from the past into the present and on into the future. Never has it dawned upon Abhidhammic scholars to recognize the linkage as a fourfold-complex, held together by the organism during life, but fracturing into distinct streams at death. It is from this "quadruplicity" that the Buddhist analysis of split-personality (*anattā*) derives its significance and impact, without which it would be nothing but an unintelligible claim, deteriorating into mere meaningless reiteration.

In the fourfold personality-complex the first stream represents the antecedent basic character with all its rebirth experiences intact, structured and conditioned by the remote past. This is what is sometimes referred to as the *pāramī*-self, the self of character-formation, the syndrome whereby an individual is recognized to be by 'nature' charitable, moral, frugal, wise, energetic, patient, truthful, resolute, compassionate, and calm, qualities which are never exhausted by repeated rebirth. Although much becomes expended in life's passage, the individual character of this stream and its manner of reacting to stimuli basically remain. The second, third and fourth streams, however, are the effluvia of the present existence, conditioned by the socio-environmental complex. With the second stream consciousness in embryo evolves with all its early trappings. The third stream represents the developed ego, with all the arrogance and identification it projects towards the environmental context. The sleeping self is the fourth stream, with all its reflex portfolio of delusions and dreams.

When Buddhism states that the self, or soul, by which man claims his essence and originality is an amorphous-plurality, the product of sense-contact; it is referring to the facile mode by which consciousness (second, third, and fourth streams) of selfhood arises, by way of occasions of contact, without which there would be no arising thereof. It is in view of this constant multiplication of consciousness by contact (*phassa*) that the psychic portfolio increases, until a quantitative split occurs. For Buddhism psycho-physical contact is the prime agent for the phenomenon of psychic-parthenogenesis. It is obvious that the third stream plays a prominent role in this phenomenon because it is the outgoing positive complex, the 'real' self with which the individual identifies, habitualized as he is to the realm of his sense-contacts, other than which is dismissed as being irrelevant and unworthy of his serious concern. Actually, however, this is the most superficial of his 'selves', relying as it does merely on immediate externals for its orientation and understanding of life. The impressionable third stream is constantly being impressed by superficiality, unable to discern that there is not very much to be impressed by, no matter how culturally developed the sensations may be. It rarely dawns upon it that a really superior state of things belongs only to a realm far removed from the vulnerabilities of the sense-context.

Rarely is it discerned that the first business of the day should be devoted to the grappling of the problem of inner roots, minus the delusion of the ego that it struts around always the master of itself. Only then can the ego claim superiority for itself. Due to the split-level complexity of the fourfold-personality structure, the innermost first may be innately something which the third egoistic stream rejects, or strives to reject. As a consequence of this inner tension much discord appears upon the psychic scene. The contemporary preoccupation with passing events stems from the overdue

importance attributed to immediate reality. While conceding the psycho-physical impact of the present, however, the reality of experience garnered from the past (lives) is rarely accorded the attention it deserves, though it continues to live in the present without which the present (consciousness) would not exist. This does not recommend a morbid infatuation with the past, but rather suggests that unless adequate allowance is made for its subconscious impact upon the present, and its potentiality developed in a way to do it justice, the attempt to attain a deeper understanding of the psychic process will always be attended by defeat.

Since the egoistic mind (third stream) believes only what it wills, it is not the business of religion to make concessions to human arrogance by offering palatable explanations to the riddles of the universe, without invitation and without applause. Facts are stated merely for what they are, and acceptance or rejection always remains completely an individual affair.

What the duality, or quadruplicity, of the psychic phenomenon contains may be imagined when consideration is extended to the first stream, where already exist myriad conflicting kammic accumulations from previous existences, as man and beast, male and female. The hybrid character of the psychic heritage within a single organism is so complex that no oversimplification of bio-genetical theory is sufficient to explain its emergence. Since humans have existed previously in various forms as animals, and with interchange of sex, it is obvious that the overload of all these psycho-physical patterns is carried over into the present, illustrating the divergent 'abnormalities' which continue to erupt upon the human scene. The accumulated kammic pressures past and present, contained in the junkyard of the individual psycho-physical unit are such that any latent factor may be jolted into prominence and temporarily confound the rest. Death-moments and other traumatic episodes in the life-process become crucial in this respect, capable of twisting the whole course out of turn. A patient study of this subject, therefore, leads to a broader insight and reduces the perplexity with which contemporary psychotherapy is faced.

There is always the tendency in human affairs to foist the responsibility onto something external to the self. The rise of psychic offshoots, however, is completely an individual affair, and the search for scapegoats in no way alleviates the issue. If antecedent kamma provides the initial impulse, fresh volition creates the conditions for their continuity, structuring the pattern for futurity. In this sense the projection is mechanically impartial and faithful to form. Produced by self-action, interaction, or even inaction, it would be perverse to indict externals as the culprit responsible for the emission of psychic plurality and all the ills to which it is heir. Since birth into the world immediately exposes each stream of life to the factors of transience, inadequacy, and split-personality, no matter how beneficially endowed the kammic individual may be involvement in the sphere of everyday affairs must inevitably reap anew its harvest of contacts and the consequent expense that they bring. It is with this margin of uncertainty in mind that the sage surrounds himself with equanimity, to offset the possibility of his being lured into actions which may rebound to his discredit.

It is a well established fact that sensations possess a heavier impact upon consciousness than the dry debates of reason. Without the right restraint of reason, however, there is no limit to the ease whereby consciousness is swept away by the whirlpools of sense. The passions lying dormant: in the psyche reactivate under the slightest provocation, particularly when their temporary quiescence may mislead the mind into assuming that it has long since become immune. As the mind rattles on its way all provocations become grist for its mill, parting the under brush to pounce upon its prey; if reason proposes remedies it enforces none. Each battle for mastery splits the mind in twain. So rolls the struggle for emancipation indecisively on, enthralled by internal splits.

Even if the individual is actually a walking plurality, as long as he is alive he is always reckoned as a unity responsible for his actions and choice. Whatever is accomplished as a unit, any offshoots which spontaneously arise necessarily partake of the conditions from which they spring. Offshoots do not

merely inherit a few facets of the 'original' character or 'first' stream, they are unmistakably perfumed by the total impress, even as a casket is impregnated with the perfume of the toiletry it contains. With the disintegration of the body psychic offshoots take off with their, 'parents' impress, conditioned as such. The fundamental importance of offshoots proceeding from superior conditioning is obvious, for they sail off with a flying start. As long as they hold together in one organic whole offshoots may be conditioned for good or ill, but once death splits them totally apart the choice no longer exists, for the choice has already been made and the offshoot develops consequently upon those lines for which the groundwork and life-pattern has antecedently been laid. Until such time, of course, when the offshoot after having rebuilt itself through repeated rebirth readjusts its experience and redirects its destiny at will. The point at issue here is that all offshoots are coloured by the psychic dye of their 'original' from the very start, for better or for worse until death does them part, and as such become products of hereditary necessity rather than of choice. Unfettered choice comes into play only at a later date, when physical disintegration launches them off into the unknown and they find themselves completely on their own, alone.

The lesson of experience asserts that psychic plurality interacts when organically embodied, even if it may exercise independent unilateral traits betimes. The new-born babe's brain, even if fundamentally 'empty' at first and not ethically responsible for any conscious activity, nevertheless absorbs kammic liabilities and assets filtered from the 'original' nucleus of rebirth-consciousness. Correspondingly, the environment lays siege to its evolving character and reconditions the setup. Past kamma, present kamma, and environmental conditions all contribute to the evolving product, for good or ill, in accordance with the fluctuating contexts of the life-situation complex.

As the psychic framework gathers momentum it inevitably becomes more externalized, and pressures increase the psychic load. As a consequence, the instinct to survive as a force in its own right excites the ego and asserts itself through the brain. By structure the organism's main refuelling centre, the brain thrives on the data which sense-contact supplies. It is inevitable, therefore, that it is in the brain that the ego comes to reign supreme, becoming thereby the most substantial obstacle to the liberation of the mind. The ego's attachment to itself is evident at all times. Actually, however, of all the individual parts the ego is the most uninteresting, for it is little more than a jumble of illusions and conceits. Unless subjected to a higher tribunal the ego always appears to be the hollow and pathetic showpiece that it is. Being merely an offshoot (third stream) of environmental contact, and on its own nothing much to speak of, it would be life's greatest blessing if human society were spared the fatuous posturing with which the volatile ego is so abundantly endowed.

With all this in mind, to oversimplify the life-situation by attributing singularity to man is not to do the subject justice. Relative to a context as man is, with offshoots galore; in no way does he present himself as an absolute. By misrepresenting a conventional fact and endowing it with absolute qualities (soul) attention is distracted from the main objective, which should be the perception of ultimate realities. By unduly focusing upon a partial truth the mind becomes smugly satisfied, and this form of satisfaction is as intractable as it is illusory, leading vision astray. The bias of the individual ego and its patterns of thought is that anticipation already decides the issue from the very start, and consequently its illusions are rarely perceived for what they are.

Brain & the Actual Seat of Consciousness

Consciousness when ensconced within the brain is always standing on its dignity, consigning the subconscious to the humility of its position in the navel underground. The authority of the brain, however, lies only in what is locked up in itself, the second-hand data imbibed from the environmental context. Of the larger area of past lives it no inkling has. The brain's domain, therefore, is always a circumscribed world in this respect. While conceding the obvious significance of the brain and its bustle in matters of everyday life, it is not the sole receptacle of communication.

Adepts in concentration bypass this vehicle and reroute consciousness through a deeper zone at navel-depth. Even in sleep the brain is largely left out in the cold as the subconscious sweeps it from view. In the astral world ghosts and celestials do not possess brains, and function the better for it in a realm, where it can be more of a hindrance rather than a help. The fact is that the brain, while being a necessary vehicle for the human organism to coordinate the life-process, has been misconstrued to be the life-process itself.

Focus at Navel-pit

Physically the human being may not be much, but even the humblest of the species possesses a magnetic field within the navel-area, once the nucleic centre of the embryonic void, which continues to be the invisible mainspring of the organic whole. It is in slumber, however, that this field comes completely into its own, as its suction exerts its pull upon consciousness, drawing it out of the brain down into the sleeping state at navel-pit. Although the sleeping self is too full of psychic under-drift to be cognizant of this fact, without this nether field the life-flow would summarily collapse due to lack of repose. It is in this nether field that the organism's salvation lies, after a hard day's work to rest and recuperate.

Failure to recognize this split-level, in the psychic-complex has retarded the development of psychology, which reaches its limit of incomprehension when faced with more devious clinical disorders of the mind. It is a fact which is rarely accorded its due regard that all beings are split personalities. It is only to the degree that he is able to shrug off his maladies that saves the individual from the asylum and makes him able to carry on his life as though nothing in the world is ever amiss. On the other hand, in that this split-level rumbles forever on and restlessly struggles for breath in its kammic depths, some form of escape from the bondage of the split is sought; and drugs, drink, violence, or sex bursts upon the scene.

To offset the havoc, the psyche will have to draw on all the inner resources it can lay its hands upon. This may be done even without knowing from where they proceed, unconsciously. In this context it may not be essential to recall these resources (from previous lives) *explicitly*, it is enough that they exist in the nether levels, whereby they may reactivate automatically when occasions of crisis demand, with the provision of antecedent guidelines. Attached as consciousness is by habit to the brain, it is plagued by vacillation, doubt, and discontent. Once it is able to integrate itself at the navel-pit it becomes calm. Tethered to the brain consciousness teeters on thoughts, flits or frets. Ensnared at the navel pit it is offered the opportunity only to *experience*. If thought colours action its experience and direction becomes inevitably second-hand, one step at a remove from the source. A more direct and firsthand approach would dispense of the necessity for such brain-induced colour, and this the concentrated techniques of psychic adepts provides, expediting a psychic frequency higher than the human.

In this context, the first concentrated state of absorption (*pathama jhāna*) which the adept accomplishes retains reason and reflection. Yet as he develops a more refined frequency his consciousness leaves behind in its wake not only reasoning and reflection, but also bliss (*second jhāna*) and wellbeing (*third jhāna*), until in the fourth *jhāna* only one-pointed refinement remains. Due to its impassive poise, this is the ideal state for the firsthand apperception of all phenomena, whereby things are perceived as they really are.

In view of the brevity of all things, the tendency to rely unduly upon the immediate returns of worldly involvement rather than the development of ultimate possibilities only leads to eventual dismay. If man seeks positions which are secure, nevertheless he must be content to accept circumstances which do not endure. If in his search he turns to religious values for ultimate support, he more often than not arouses only the disdain of the more worldly-wise. So cynical have the worldly-wise become that

the religious instinct is dismissed out of hand as being the opiate of the unsophisticated, the product of foolishness and fear. Rarely is religion granted the benefit of the doubt that it may contain some connection with ultimate substance, established through the extension of a psychic device plugged in. Driven into a defensive context by external attacks, all that religion can reply is that the proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof. Even in religion success justifies itself.

To return to the matter of psychic offshoots, logical questions arise concerning their separation and different destinies at death. With no certain evidence to mark their course, problems of identification arise: they may be reborn without knowing from where they proceed, with no case history in hand as a distinguishing mark. And such is the nature of things. It is in view of this very amorphousness of identity that the Buddhist argument of split-personality (anattā) asserts that all compounded things lack definite demarcation lines. Even if granted that an individual experiences continuity of consciousness, a certain generous measure of inference is involved, and this is so because the genesis of self consciousness and its passage through space-time includes gaps and lapses of memory, so that the only reliable record for its sense of singularity lies in its almost total dependence upon relocating its environment from moment to moment for reassurance thereof. Identity, therefore, is an amorphous quantity which must be continually reassured by sense-contact or else its bearings are lost.

This is easily observed on awaking from sleep in which dreams have dug devious inroads. Dreams push consciousness into various space-time contexts which for the duration thereof possess just as much reality as waking life. To reorient itself once awake, therefore, consciousness looks around and is reassured that the waking state is reality, thereby disposing of the sleeping state and its dreams as mere irrationality. If death, however, were to occur in the dream-state it is obvious that the subject would identify itself completely with the data of the dream-drift, possessing no means of reorienting itself, until such time as it discovers that it is 'dead' and now drifts on in disembodied state. In so far as offshoots are concerned, moreover, it will have no knowledge of any, all of them having sailed off in different ways.

Nostalgia is always part and parcel of the psyche's make-up. Associations of the past are for psychic offshoots the very breath of life, since they originated therefrom. Identification with these areas of contact, therefore, contributes little or nothing to the stimulation of serious motivation or commitment to more enduring goals. Offshoots of recent origin are thus spiritually light-weight, a defect which is only in keeping with their lack of psychic substance, a substance which accrues and possesses cumulative effect only after repeated rebirth. It would be too much to expect that such offshoots should behave or react in any but the most rudimentary manner to the situations and complexities of life. In matters of daily life offshoots are generally facile spokesmen, lacking premonitions of a subterranean sort. In the case of an offshoot of recent origin that is reborn, and which subsequently dies, developing offshoots of its own in turn, the 'main-stream' will not differ substantially from the immediate offshoots because in itself the main-stream possesses only a single past life to which to refer. Traits such as having committed suicide in the past life will persist into the present and almost inevitably repeat themselves, with the same conclusion. The psyche is in fact conditioned like a rotor, whose cycle is indented with particular items peculiar to its constitution, repeating their effects when these space-time positions are reached.

Another element in support of the fact that psychic offshoots react according to groove is that, not possessing the kammic potential to rise to a higher plane, they are very shortly reborn into the earthly circuit again, and in a region at no great distance from the previous abode. Since only a brief interval intervenes between the previous existence and the present life, memories of events in the past remain fresh and are therefore easily recalled. Recollection becomes difficult for a stream of consciousness which, after having withdrawn to other distant planes for great periods of time, eventually gravitates into a womb. A lapse of memory is only to be expected in such a case. It is only when some striking

feature from the past is accidentally re-contacted in the present environment that a subterranean chord responds.

Kamma as Cause & Effect

The difficulty in recalling previous births at a late date is because the data pertaining thereto has receded into the collective background, condensed to such a density that each life resembles in dimension an almost invisible speck of dust. The feasibility of pinpointing such a target is a highly improbable feat for the peripheral mind to achieve, and vision of these specks may arise only after the mind has been trained in concentration techniques, so that it is able to expand these specks into their actual proportionate size. It is in these specks that kamma is packed, and the density is so wide and various that, as has been mentioned heretofore, any portion may assert itself through random contact (generally at death) so as to jolt the evolving life process with a seemingly unprecedented twist. However, it is not as unprecedented as it seems, since the precedent for it already exists in embryo within the kammic past. If it seems unjust that a certain adverse burst of kamma may twist in a moment the individual's destiny out of joint, after it has been progressing on a prosperous track for so long, it is only one of the hazards to which the psychic wayfarer is always exposed, and possesses no choice but to accept what is an inevitable consequence of the natural scheme.

It is in this context that mind-control is of such value in situations such as these, for it trains itself to be always on the alert so as to fend itself from any untoward calamities which pounce upon the psychic scene. Even if the psychic apparatus succumbs to the random assaults on its preserve, however, whatever wholesome kamma it has accumulated to its credit in the past is also never lost, but is relegated to the background for the present, and may reassert itself when favourable opportunity affords. The active agency of kamma, however, is only one factor among myriad latent possibilities which condition the psyche. There are twenty-four modes of conditionality in this respect, which by juxtaposition may be multiplied to infinity, and need not burden this context. It would suffice if the mind makes allowances for the so-called 'irrational' elements in life, by which humanity is perpetually encompassed. If the psyche were to live in a state of perpetual alert, the possibility of being overwhelmed by such random gusts becomes proportionately reduced. And this is only as it should be.

If the structure of life, for a major part, is based on kammic action as the originator and perpetuator of the human predicament, it may be contended that this does not explain why those who are innocent should suffer, in wars and mishaps, collectively, for something which they have in no way been the cause. The fact, however, is that even if these human beings may be innocent in this life, they may not have been so in their previous ones, wherein conditions which they created laid the groundwork for their present misfortune. In this context, the Buddhist scriptures abound with examples of such cases, a familiar one being the death of Elder Moggallana, one of Buddha's chief disciples, who, the Buddha himself admitted, in his present life had done nothing to merit his head being bashed in by bandits, but, perished according to his deserve for having killed his parents in like manner many an aeon ago.

It is generally understood that kamma, even if it does not take effect immediately, manifests itself eventually whenever opportunity occurs. The conditions for certain kinds of kamma to activate must be appropriately present for it to manifest. That is, if a person possesses kamma which entails that he drown, then it is obvious that if he lives in a desert the conditions are such as not to provide the opportunity. Unless, of course, drowning in a quicksand serves as an adequate substitute.

If it is possible for some types of kamma to be adroitly side-stepped, there are other kinds which it would be futile to attempt to prevent. And this is one of the reasons why the Buddhist attitude of passivity, in many a context, is deprecated by the uninformed, as being negative in matters of immediate aid. This fallacy is amply illustrated in a case involving the Buddha himself. When a king,

out to wreak vengeance upon Buddha's own kinsfolk, set forth with his army to do so, the Buddha sought to prevent bloodshed by intercepting the king, seating himself by the road where the king was to pass. Out of deference to the Buddha, the king withdrew, knowing in his heart that the Buddha had come with the express purpose of preventing bloodshed. But when the Buddha left the scene, the king returned. The Buddha also returned to the scene a second time, and the king, then retreated a second time. When the king returned to the scene a third time, the Buddha, perceiving through his supernormal vision that such a slaughter could not be forestalled due to his kinsmen's collective kamma in the past, left them to reap the retribution which they deserved.

It is obvious that there are limits to the aid which can be extended in situations of this kind. It is a mark of the enlightened mind that, after having exerted compassion and active aid to the full without result, the last resource when nothing else will work, is to resign itself with equanimity. If Buddhism champions friendliness, compassion, and sympathetic joy, it is always balanced by equanimity, so as to prevent emotionalism or misplaced sentiment from leading the mind astray, whereby it loses its constructive impact.

It is a characteristic trait of the mind to place great importance upon the present moment, at the expense of the past. The mention of previous lives being responsible for certain circumstances and predispositions, only elicits scorn from circles that pride themselves upon their sophistication. And yet, the complexity of the psyche reveals that superficial explanations never do justice to the affair. It is to be observed that individuals possess certain predispositions of character even at a very early age, before the environment could have imprinted its mark thereon. It is not customary to question how these predispositions arise. The usual explanation dismisses any factor other than that of heredity. It is difficult to see, however, how such a complex matter can be summarily disposed of by the convenient argument that merely genes determine the issue. It is not necessary here to go into the niceties of this argument, but merely to reaffirm that in the make-up of the psychic profile there always lies something more than meets the eye.

Offshoots beget offshoots

One of the most crucial aspects which determine the psyche's make-up from the Buddhist context, however, concerns the manner in which a psychic offshoot splits off from its 'parent' original, bearing its imprint, and completely coloured with its parent psyche's characteristic dye. It becomes apparent that a well-conditioned start lays the foundation and sets the pattern, for a propitious rebirth, in an environment which is conducive to the development of its potential in this its very 'first' life. Henceforth, it will fare on its very own, on the long journey of consciousness, the drama of which is that it too will continue to reproduce itself by proliferating offshoots in turn.

In so far as society is concerned, much is made of the sex of the individual concerned, and much friction erupts thereby. Nowhere is the ambivalence of sex more revealed than in the psychic-offshoot context, where gender is not as fundamental as it would seem. It is true that a man's offshoots will be masculine and a woman's feminine. After death, however, once they impregnate a womb preparatory to rebirth, there is nothing in their psychic make-up to prevent an interchange of sex since bisexual characteristics are already part and parcel of the psycho-physical structure. It is not unusual for a sex interchange to occur after each rebirth. The complexity of the interchange will depend upon the predominant factor of kammic continuity, whereby a certain masculine offshoot sprouts forth into a feminine rebirth, and vice versa. The birth of twins, triplets, quadruplets, and quintuplets, also hinge upon their kammic relationship in some past life, or may be simultaneous offshoots from the immediately previous life. The inherent complexity of these matters only serves to reveal that the simple explanations in vogue regarding the origins of life are not as simple as they would seem, and are actually a symptom of intellectual conceit.

The tendency of a psychic offshoot to gravitate, if it dies at an early age, into the womb of the same mother, is also a common affair, so that the reincarnating entity becomes the younger brother or sister of 'itself'. In that offshoots generally hover around the former abodes, due to their attachment thereto, such a form of rebirth is usually inevitable. Its connection with the parents enables it to adapt with ease, there existing no divided loyalties to past and present families, cases of which create a discord in the psyche as it hankers after distant scenes in the immediate past. It is not uncommon, therefore, for children to recollect their previous lives in the sleeping state, awaking in the middle of the night to run out of the house in search of their former abodes some distance away, the pull of which has come to the fore. That recollection comes in sleep is because consciousness, having retreated from the brain (which knows nothing of past lives), gravitates to the navel-pit, where through a random contact it regains the data of the previous life. The vividness of these memories of past lives reveals that the re-embodied entity is usually an offshoot rather than the main-stream of the past life, since an offshoot possesses a tenacious grip on its particular milieu, being its direct product, whereas the main-stream of personality, possessing a much larger store of lives in its stock, products of diverse areas and backgrounds, does not so facily identify itself with particular items in its collective, past.

The recollection of previous existences remain fresh in the memory of children only for a few years, however, after which they become subject to the overwhelming pressure of the changed environmental context. The touching detail with which little children spontaneously recall impressions of their former lives, impressions which even at this late date elicit joy or grief, only serves to reveal the pathos of the psyche, the extent it is bound to its past environment and the affections which arose therefrom. Eventually, however, fresh layers of superimposition, and the defence mechanisms which arise from social intercourse, suppress these antecedent levels of memory, until they fade almost completely away.

In that the fourfold personality stack lies superimposed in the organism, as in a vertical sheath, it eludes exposure and distinct identification. The fact is that the collective subconscious is in the position of a vast dustbin, to rummage in which becomes a formidable feat. If the accumulated experiences of consciousness were horizontally spread out on the pavement for exposure, they would consume a vast expanse of space, whereas existing as they do within levels of each other they conveniently remain spatially contained. It is a general assumption that spatial dimensions wane in proportion as psychic internality is probed. The very opposite is true in matters of the mind, as psychic adepts can confirm, dimensions expand. It is only the physical-mental block of outer bark and twigs encompassing the inner core that buttresses this from view.

Loophole to Freedom

A phonograph record possesses a hole in its centre, without which it would be unable to fit on to a turntable and revolve. Simple as this device may seem, upon such a similar structure does the psyche activate, in whose centre a hollow exists, without which it would not be able to perform. What is even of greater import is that it is the one loophole (like the eye of a storm) there is, through which the aspiring psyche is able to launch itself out of mundane orbit to the far reaches of the supramundane, emancipating itself once and for all from the ceaseless round of birth and death without end.

EMANCIPATION

If Buddhism avoids becoming embroiled in the implications contained in concepts of First Causes and the existence of inherently permanent souls, it nevertheless asserts that it is quite possible, even if not inevitable, for self-created plurality to harness its incoherence and, by certain techniques of integration and sublimation, to achieve ultimate goals and the emancipation of the mind.

In any attempt to understand this stand, consideration must first be directed to the evolution of forms other than the grossly physical, and the part they play in the sublimation of personality. Buddhism asserts the existence of 'astral' forms because without these psychic vehicles the human personality would not be able to even so much as exist. Forms are essential to life, and to the extent that life does not coalesce into some form it does not exist. It is true that in Buddhism the existence of so-called 'formless' (arūpa-brahma) deities is mentioned. Unfortunately, through lack of knowledge on the subject, these 'formless' deities have been misinterpreted as possessing no form, when in reality what is implied is that because of the formlessness of their meditations (projecting their consciousness onto space and void-like concepts) they are so termed, absorbed in their own relatively constructed world.

Astral Forms as Exit Forms

In the living organism there already exist 'astral' forms which support the life-flow, without which it would collapse, as it does when once they make their exit from the body at death. These astral forms are ghost-like replicas thereof, mind-forms, possessing sense-organs, and complete in all their limbs. The natural evolution of life produces these astral forms automatically through the psychic complex. The manner in which mind-forms are deliberately produced by concentrated-absorption, however, differs in that they are consciously accomplished by adverting the mind to their creation, or rather 'reproduction'. By establishing the human form in consciousness as being 'hollow', it automatically becomes hollow. In this hollow-context another form is resolved to appear, which becomes a mind-form. In the same fashion as reed reposes in its sheath the mind-forms appear exactly alike as their original. Even as a photographic negative reproduces any number of details on sensitive film, even so are mind-made forms reproduced by introverted technique. Thus if there are human astral forms, the production of celestial forms is made possible in ever-ascending scale.

As all these forms are merely aspects of the 'original' individual who has developed his potentialities they are not considered as simultaneously apart, they are only reckoned by the name of the particular personality which for that moment prevails. A certain form appears when attention is focussed thereon, ushering it into prominence at the expense of relegating the other aspects into the background. As forms are transmuted from the same psychic substance they may be termed differently in varying contexts while retaining the same base, as carbon remains carbon even after having been transmuted into a diamond of brilliant allure.

It is germane to the issue of emancipation to bear this fact in mind: namely, that mind-forms exist, and also techniques whereby they may be deliberately produced. What is left to be dealt with is how an emancipated (vimutti) form may as a consequence be produced if the technique is pursued to its logical conclusion. Obviously it will have to be developed on similar lines as the other astral forms, that is, by a concentrated process, of intensification, of condensation, even as carbon is transmuted into a precious gem with a lustrous *increase*.

However, regarding the subject of emancipation the speculation which widely persists is that it must be a conscious *decrease*. That is, the trend of thought is to interpret consciousness as being greatly reduced, or altogether extinguished, once the Nibbānic¹ state is reached. While the emancipated one (arahat²), is alive the question does not arise, since it is an accepted fact that his consciousness is in no way impaired, reduced, or rendered extinct. It is only in determining the state after the death of the body that the ambiguity remains. It is easy in this context to observe how an extinctionistic interpretation may be adopted, in view of the manner in which the chain of dependent dissolution (in contrast to that of dependent origination) is presented in Buddhist texts: namely, with the eradication of ignorance the psychic aggregates cease, with the eradication of the psychic aggregates consciousness ceases, etc. The illogical interpretation is that at the end of this process of eradication nothing remains.

89 Categories of Consciousness

The confusion which ensues when assessments of psychic matters arise stems from the tendency to lump consciousness into only a single pile. The Abhidhamma, however, classifies consciousness into 89 categories (or 121 when the supramundane jhānas are involved). When the formula of dependent dissolution asserts, therefore, that with the eradication of the psychic aggregates consciousness ceases, it would be relevant to enquire *which* category is implied. Even if granted that all the mundane categories of consciousness are eradicated by the emancipated one on his attaining enlightenment, as long as he possesses a body he must retain three mundane categories (ahetuka kiriya citta), namely, the five sense-door functional consciousness, the mind-door, and the sense-of-humour consciousness.

These basic three categories are dispatched of only when the arahat finally attains Nirvana³ without remainder (anupādisesa Nibbāna). This irrevocable sounding term would lead to the assumption that indeed nothing is left. Actually what is implied is that no *mundane* vestige (the last three mentioned above) remains. The arahat's category of supramundane consciousness, however, at this moment becomes disembodied for good and continues as a psychic constant, being that state wherein the physical elements no longer footing find, invisible to the human eye, unfettered, accessible from every side.

At the risk of becoming technically monotonous, it is necessary to dwell upon some of the items which have contributed to the interpretation that the emancipated state hovers everlastingly upon the threshold of an irrevocable vacuum. A sad fate indeed for those whose aeonic effort in the world of temporal fact has been charged with positive thrust, to thus dissolve anti-climatically into an ocean of redemption-less nullity. The value of pursuing this matter at length lies in the hope that when pressed a completely opposite interpretation may emerge, positively revealed.

One of the items concerned for the Nirvanic state being interpreted as semi-extinct is because of the Buddha's assertion that Nirvana is beyond the state of the infinity of space, the infinity of consciousness, the void, and neither perception nor non-perception. These states with their infinity label attached would seem to cover all that pertains to the most refined of attainments, thereby leading the uninitiated to infer that Nirvana (necessarily being something higher) must be even more ethereal. Buddha's reference however, to the 'infinity' of these formless attainments is only in the context of their being relative states of mind, not objectively 'infinite' in scope as they would seem to sound. Actually those who practise these attainments on earth are transposed at death to certain

¹ Sanskrit; *Nibbānic*, Pali

² Sanskrit; *arahant*, Pali

³ Sanskrit; *Nibbāna*, Pali

planes where they may continue so to abide in this state for a greatly protracted length of time. In no way is it implied that their consciousness has dissolved into objective space. Even the next 'higher' state of mind, the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā vedayita nirodha*), in no way objectively dissolves consciousness into the void.

Jhānic attainments as release modes

The classic case whereby a clearer understanding of the Nirvanic state maybe gained is witnessed in the Buddha's death-scene, where his consciousness is portrayed as ascending from the first *jhāna* right up to the cessation of perception and feeling, covering all the attainments there are in direct order. At that point Ananda his disciple, with typical miscomprehension, exclaimed that the Buddha had attained Nirvana. He was corrected of this error by another disciple Anuruddha, already an emancipated adept, who asserted that the Buddha had only attained the temporary cessation of perception and feeling. After which the Buddha, in reverse order, descended from that state right down to the first *jhāna* again. Then rose up once more to the fourth *jhāna*, attaining final Nirvana in that state.

This, of course, does not imply that the emancipated mind must always abide in the fourth absorption. It only implies that when Buddhas attain enlightenment or final Nirvana they do so in the fourth *jhāna*, due to its psychic stability. They, however, may expedite any absorption they please once emancipation is theirs, as there is never any restriction upon their expertise. Psychologically having eradicated all attachment to mundane passions, or indulgence in psychic attainments, the emancipated mind abides under no mundane pressure, even if it retains compassion for all.

In so far as *jhānic* absorptions are concerned, although their labels apply to all who practise them, they differ in the refinement of their psychic frequency according to an individual context. That is, the first *jhāna* practised by a layman or a yogi differs in essence and content from that of one who has attained the partially emancipated state of stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*). Which again differs in refinement from that first *jhāna* practised by the next higher emancipated state of once-returner (*sakadāgāmin*). Which is again superseded in refinement by the first *jhāna* practised by one who has attained the state of non-returner (*anāgāmin*). The first *jhāna* practised by the fully emancipated one (*arahat*) is even more highly refined than the rest. They are all called first-absorptions (*pathama jhāna*), yet distinctions exist, of quality and essence. It is the degree of emancipation and luminosity involved in the individual's consciousness which qualifies his absorption and grades it accordingly.

The Path to Ultimate Release

It may be clarified in this context that the *jhānas* of the Hindu yogis differ from the Buddhist versions in that the yogi's absorptions are based on external devices, adapted artificially for psychic alignment, fixed in the mind's eye until a state of absorption is achieved. The essentially Buddhist technique, however, is an internal one, concentrated at navel-pit, where a psychic nucleus is perceived called the first-path (*pathama magga*), so called in that it is the first step towards the liberation of mind. Absorption at this point eventually produces the attainment of path-consciousness (*magga citta*) and develops path-wisdom (*magga paññā*). The typically Buddhist technique is often confused with the Hindu versions because the yogis also practise forms of concentration which have the spinal column as a base, and where they develop the so-called serpent-power (*kundalini*), adverting towards the various centres or *chakras*. The Buddhist technique possesses no association with the *chakras* or spinal column, and whatever attractiveness the Hindu systems may possess lies in their 'mystic' or 'occult' appeal. The Buddhist scheme, however, provides nothing less than a weaning of the mind from attachments such as these and the delusions of grandeur to which they inevitably lead.

Another confusion which may arise is to identify the Nirvanic state with the yogic attainment of unconsciousness practised by certain adepts, who by ascetic exercises attain a hypnotic state wherein they become senseless (*asaññā satta*) like a stone. In no way having eradicated greed, hate or delusion, this attainment of a coma like state serves to temporarily suppress growth, like a stone slab laid on grass. Once the slab is lifted, the grass runs wild again. Thus between the yogic swoon of the unconscious beings and the cessation-attainment of the emancipated minds a definite distinction exists. In the former case the cut-off consciousness is deluded into the idea of having attained emancipation, whereas the cessation-attainment of the really emancipated mind is expedited merely to sever sense-contact from life's frivolity by temporarily cutting the current off. Having already achieved emancipation of mind, its task is already done and its objective attained, and it is only marking time until the body dies. The task (the eradication of greed, hate, and delusion) of the senseless beings, on the other hand, has not even begun in so far as they continue to delude themselves that emancipation is a stone-like state of mind. The result when ultimate goals are distorted out of context is that the effort devoted to their gain becomes an enormous waste.

Before the emancipated mind enters cessation-attainment (*nirodha samāpatti*) certain matters are determined in advance: that should it be necessary it will respond to the call of duty on contact, and that robes and such will remain intact in case of fire or attack. This form of psychic determination is not something which the senseless beings can command, as it sets a mechanical psychic device in operation whose response is triggered into action at the anticipated contact. This displays the scope and area of command even when the emancipated mind is totally withdrawn and absorbed, oblivious to all but what it determines in advance.

From what has been mentioned above it ought to dawn upon the mind that the Nirvanic state is not something to be interpreted in terms of a loss of consciousness but rather a heightened state of being, since it is not the cessation-attainment itself but the fourth *jhāna* as such in which the emancipated mind expedites best its sway. And this is further clarified by the Buddha again when he asserts in many a discourse how by putting away unwholesome dispositions and purifying the mind wholesome qualities are increased, so that even in this life one comes to perceive face to face things as they really are. The implicit fact contained in this context is that the perception of ultimate objectives involves not an overwhelming decrease of consciousness but a significant increase.

The Dhammakāya Form

The Buddha's definition of the way in which he is to be genuinely known is contained in his positive assertion (of the *Agaññā Sutta*) that he possesses a supramundane form called the *Dhammakāya*. This term has of course come to be crassly interpreted, like so many other aspects of Buddhism, as being the 'body' of teaching which the Buddha declared by word of mouth and left behind to later ages in the form of a library of booklore. The presumption in so called orthodox interpretations of Buddhism is that the emancipated mind must necessarily be *formless*. This is a presumption which the meagre information regarding the subject does in no way support. Objectively, the issue at stake is to deduce by what means a psychologically emancipated state is transposed even when it is alive in embodied flesh, not to mention when it becomes disembodied at death. The term *Dhammakāya* explicitly affirms a form composed of special qualities, in accordance with the element of increase to which the Buddha refers when speaking of perceiving the truth as it really is. If wholesome qualities are to flourish they can only do so in relation to a locus of identity, to a formative context, and not dispersed in some splendidly dislocated abstraction of empty space, which would be a contradiction in terms.

According the Buddha the credit of not resorting to such dialectical ambiguities or superficial sophistries, the legitimate conclusion which arises from this context is that the *Dhammakāya* is the form, or vehicle, whereby the emancipated mind consolidates itself while still embodied, and wherewith it transposes itself to an objective locus once disembodied by death.

To arrive at a mature understanding of what the Nirvanic increase implies it is well to dwell for the moment upon the subject of consciousness itself. Consciousness is basically an indiscriminate receptivity, negative in itself. To instil positive knowledge and discrimination into this indiscriminate receptivity entails a harvest of contacts in the world of spatio-temporal fact, whereby through a variety of repetitious interludes the life-experience brands upon the evolving flow its indelible mark. The essence of emancipation lies in the fact that consciousness retains the lessons it has learnt in its traverse through space-time, with a discriminatory insight into the transitory nature and flimsy fabric of that which passes on for life. Attendant on these experiences, the developed consciousness has come to realize that a more enduring vista other than this exists, and dissociated therefrom eventually passes beyond.

The Dhammakāya form serves to expedite this end by the successive sublimation of qualities gravitated thereto through an aeonic thrust. Vehicles of emancipation that they are, sublimation is made possible only after a succession of increasingly refined Dhammakāya forms have been produced. It seems to be a mark of life that even in matters of ultimate emancipation of mind an efficient assembly-line is crucial to the production of an enduring masterpiece.

Another fallacy which must be alluded to regarding the ultimate goal of Nirvana is that reference to it as an Ocean creates the impression that the emancipated mind sinks like a dewdrop therein, achieving its consummation and a consequent loss of identity thereby. This concept is not dissimilar from the idealism of most world religions when they speak of their ultimate goal as one of union with a higher Being, merged therein. The position of the Dhammakāya forms in Nirvana, however, strictly precludes this impression, for they are individual forms in their own right, and although a fellowship of emancipated minds exists, such a situation can in no way be confused as a union where individual identity is lost. It seems to be a natural tendency of the enthusiastic mind to permit itself to be swept away by the euphoria attendant upon such heady concepts as total union and cosmic unity. The obsession with concepts such as these lies in the understandable instinct for sublimation which pursues humanity, even if it produces results indistinct from that of a sexual swoon. For when the sexes emerge from their simultaneous swoon it is only to discover that their much vaunted 'union' leaves them individually separate, as they have always been. Serving to illustrate the extent of illusion involved whereby; under the stress of peripheral excitation, sane judgement is impaired.

It is obvious that 'unions' such as these are not the realm where emotional security can ultimately exist. The unity which the Buddhist ideal wholeheartedly supports lies in the integration of personality and emancipation of mind. In no sense does this ideal lend itself to an ambiguous interpretation. If each stream, or streams, of personality are acquired tediously in the world of spatio-temporal fact, they always remain strictly individual affairs. At no time along the way does the individual stream, or streams, unite with other individual streams. On the contrary, as has been observed, the world-process tends to initiate the disintegration of personality into offshoots rather than the reverse. It would be illogical to assume, therefore, that a process which has proceeded for so long upon these lines could anti-climatically reverse itself by culminating in the resolution of individual psychic parts into the one combine.

Buddhism in no way succumbs to the impulse to draw fallacious conclusions regarding total union or cosmic unity, under the euphoria of a psychic swoon. The pitfall of euphoria is well exemplified even in the jhānic attainments themselves. Bliss (euphoria) is personified in the second jhānic absorption, yet its tendency to illusion is recognized and for this reason the mind, in search of a higher enlightenment is compelled to leave this inferior vehicle behind as it proceeds upon its upward psychic ascent. It is not euphoria but the impassive equanimity of the fourth jhāna which becomes the ideal vehicle for relegating all phenomena into their proper perspective. Accompanied by such penetrative insight, equanimity leaves no room for the mind to be led astray by a momentary swoon. The general addiction to the transitory thrills of sense-contact would seem to signify that life is only

savoured to the full by such means. The fact is that euphoria represents merely one aspect of life's realities. If the mind is to serve as a measure of clarity the evidence for its reliability must depend upon the comprehensiveness it reveals. Under the irritation of surface-winds commotion prevails and clarity recedes. If in the depth of the ocean-bed no commotion occurs, in the psychic context clarity of eye appears proportionate to the extent of calm, revealing that euphoria is a poor substitute for the perception of reality in depth.

If this fact would seem to steal all the savour out of life, it need not necessarily be so. Unadulterated vision and self-development are more reliable resources in a storm than wishful thinking and delusive dreams. For it is the perfection of selfhood, not the disintegration of hope, that embodies the ultimate ideal, and the emotional security which its attainment provides.

The significance of Buddhism lies not in its statement of fourfold noble truths or eightfold paths and attendant items, but in the fact that Nirvana actually exists, and emancipated minds therein, which endows the Buddhist context with relevance for our times, or else all discussion thereof is rendered meaningless. For it is not in any form of a path itself but in the actual existence of an ultimate objective that significance must lie.

Even if it is recognized that emancipated minds continue to exist in Nirvana, it would be difficult to acknowledge that anything more than a benign inactivity could be their ultimate lot. The fact, however, is that activity of an extremely high degree proceeds in the Nirvanic plane, and it is only ignorance of this which seems to make the emancipated mind more dead than alive. Judged by their message of emancipation and peace which they preach, it would appear that Buddhas must necessarily be inactive and meek. It is well to note that it is on the basis of psychic powers that their attainment and status rests. To assume that all this potential on which their being rests is dissolved once the Nirvanic plane is reached is to propose a sudden reverse. It is by virtue of a structural-complex that aeons of psychic development are able to adhere together in a stream proceeding towards a definite objective, and it is the cumulative projection of this process that assures this flow of being the essential measure of its calculated destiny. In this respect the Buddhas achieve the acme of their aeonic thrust in a sublimated sphere, with the attainment of which there is nothing in their active history to retrench.

Although it may seem a strange claim to make, their facility of action and mobility is illustrated by the manner in which they descend with ease to earth whenever there is occasion so to do. The context of descent is, of course, not accomplished in totality, only a partial outflow of essence is projected down, even though it may be diversified in scope. The major portion of their essence must necessarily be established in the Nirvanic plane itself so as to direct any active process from above, never to be dissociated therefrom. In this it resembles the energy generated from a power-plant, with high-tension lines radiating from the source. In that these high-tension psychic lines, invisibly flung abroad in space, convey their power and achieve their ends, the emancipated mind rarely strays outside itself, for there is no necessity so to do. Contact with externals is established through the convenience of attracting like a magnet the externals into the centre of its psychic field. Tapped into the perimeter of its internal periscope, psychic security is thereby assured. With this facility at its command the emancipated mind is never sidetracked into alien territory at all. The domain of the emancipated mind is strictly an individual affair, and as such its authority and jurisdiction is circumscribed by the very virtue of its natural restraint.

The Aid of Buddhas

Among the activities of the Buddhas in their Nirvanic fields is the task of aiding wisdom-aspirants (bodhisattas), or prospective Buddhas, in the world to accomplish their aim; of ushering beings into the Nirvanic plane. This is necessary because the bodhisatta, as he is gathering experience and

perfecting his qualities (pāramī), is generally unaware of his peculiar situation, and works more or less unconsciously, having forgotten his ancient pledge. As long as he has not attained full enlightenment himself it is too much to expect that he can be as effective in his tedious task as he would wish. In fact, through this inadequacy; many a mistake is made, which he has to painstakingly redress in a succession of lives. Exposed to dangers such as these, a vast amount of risk, trial-and-error strategy, becomes involved. It becomes the thankless task of Buddhas in their Nirvanic planes to sweep such beings as possess the budding potential into the path of the bodhisatta while he is abuilding his pāramī, so that some connection between them is established, in such a way that when the bodhisatta attains enlightenment those beings may encounter him when the moment is opportune, ready for their collective emancipated goal.

It need hardly be stressed that all this activity entails an enormous amount of cooperation and time, above and below. In this context the Buddhas in their Nirvanic planes have more than their share of work, and can scarcely be viewed as hugging their emancipation merely to themselves, forever regardless of mankind. With this in mind, it is only in keeping with the nature of these emancipated minds that they expedite any activity they see fit to suit their intent. Since non-attachment is their *status quo*, indulgence in any psychic activity they may initiate in no way signifies an excitation of desire on their parts but is rather an enhancement of their lustrous nature, which for lack of commitment and scope would otherwise limit their potentiality to nothing more than that glorious but monotonous inactivity mentioned erebefore.

External, or visible, activity does not necessarily signify the sole measure of excellence in any way. The undue significance which is placed on visible activity is that its results can be perceived. There exist forms of invisible activity, however, whose performance generates more subtle and substantial returns, of which humanity can in no way be the judge since its ultimate impact is extraordinarily refined. Not addicted to publicity, and rejecting it as the worst form of distraction, the invisible activity initiated by Buddhas and bodhisattas, known only to the elite, becomes of supreme value, not merely for the temporary survival but the ultimate welfare of the human race.

In view of this it would seem that all beings shall eventually attain emancipation as a matter of course. It is hard to perceive, however, how such a conclusion is to be realized. The attainment of emancipation entails a laying down of a ground-plan in consciousness, and the necessary labour involved, which directed to this aeonic task achieves by cumulative effect its object. Since it is obvious that the overwhelming majority of beings are neither aware of such ultimate objectives, nor perceive the necessity for them, the possibility of their emancipation must inevitably remain dim. Until such time as will and effort become present in this projected context, the eventual emancipation of beings must continue to exist only in the realm of a pious but ineffectual dream.

One of the prime obstacles to an understanding of otherworldly realities is the angular distortion to which a mere earthly view is subject. North, south, east, or west, the angle of vision to which the individual psyche is confined from birth, imposes a natural bias upon all its judgements, opinions, and concerns. It becomes inevitable, given such conditions, that the psyche should derive its bearings and orient itself from the centre of physicality in which it finds itself encased, and by which its notion of selfhood is established. Yet this selfhood is, as has been observed before, an ambiguous quantity, constructed of part tangible and part intangible substance, fashioned together through a variety of contacts. If it is only natural to identify this contraption as the self, and to even elevate it to the status of possessing immortality, its very instability precludes it from being in itself a self-sufficient source. It is in view of this that, although it is commonly referred to as a self, when considered in a neutral context it is de-personalized and reckoned merely as an element (dhātu) possessing qualities (dhamma). Since the personality by which man identifies himself is transformed from one life to the next, it is difficult to see how any one personality which persists for only three score years and ten, can be identified as a self which endures, possessing as it does a different face and figure with each life. In

such a context, therefore, it becomes more exact to categorize all life into streams of elements and qualities (dhātu-dhamma) perpetually changing their form and drift.

It is only when the Dhammakāya form is attained, and expedited to review the context in which life is positioned, that the angular distortion to which all mundane vision is subject becomes re-aligned in its true perspective. The value of introverted concentration, therefore, is that as the psychic-atom is penetrated to its logical limits; an ascendancy over external space is gained, revealing it as a relative construct, which need not necessarily confine the psyche to its domain once psychic mobility has been developed by techniques which transcend. The relativity of space-time itself, however, is resolved into an absolute context only from the Nirvanic vantage-point, resting as it does above the galactic storm, where relative frames of reference and form cease to apply. The spectacle presented from such an altitude enables the emancipated mind to observe the relativity of stellar systems in their particular contexts, as well as in reference to the universal whole. From such an altitude it is not difficult for the universe of matter to be perceived as existing simultaneously in an absolute space-time context, and that it is only the particular idiosyncrasy of individually-constricted motion from one system to another which produces the distorted notions of time's relativity.

If the Dhammakāya form represents a higher form of vision, however, it does not imply that those who are able to attain such a form automatically become endowed with wisdom and all its attributes, or entitles them to exist in a Nirvanic plane henceforth, since the Dhammakāya form of an individual is conditioned by the qualities which the individual has structured for himself in his antecedent aeonic career. Outwardly he will appear the same human being as before, with all its frailties and defects. It would be too much to expect that the attainment of a Dhammakāya form summarily eradicates what has been an appendage of the psyche for already so long and with such characteristic impact. It is only with the attainment of arahatship that such defects become erased. And this is why the path to emancipation is itself graded in such a subtly gradual way, so that even each grade is subdivided again into the types of individuals involved, and qualified by their standards of progress.

The positive interpretation which an understanding of the Dhammakāya form inspires, therefore, reveals that the ultimate state is something other than the psychic skeleton to which it has been summarily consigned by the uninformed. If the Nirvanic plane is understood as the only state of Being which endures, in contrast to the fluency of all that incessantly becomes, then it is to be recognized as a Being in which conscious activity remains implicit. Otherwise it degenerates into a contradiction in terms. The Dhammakāyas that inhabit the Nirvanic plane possess a heritage of consciousness whose range is appropriate to the field of experience accomplished throughout their aeonic career, and it becomes only logical to assert that they continue to endure as such, within the everlasting tenure of the overall expanse.

The dearth of detail concerning impersonality (anattā), Nirvana, and the Dhammakāya, germane to the issue as they are, is the main reason why so much misunderstanding has for so long prevailed. The perplexity is why they are not treated in extant scriptures with more adequate detail. Not to provide adequate treatment to a subject, however, does in no way imply that it is irrelevant to the issue. The fact is that in Buddhism elaborate explanations do not necessarily contribute to the production of insight and release. On the contrary, they may become a hindrance rather than a help, where instead of time being devoted to meditational insight the hours become scattered upon sophistries and the niceties of mere polite talk. It is to be observed that emancipation of mind may be achieved after having heard merely a few lines, as Buddha's statement to the Elder Bahiya illustrates, where the Buddha observes:

'In the seen there can be only what is seen (and the same for the other senses). This being so, Bahiya, neither do you exist in the eye that sees, nor the object that is seen, nor the space betwixt the two. This alone is the end of pain!'

The fact that the Elder Bahiya attained arahatship merely on such meagre grounds serves to illustrate that it is possible for a mind which has developed itself over the aeons, to recognize by only a few brief hints the essence of things as they really are. The excitement of the senses and the brain by peripheral means, through which the mind is so accustomed to exist, merely scatters itself upon the ground, neither taking root nor bearing any fruit. The facility to intuit reality will always hinge upon the psychic potency of the individual concerned, a special mark revealing his prestige. As the Elder Sariputta observed:

'Why speak many words? A single sentence is enough!'

Or, in the words of the Buddha himself:

'No value has a thousand stanzas without meaning. Better a single stanza, if by hearing it the mind encounters peace!'

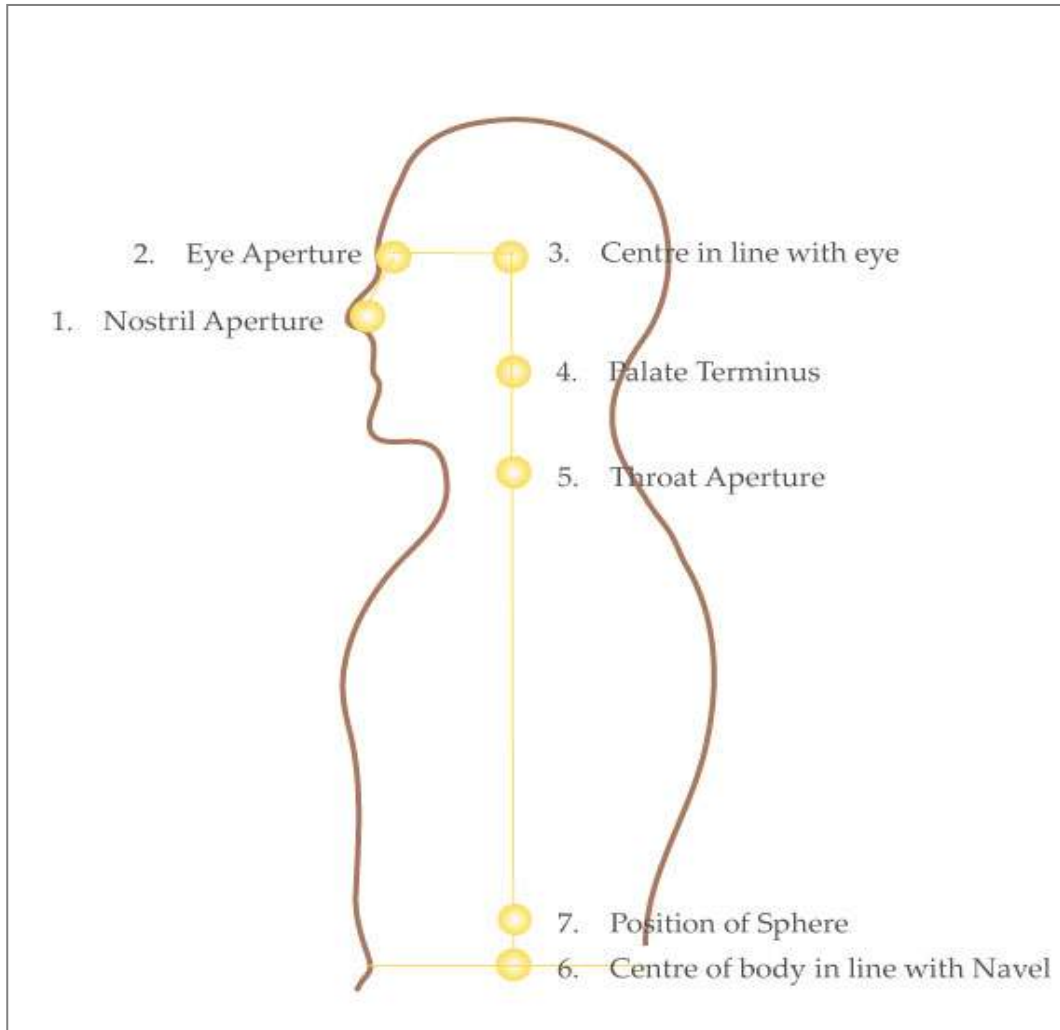


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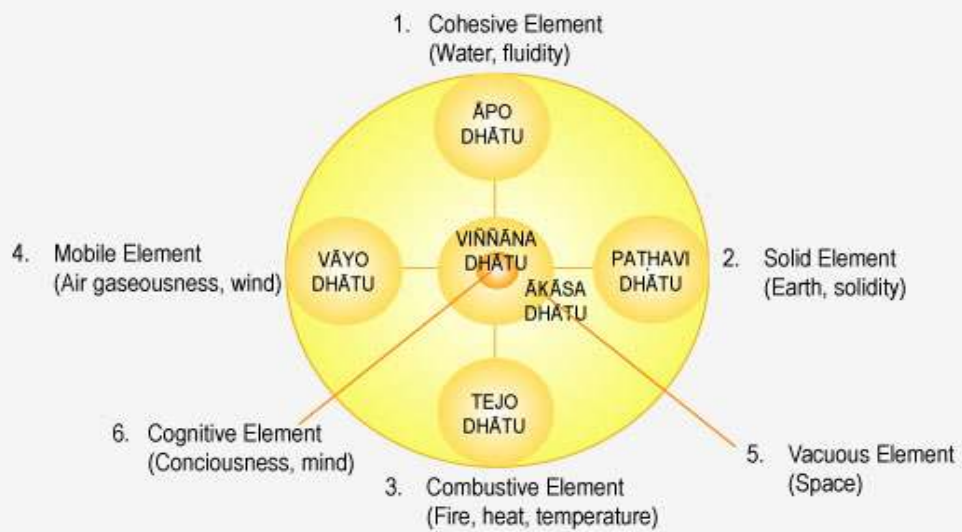




LORD BUDDHA GOTAMA



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



SITTING STILL IN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

It has become a debatable point today whether personal virtue carries directly over into social virtue, or whether individual progress and social progress are the same.

The context in which these questions are generally posed by secular society, however, is of no urgent significance in so far as the Buddhist position is concerned, wherein the fact of universal transience renders such propositions, or any conclusions which may be drawn, a matter of relativity. Of course, although it would be ideal for personal virtue to carry directly over into social virtue, it would be if anything presumptuous to so demand. For a man can be virtuous in himself without it having any effect within a social context. Moreover, if individual progress implies the wellbeing of a particular unit, it need not necessarily generate into social concern.

What is social virtue?

Since virtue and progress are both ambiguous terms, it would be necessary to first define their specific impact. If virtue signifies how 'good' an individual is, that goodness is relative to an individual concept of what is good, the goodness of which may be confined to merely the limited sphere of himself and his immediate family, which is generally the case. It would be too much to expect that a man must necessarily subject his personal felicity to an amorphous factor called society. In fact, the 'progress' of this society may not coincide with the individual's concept thereof, and he therefore cannot be condemned if he refrains from an active cooperation in the designs, dreams, and indistinct patterns of that which is termed social progress. Since men's ideas concerning progress will always differ, it would be an infringement of human rights if certain speculations regarding progress are imposed upon the individual without the benefit of his consent.

Personal and social virtue, individual and social progress, therefore, acquire significance only in the context of particular issues upon which certain agreements between parties have been reached. Since the feasibility of such agreements on a global scale does not present itself at this stage of evolution, no universal criterion concerning the substance of virtue and progress, whether individual or social, can be recognized outside the geographical and cultural contexts in which they arise, subject as they are to the arbitrary conditions circumscribing their sphere of understanding and outlook.

If the relativity of all concepts is recognized, if frames of mind tend to differ, if certain sections of society persistently endeavour to bend other sections to their way of thought by persuasion or by force, and if the world provides enormous scope for all manner of diversity in aspiration and outlook, any conclusions which may be drawn concerning the ultimate issues of virtue and progress, individual or social, can only be arbitrary ones, and as such merely of academic import. The fact is that the contemporary preoccupation with social philosophy stems from an ambitious presumption to align the world to certain preconceived points of view, backed by all the resources of a new technology, failing to consider that the very temporality of things dictates its own modes of social acceptance in accordance with time and place, and that what may suit a minority in no way justifies its application to a majority, whose preference and felicity may lie in directions other than the conditions which it seeks to impose. The lesson of universal transience is that all man's attempts at uniformity, and the concoction of imaginary utopias, are merely academic pastimes which never have the opportunity in reality to apply, by the relentless pressure of events to oblivion unceremoniously consigned.

The dichotomy to be observed existing between different sections of society draws attention to another form of incompatibility, the devious discord existing inconspicuously within the individual, one portion of his personality (mainly of peripheral origin) straining to conform to society's demands, the other portion (mostly subterranean in scope) rebelling at the impositions set it by incompatible social patterns and mores. In situations such as these, the hope for uniformity in the context of virtue and progress, not to mention the realm of ultimate ideals and long-term goals, becomes an impossible dream.

The ambitious scheme of aligning all humanity into convenient conformity ignores the fact that individuals possess different sets of kammic patterns, of distinct liabilities and assets, the diversity of which renders social uniformity unproductive even when pressured by the technological advance, for it lies beyond the scope of any technology to exhaust or plumb all the combinations to which human frailty is heir. Each psycho-physical unit, possessing as it does its own digestive tract, filters the world through in varying degrees of clarity, proportionate to the refinement of the tract itself. The lack of refinement in any digestive process lies in the degree of material which goes to waste, whereas the asset of a sophisticated system is that even waste may be recycled productively. The prime resistance to uniformity, modification or replacement, is that each system, unlike an obsolete piece of apparatus, is a built-in device for which no substitute exists, even when more recent advances of sophisticated technology appear upon the scene.

The fact is that the emotional instability with which the mind is beset renders it too loose a structure upon which to base technological schemes of global uniformity or reform. To imagine that a score of years suffices to plumb the heights and depths of the universal process is to reduce the totality of existence to an extremely narrow field. No matter how inventive contemporary excursions of technology may be, the approach still remains a mere humanly-oriented affair, which fades into insignificance in the vast perspective of the cosmic scene. Knowledge for its totality demands a projection of scope, of a superior thrust, other than that which the merely human level of consciousness flatters itself it has attained, or can achieve. Until the human mind has trained itself in humility and moral reach, in emotional stability and psychic proficiency, the peril of entrusting the human condition to the whims and fancies of minds with an insatiable thirst for mischief is akin to leaving a box of matches with a child to frolic. It would seem that certain types of minds are able to derive motivation and energy only from vast external schemes, when what really is at stake is the more modest issue of internal responsibility. The vacuum of not knowing what to do with his leisure remains man's greatest liability, and his attempt at achievement by external means is only a poor subterfuge for concealing from himself his own emotional insecurity.

External social dilemma

But the cogs of life roll on relentlessly, and endless movement becomes the mind's nightmare, splintering under the overload. Although discord activates within the psyche itself, with all the technology at its command it has yet to discover a means whereby the cogs may be revamped, or altogether changed, whenever the mechanism hurtles out of control. Once futility is diagnosed for what it really is, the mind can no longer afford to waste its sanity and strength upon unnecessary things. In as much as these futilities are extravagantly disguised by their artificial necessity, their true nature remains treacherously concealed. The subject is further complicated by the problem of communication, which makes of ordinary human expression a hindrance rather than a help, for any attempt to convey the insignificance of man's activities in an ultimate context is only met with undisguised contempt and even rage. The fact is that it seems essential to man's opinion of himself to exist under the illusion that the petty activity in which he is engaged is of profound significance to himself and the human race at large. Any suggestion to the contrary would deprive him of whatever illusory significance he may possess, and jeopardize the very reason for his being alive at all. The

standard of contemporary living, with its extravagant demands, has come to justify superfluous lines of activity, endowing them with an air of indispensable dignity, when they are only petty luxuries. In this context, humble occupations such as the farmer's, whose labour at least possesses a significance superior to many a more sophisticated trade, for all men must eat, are treated with disdain.

Boosting standards of living at the expense of standards of mind disguises the disease but in no way eliminates the defect. The sobering fact is that no justification exists at all for man's standards of living, not to mention his petty activity, except his own desire to exist. A man never even knows why he is born. All he can do is pick himself up from where he falls, and start to bluster and to blame. Rather than reveal symptoms of vulnerability, or admit a fault, by such a display of bluster, a great deal of face could be saved if the causes which batter life about were to be researched. The emergence of life is always discoloured by ambiguity, like a sentence severed in mid-air, not knowing where it begins or how it ends. The peripheral mind is more accustomed to accepting established facts rather than seeking the causes which make them established facts. That the majority are devoid of any emotion concerning the search for causes has always been the mark of an over-sophisticated age, whose fascination with immediate comfort precludes any incentive directed to this end. Buoyed by naive hopes of endless grip, the pleasures of possession flow through the mind only to collapse in the clutches of a corpse. That the value of anything lies only in relation to some inner life is a fact which rates of no consequence when no such inner life exists.

In a materialistic age, where the good life is measured in terms of acquisitive success, the value of any form of contemplative insight exposes itself to wide-spread ridicule. The argument is that if society is to progress, what would ensue if men were to do nothing but sit upon their backs all day and dream themselves away? This irresponsible indictment of the contemplative life, however, merely serves to reveal the sorry fact of modern man's fundamental inability to sit still even for a minute. For observation reveals that, given enough time and to spare, the moment man sits down he promptly begins to fidget and to fret. Physical activity thereby becomes the best excuse to conceal psychic vacuity. The acute embarrassment of not knowing what to do with the mind is something which makes of the ability to sit still, even for a minute, a feat worthy not of contempt but of the highest praise. The calm composure with which the contemplative man comports himself is a singular distinction rarely to be found in the world of men, since it is the essential mark which distinguishes him from man's erstwhile friend the ape.

The erudite discovery that man is descended from the ape is significant only in one respect, the embarrassing mobility of his monkey-mind. In another context, it is man who is the father of the ape, a penalty he deserves when his monkey-habits consign him to the simian brotherhood. It seems that any erudite discovery, or scientific surmise, will suffice if only it helps fill the terrible vacuity through which from day to day the mind must pass. It is a wonder that man has come so far in the evolutionary scheme, because observation reveals that even at his most mobile he never really occupies his mind, and so even though a meagre cut will fill his plate he must jump on, since to jump is the simplest way to fill vacuity. The paradox is that the lifespan is so short and the vacuity so long. In this context, evolution has been jumping from one vacuity to the next, with not an end in sight.

Basically alone though man be, rarely can he resist drifting with the local tide, cornered by a crowd in which he cannot even straightly think. Solitude and silence are the last bulwarks of mind for fitting things into their proper place, yet have become the most elusive quantities to accommodate, expensive luxuries in a restless world. If life is to attain to something more than mere perpetual drift or periodical jump, it has to be by silence and solitude refined, in that they offer the opportunity for indistinct factors in the inner man to surface to the fore. Mental culture and serenity, however, compete at a disadvantage when faced with the demands and clamour of outrageous whim, of the incessant dalliance with superfluous needs, where conceit comes always first. The fact is that life is least itself when it creates the greatest rush, while most "itself" when it never even makes a move.

Whatever poignancy sentient life contains is best revealed as it wends in sleep its unobtrusive way, unveiling the well-spring of life's common ground. The possibility for the psyche to be most offensive is when it is awake, in contrast to its capacity for containing the least harm when asleep, the counterpart of disembodied form. It is in sleep that the psyche draws nearest to the disembodied state, on the fringes of which hover death's survival lines. Exploration of this psychic landscape unfolds glimpses of the real stuff from which life appears.

The duality of the body is that it may serve as a vehicle for the perpetration of the greatest mischief, as well as provide the base for the attainment of the greatest good. Mental vacuity becomes in this context the surest stimulant for mischief. The singular sophistry of such vacuity is that standards of good and evil do not exist, that actions may pass unregistered or unpenalized. Illusions such as these even if they may pass muster in the amorality of the times, cease to hold their own in the world of disembodied life. The twisted mentality which prevails in a large context today bases its rebelliousness upon mountains of ignorance, the arrogant belief that violence may escape scot-free the penalties it deserves. The rampant rage to redeem by violence the anxiety of never having had a decent deal is poor compensation for a prolonged state of misery in the hereafter. If senselessness seems excusable on the mundane plane it becomes inexcusable in the adjuncts of the disembodied state. The summary rejection of another plane of things, or even its grudging recognition, generally stem from attitudes which contain a certain gnawing anxiety at their root. In any case, if violence never stops to think it is also true that it never stops to sink. By its very kammic momentum a vicious cycle is set in motion, out of which neither hope nor liberation ever comes.

Mental moods depend upon extremely little for their twists and turns, like clouds drifting into a myriad of shapes and shades within a shiftless sky. The tendency for the mood of poise to be upset at the least provocation by one of fret is what the necessity for mind-control is all about. In this respect it becomes a constant challenge, for on its mastery the whole structure of psychic security is built. The fact that even the merest bit of homework cannot be successfully resolved without some measure of mind-control underwrites this claim. The ability to resist environmental stress is not a hallmark of the technological age, and the unpredictable possibility of going to pieces at any time has become the dreaded spectre of today's concern.

In any mechanical failure, the simpler the machine the more facile the repairs. Where the psyche is concerned, however, the vulnerability to mechanical malaise is not so facilely redressed. Technology proves of little service in mitigating the mind's fundamental vulnerability to emotional upset. Make-shift adjustments and short-term measures prove inadequate in coping with long-term disorders, a condition to which the psyche is chronically subject. Though the age is overwhelmed by the products of progress it remains emotionally immature. Without a long-term view of life the merest trifle becomes an upset. The over-cultivation of the physical at the expense of the psyche is an ignominious surrender, without a thought for the long-term view of things. The tragedy of life is not that it must die, but that it must relive again the burden of its mistakes. The germ of man's unrest is his inability to discover an enduring object which with all his technology he as yet does not possess the capacity to produce.

It is only in the scope of long-term psychic patterns that life is able to work itself out of its pernicious vulnerability, so as to achieve a measure of immunity from the threat of unpredictable emergencies. In a scale which has the vastness of the universe as its measure, in what lies the significance of a single life which amounts to merely three score years and ten? As time swallows corpses up at an enormous rate, any master-plan which contains a true liberating impact in counteracting vulnerability needs to embody in its format the legitimate goal of psychic security, endorsed in patterns of ever-ascending life. The challenge of making his image an enduring one is a tall order for ordinary man to face, since for this he will have to become extraordinary. But challenge is the measure whereby stature has always been achieved. The history of the human race has been a succession of orders, tall and short,

with the capacity to project the race this far. If humanity is to culminate in a fitting climax the projection must proceed, not merely in a horizontal pattern of physicality but in an ever-ascending psychic scale of verticality. To meet the ultimate challenge and accomplish the enterprise, however, entails a vast stock-pile of potentiality, aligned in a far-flung rebirth context.

The clamour for superficial forms of liberation today is a surface symptom of the psychic vulnerability to which humanity succumbs. Even the female of the species is exposed, clamouring for the rights which it appears were deprived her from somewhere in the park. It is as old as history itself for the nature of the sexes to consume (with Adam and Eve) the fruit while despising each other for the fact. The point, however, is in what does liberation consist? For the value of any form of liberation is to be measured, not in the bustle of mindless movements, but in terms of the ultimacy involved. The great drawback of sexuality itself is that it has been transformed into a glorious luxury rather than left for what it actually is, an inglorious vulnerability. The facility in erecting imposing facades to disguise inherent vulnerabilities is one more form of humiliation to which man is subject, for whenever a vulnerability appears it is summarily sanctioned into respectability by tacit consent. The licence for sanctioning vulnerabilities into respectability knows no bounds, and is a symptom of man's poignant attempt to award the human race a certain measure of dignity which it so sorely lacks. The respectability of the sex-context rests upon as shaky a foundation as man's inability to do without something which he would be wiser at times to do happily without. It would be more dignified, therefore, to acknowledge vulnerabilities for what they really are, by relegating them to inferior roles, instead of elevating them into celestial commands.

Controlling psycho-physical chaos

The psycho-physical tensions and frustrations arising from life's vulnerability, besieging man on all sides, demands some significant antidote, offset in part by the factor of mind-control. The value of any form of mind-control worthy of the name lies in the degree to which it is able to reduce anxiety and distress. It is here that a worthy contribution to man's dignity may lie, advanced by a system of strengths, with some form of psychic superiority as its ultimate mark. The initial effect would be to afford a fair measure of psycho-physical balance, not to mention the ultimate effect of a drastic curtailment of karmic pressures and liabilities, once a state of psychic equilibrium is reached. The insight which mind-control brings is, moreover, a priceless form of sensitivity which appears first-hand. All other forms of knowledge are second-hand at best, and as such mere hearsay. There is no substitute for first-hand insight, for if theses provide diplomas, insight produces substance, without an ample measure of which it becomes impossible to forestall life's regular repetition of mistakes. Since insight is born not in the classroom but in the school of life, it is a form of knowledge which penetrates to the bone, to the marrow, becoming part and parcel of life's inmost core.

If mind-control is to serve as the antidote to man's persistent vulnerability, it cannot but be specifically an individual concern. The momentum generated by the individual may, or may not, proliferate into the system of society as a whole. Social equilibrium is something which does not originate from the pulpit but begins with the individual at home. It is in view of this imponderable factor that the stability of society cannot lie within the mere dictate of some ambitious socio-political philosophy, but rests to an immeasurable degree upon the fundamental factors of internal cultivation and mind-control.

The case for self-development, in contrast to that of mass-reform, rests on its feasibility. In any action which involves others results can never be guaranteed, since men are free to react according to their propensity. In so far as himself is concerned, however, a man may apply pressure upon his already patterned course without trespassing upon another's privacy and arousing animosity. The discontent and discouragement which ensue when altruistic aims are sabotaged by public indifference or disdain is a tidy lesson for the individual to commence with himself as a subject for uplift, instead of

harbouring vast schemes to rejuvenate the world in the image of himself. Since individual judgement in no way qualifies as an infallible standard of what is felicitous or right, any attempt to impose ideas upon the mass becomes an infringement on its liberty of choice, an imposition which it could do well without. The Buddhist thesis, therefore, is that the feasibility for success in matters of psychic development commences with the individual, irrespective of any power it may generate to indirectly filter into the mass.

The ideal of any philosophy worthy of the name is penetration into facts. It is usually opinion, however, with which humanity is content to live, an attitude completely coloured by the limitations of its sight. Diversity of opinion and theory, while perfectly legitimate, more often are a defence of certain natural attachments rather than a sincere openness to entertain alternatives to a particularly circumscribed approach. This is further complicated by the fact that no extra access to insight seems to exist other than through the limited avenues of the five sense-door field, on whose random juxtapositions the mind must structure all its views. In a situation where merely three score years and ten condition man, it becomes a forlorn hope for the mind to disentangle itself from the environmental bias to which it has been from birth subject.

The gravitational tensions of mundane life are weights which, when they become persistent, are more than the deluged mind can overcome or resist. Addicted as man is from birth to identify himself mainly with his peripheral brain, he fails to reconnect with the experience of his subconscious levels emanating from previous existences, linking up with which he would be able to activate at full efficiency, instead of the meagre response with which he begins and ends his days. Under the inexorable order, or disorder, of the universal spin the mind is otherwise compelled to live and die with the limitations of its fate. It is a well-attested fact that self-deception is a predilection whereby man willingly conspires to buttress himself in his accustomed ways, an attitude arising from a singular self-complacency. Consideration is rarely afforded to the possibility that there may be more to the picture than the superficial personality presented by the everyday face. The possibility is that certain archetypes of the psyche other than the merely human, may exist, and that extra forms and levels of consciousness may lie dormant beneath. The surface of the peripheral mind, whose functions may be far superior to any which that surface-mind may have envisaged or devised. The test of this will rest in their being exposed to light on a global scale, whereby it may be proven that even if a man is born in darkest Africa or the most civilized capital in the world, these archetypes or forms will, under the appropriate circumstances, reveal themselves without religious or cultural bias to be the same.

Introversion – the key

The capacity to unravel these archetypes or forms, however, will depend to an imponderable degree upon whether the individual is able to *sit still*, and all that this implies, possessing resources to this effect. For if there is anything which disqualifies a mind from penetrating into internal fact, it is the inability to sit still. Psychic vulnerability immediately is revealed whensoever the mind throws the focus of its attention upon random items which impinge, a facility of *rushing out* to intercept some random guest, even before it has stepped across the threshold or even knocked. An incessant thrashing about such as this becomes an overload, and could be reduced, so as to forestall any unwelcome shock, by first ascertaining who the guest is before opening the door to entertain. It is here that mind-control for its effect provides a base where it can seat itself, a definite centre of focus which does not flutter with the breeze, or at the least provocation jerked about and thrown around. In so far as life's objectionable intruders are concerned, mind-control becomes a door-slam in the face, and as such is a facility devoutly to be won.

It is true that this assertion is in direct opposition to the theories of Western man, to whom endless surface activities embody his highest ideals. The West, however, is renowned for its technological

advance rather than its insights into supernormal fact, a goal to which its movements have never been systematically trained, and where the stilling of the mind is summarily condemned. The advance of technology, in this context, defeats its own purpose, for it renders void through endless movement the fruits of its labour, which is obviously to transpose time from a matter of compulsion to the convenience of leisure.

It is a fallacy much in vogue that introversion, of which the technique of mind-control is a positive part, possesses a warping effect upon the mind, whereas extroversion, by implication, broadens it. For those minds which already possess a tendency to distortion, it is possible that introversion, by exciting the mind to wallow in its unhealthy stew, augments the deleterious effect. On the other hand, to the extent that the mind fails to initiate an inward trek, it flounders in the tentacles of the external world. The more externalized the process of its engagement the more entangled does the mind become. Introversion, although it may appear to narrow the field of vision to internal concerns, at the expense of the external, in reality provides a better balance in-between when properly controlled. Introversion, adequately adjusted, by narrowing its focus actually enlarges it.

It would appear to be a contradiction in terms to assert that an expanded range of fact may be apprehended by focusing attention within rather than diversifying it without. Nevertheless, mind-control upholds the assertion that the focal point of insight is an internal one, as its very name implies, rather than an external projection as expedited by the scientific technique. The fact is that technology is accorded great prestige at the expense of the developed internally-oriented psychic tool. The psychic tool, and its internal technique, has not been awarded the attention it deserves because of its natural inconspicuousness, depending for its very success upon quiet activity rather than thriving upon the plaudits of publicity.

The prominence of feeling, perception, and intellect in any area of experience hinges upon the degree of focus thrown thereon, enlarging its import. The limitation of external focus as a pivot of experience, however, lies in its tendency to confine the field of contact to superficial details, at the expense of an overall view in depth. The ability to specialize in particular fields of sense-data accords the data itself an importance which it may not basically contain, so that the capacity for comprehensive understanding is proportionately reduced. The psyche itself, from which the premise should really start, is a nucleus with a many-layered shell. Each enveloping layer (like an onion) possesses its own facility, which becomes more sophisticated as it deepens towards the core. The human-animal layer, being the outermost of all, with its focus diversified perennially upon externality, lacks subtlety, being a mere consequence of the outer crust's contact. Unable to extricate itself from its position at the periphery, this outer crust remains enmeshed in the illusions of substantiality, incapable of advertent to the inner core, where more subtle forms of focus lie.

In its understanding of atomic structure even nuclear physics recognizes the illusory *substantiality* of the physical universe. Due to a singular identification with the insubstantial planes of superficial sense-contact, the psyche eventually develops a peculiar malaise. Discontent, unrest, suppressed rage, and even anarchy are inevitable reactions of the psyche, which may be traced to the ambiguity emanating from sense-contact, and the painful sense of inanity which it aggravates. It is to be appreciated, therefore, to what degree an internal focus demands priority, not only in terms of the individual's sense of values but in matters of mental health.

Contemporary education attempts, in this context, to diversify its range. But the diversity itself, no matter how wide-angled it may be, suffers from the basic premise of consigning knowledge to curriculum primarily of sensory scope. A mental camera registers whatever falls into its field of focus, recording perspectives only up to the degree of sensitivity for which it was designed. The inadequacies of sensitivity may be redressed only by the development of a more refined degree of optics, a lens capable of being focused and adapted to record wave-lengths of a higher sensitivity and

range. Techniques of introversion reveal that, even if the local sensitivities of contact possess basic priorities, they eventually prove to be not as crucial as they seem once they are thrown into the context of a more internal scope. Due to its very superficiality and limited sensitivity, sense-contact proves to be of minimal import when confronted with a focal sensitivity which does not rely upon mere externals for its nourishment and support.

The intellection-process may be advanced as a more sensitive substitute to redress the inadequacies of sense-contact. The intellect, however, although a great resource in itself, can be an even greater hindrance in so far as mental bias is concerned. It is as complex a process to separate emotion from the intellect as it is to split an atom, so deviously are they bound. If computers provide rewarding results, it is to the extent that in their mental make-up no emotion is involved. That much cannot be claimed for the intellect, in whose emotionally coloured network impartiality is extremely rare, inevitably dyed by the avenues of its mental map. The intellect, of great value though it be, is in reality a primitive tool, not sophisticated enough for penetrative projects into wave-lengths demanding a higher sensitivity. In that the intellect depends for its function on the brain, its limits are circumscribed by the data with which it is antecedently fed (in the immediate life) and environmentally programmed. Serving as a repository and half-way house for the intellect, emotions, instincts and all other mechanical functions, the brain is always living in the thick of a traffic-jam, and as such becomes an unreliable authority when under this congested stress. The fallacy has always been to attribute all psychic activity to the brain, whose main function is that of a relay-station, a telephone exchange, and not the source of electric power itself. That the psyche itself, as a separate entity, may function without the benefit of this telephone exchange (as in concentrated absorption of the jhānic adepts, or in the disembodied state), is a fact of experience which science has yet to plumb. The traffic flowing through it leads the brain to assume that it is the source of all the life there is, and as such becomes the body's most arrogant device, inflated with a supreme conceit, impelling the intellect from one smug illusion to the next. Until some other fundamental electric-source is eventually recognized to actually activate the well-springs of life, and the brain demoted to the status of the organic conduit which it really is, at birth empty of content, confusion and perplexity must remain the burden which the psyche must carry with it to the grave, floundering on without any insight into the structure of life's scheme. Whatever may be said for the intellect, therefore, its merits are inextricably linked with the consequences of antecedent association and proclivity, and as such is more of a liability rather than an asset in so far as the tapping of higher sensitivities is concerned.

The Method of "Sitting Still"

The technique of 'sitting still' is here advanced as a method through which mind-control and insight may be achieved. Other than these long-term goals, the case for sitting still in these hectic times is that tension may be reduced. It is true that tennis, golf or yoga could serve this purpose just as well. Forms of physical exercise, however, beneficent in their contexts, are in the psychic context merely loopholes whereby the mind may be lured temporarily away from itself, but not definitely contained. In so far as sitting still is concerned, the mind is presented with no such facile avenue of escape but must face itself, whereupon it immediately commences to fidget and to fret, the whirl of thoughts which arise eventually driving it from its seat into the arms of the nearest random activity. The vacuum with which the mind is weighed down, and with which it finds it so hard to come to grips, is not merely a void (which would be just as well), but an incoherency, so eel-like in its thrash that its data must be reduced to scratch before it can become presentable, and thus make sense. The necessity for a well-harnessed mind becomes obvious if man is ever to be master of his fate. If sitting still can be a lock to shut the mind upon itself, degenerating into a self-centred liability, it can also be a key asset to open many a psychic door. The ability to sit still, therefore, becomes the supreme test of modern man, and games can even be invented to this effect, resolving whether a mind possesses any inner resources upon which to fall back on ante all movement stops. If it does, then there need be no

anxiety, of being turned into a vegetable, because sitting still, contrary to what its detractors may say, enables the mind to savour its resources to the full, if such resources internally exist.

If the psychic therapy of sitting still will always lay itself open to the charge of advocating social irresponsibility, then it will be a sad fate to befall a system which has the reduction of tension and the remedy to life's ills as its motivating aim. The large area to which the modern mentality prefers not to subscribe is the proposition that life's pattern is riddled through with the basic fact of pain. In this respect, of course, subjective man is free to avert his eyes, and seek whatever pleasure he can wring from life before it ditches him out of its headlong way. This is an inevitable attitude, without which it seems the courage could not be mustered for life to be so much as lived. It is a mark of the apprehensive mind, however, to bravely claim that it knows its own mind and what it wants from life, when in reality it knows very little of its own mind and is always changing itself in this respect. Its very apprehensiveness gives itself away, diverting or blocking more constructive avenues from revealing themselves.

Granted the ability to sit still, however, the mind requires yet another item to qualify: maturity, without which the psychic tree is bare of fruit. Maturity of mind involves, in this context, penetration into the hollowness of life's disguise, attended by a premonition that something more than the idiocies of a fancy-dress ball exist. If it is universally understood that the choice to lead his life as he thinks fit and in accordance with his lights is man's right, the choice itself inevitably reveals that a substantial amount of heart-searching is involved, in the context of how much relevance his life possesses at all. In matters of relevance and irrelevance no clear standards apply in so far as the everyday life of man is concerned, since his preoccupations justify themselves by his merely being alive. It is only in the context of the vision that a higher destiny exists that relevance and irrelevance apply, distinguishing certain standards whereby that vision may be fulfilled, persuading the mind to readjust accordingly.

If a certain hollow discontent pursues a thoughtful man even after the peak of material success has been achieved, it is because for him such a vision has yet to become significant and clear. Not possessing the sense of a higher destiny, in the context of which he may regulate his life anew, and having nothing further to accomplish, success itself grows stale. The mind is forever seeking fresh incentives, without a promise and provision of which it rebels. Even a return to long-forgotten sights and sounds prove a delight, reinvigorate and renew. Change always creates its own excitement, temptations, demands, and necessities, yet when it becomes too swift and uncontrolled for fun it is soon deplored. In that even the seemingly endless opportunities for excitement and change eventually begin to pall, the last resource is that the gleam of some higher destiny may possess the necessary substance to regenerate zeal.

Blocked off from view by the everyday lump of things, the vision of some higher destiny does not appear, and the mind is left with little choice, if at all, for hope. This is hardly the age where blessed are those who do not see and yet believe. Hard facts are the order of the day. In that soft and invisible facts are not easily transformed into hard, therefore, an impasse is reached, the negotiation of which remains remote.

In so far as a higher destiny is concerned, if some universal landmark guarantees its existence, then the psychic compass may be adjusted to point in the direction of its lode. As it is, the guidelines promised by a confusion of rival systems are so diverse and vague that bearings, even if not completely lost, appear too inconsistent and inadequate to leave much choice. If a system contains some measure of morality or mental discipline it becomes laudable to an extent. The validity of a system, however, should lie, not in its emotional appeal or compatibility, but in the ultimate degree of illumination it brings to bear upon the whole structure of the life process. This is a tall demand, which the more modest systems, due to a tenacious angular drag, can scarcely support, since they fail to explicitly direct the mind, in an ultimate sense, nearer to its object.

The test of any position lies in its viability to produce something of enduring value. A position which possesses no redeeming central insight lacks a stability of standpoint. The ability to withstand the tendency to waver under pressure, and not to be floored by imitations and fakes, or emotionally drugged by unsound premises, demands a psychic foundation in depth. Shackled as the world is by duality, of good and evil, pleasure and pain, euphoria and gloom, this perpetual confrontation wisely recommends the mind that the safest path to invulnerability is to steer a clear course in between, since a central position is one in which there is no drag.

A central position would emerge from the discovery that extra-terrestrial dimensions, even if invisible to the human eye, actually exist within the realm of established fact. The discovery of planes other than the human automatically entails a readjustment of perspectives, commitments and concerns. That is, the world and worldly objectives will, in the light of the new discovery, not appear as significant as they once seemed that all initiative, programs, ideals, and effort must necessarily be devoted solely to their realization, at the expense of ignoring whatever otherworldly standards or values additionally exist, which present guidelines to some higher destiny.

Technology's inability to gain access to these perspectives in no way detracts from their invisible impact. Whether an individual is prepared to seek and accept guidelines to this effect will hinge to an imponderable degree upon his kammic pattern, which not being standard for all relies on helpful contacts and events of an intertexture causal chain. Undesirable contacts may deflect the mind into a kammic web out of which it may take many a lifetime to emerge. A great deal of unnecessary waste can in this way be evaded if the individual is kammically well-structured, so as to encounter direct access into these guidelines.

The tendency of the psyche to be seduced by superficial allure demands a healthy measure of direct discipline. Sitting still provides this discipline, whereby the seeming inactivity actually opens up a whole area of subterranean activity. The mature mind, knowing itself not to be immune, exerts its best to rise above the ignorance and anarchy, so that balance may be regained and the psyche preserved of its sanity. The marvel of the mind is that it is a many-levelled thing, so that one subdued layer may objectively observe, without involvement, the activity operating in another sphere. Sitting still becomes the method whereby the mind explores itself, by breaking down its totality into detached observation-posts of impartiality. In a rudimentary and superficial sense this is what occurs when the mind sinks itself into a muse.

To lift this muse to its logical limits, however, demands an extremely developed technique. Pressing a mind too hard in a system alien and uncongenial to its disposition, however, serves merely to emasculate. The deceptive simplicity of sitting still, by the high technicality involved, enables the mind to separate and divide itself for detached inspection, without being emotionally atrophied or unhinged. Its lack of appeal to extroverted types of mind is that no *visible* results can instantly be promised or produced. Since this is an age where instant products are the demand of the day, sitting still faces overwhelming competition in that an invisible refinement is all it seems to produce. Nevertheless, if instant publicity goads the mind to blurt out its worst, the solitude of sitting still brings out its best.

Extroverted activity has always enjoyed a privileged mandate, and never more so in the technological age of today. Without a central position, however, extroversion leads to an angular distortion, the glorious irrelevance of fiddling with home-made gadgets in one tiny corner of the universe. It is astonishing to observe the scientific awe expressed over minor achievements like travel to the moon, with its limited locality. Psychic velocity dwarfs even the speed of light, rendering the depths of outer space merely the distance of a moment, achieving its invisible ends without the benefit of any cumbersome technology. Even the keenest lenses fail the test of comparison with the developed mind's sensitivity. Grope as they might it is not technological tools but consciousness which irradiates

the universe with perception and intelligence. The superfluity of technology and its basic assumptions become self-evident in the manifestation of life itself, the spectacle of matter being impermeated by mind, its multiplication and proliferation, a fact which technology did not invent.

Psychic superiority is established not merely in matters of mobility but its ascendancy is revealed by its ability (by telepathy) to communicate. If the psyche were to develop its transmission lines and channels, it is difficult to discover anything else in nature whose qualifications would be able to match its mark, for not only are the various planes of extra-terrestrial existence capable of being explored (by merely sitting still), but all manner of constructive projects could be accomplished likewise.

Contemporary man's preoccupation with technology, however, seems to be a necessary engagement at this stage of psychic evolution, whereby the mind may experience for itself the eventual futility, limitations, and disenchantment lying in such an approach, leaving the psyche as basically unsatisfied as it began. In this context such experiments of engagement become necessary, the definitive means whereby the evolving psyche its lessons learns.

Psychic sophistication is the ultimate measure of any higher destiny that lies in store for man, and to justify its claims its tools depend for their cutting edge upon an internal finesse rather than the bluntness of external push. The whole scope of perception is disclosed by the psychic approach, and the deeper the penetration is effected into the psychic void the better the external shroud of physicality is proportionately dispelled, relegated to an inferior role.

The fundamental Buddhist interpretation of existence is that it is 'hollow'? It is far from indulging itself in sophistries by this assertion, and possesses facts to bolster its claims, as exploration into the insubstantiality of atomic structure already partially reveals. It is in the psychic sphere, however, that this hollowness is most relevant and impressive. Psycho-physical activity constructs an infrastructure which coalesces around the nucleus of this basic hollowness or void. The psycho-physical recording machine which is the living organism, through contact multiplies its consciousness, until at the end of a single life the spools of impressions are enough to fill a room. Although most of the data recorded in the 'original' blank tape of this psychic void is generally irrelevant in an ultimate context, it would be unjust to assert that it all adds up to vacuity, or that nothing of value has been preserved at all. By the very fact of its having lived, the conscious impressions registered in the psyche will serve in good stead as a reference file for future lives, whereby the evolving psychic vehicle may be able to compare its notes with the lessons it has learnt, and continues to learn, on its long journey into space-time.

Left to itself consciousness drifts with the tide of matter. The hope for a higher destiny is that life contains the element of will, whereby the higher destiny upon research itself reveals. Only that consciousness which has evolved by experience to a certain pitch, however, finds itself prepared to initiate such a sophisticated program. By the fact that seeds sown in the fertile soil evolve after many a summer (and winter) into productive trees, it follows that some more rare kind of seed once sown in the soil of consciousness may evolve into some high futurity. Properly disciplined and directed there is no estimating the high futurity which may come within the trajectory of the ever-ascending mind.

In this context Buddhism offers a simile concerning a man in search of sound timber to build a home for himself, but becomes content merely with the discovery of only bark and twigs. The implication is that outer bark and twigs, like the human body and the world of sense-contact, are more suited to the creation of a bonfire rather than a home. To arrive at sound timber a cut into depth is entailed, whereby a product of structural strength and longevity may be assured. Proceeding from the outer bark and twigs of the human level of consciousness towards the core, other more enduring levels appear: the celestial, the super-celestial, and the Buddha-mind, in depth of successive style.

In the hypothesis of the new science the so-called neutrino particle, believed to possess no mass or electric charge, is assumed to be capable of hurtling through the earth with ease. If so, consciousness passes unimpeded through matter with even greater velocity and ease. Nothing is so condensed that the concentrated mind cannot penetrate, considering that all compounded things are basically hollow at core. The limitations of science lie not only in its tools (composed of matter, unwieldy, imprecise) but in the very premises themselves. No matter how these 'extensions' of self are expedited, it is not in the constitution of even the most refined of gadgets to 'liberate' invisible fact, so as to usher into consciousness some ultimate insight into the universe's deeper reality.

It takes a lot of living for experience to come into its own. From a superficial point of view there is much to engage the mind in an external sense, and the body is built in such a way that there seems to be no alternative but to adjust the periscope and level its sights upon externality. It is not in the nature of the peripheral mind to behave otherwise, and as a consequence this peripherality leads to an *oversight*, or *undersight*. Namely, that there are two sides to a coin and the bottom is just as integral as the top. Externality is always complemented by internality, and an overload of either leads only to a dangerous imbalance. The inability to strike a happy balance between both poles has always been man's plight and now more so than ever. Generally, it is an overdose of external living which overwhelms internal poise, so that when sense contact is turned off like a switch the psyche is thrown into the dark and at a loss for bearings, gropes in fear and anxiety.

The essence of balance, of survival itself, lies in psychic flexibility, even as a tree bends to the wind without a split. A tree's strength, however, lies in its roots rather than its leaves. In so far as the psyche is concerned, therefore, what lies below ground is of indisputable import. If the bottom of the psyche depends for much of its information upon the five senses and peripheral mind at the top of it, nevertheless, it, like a submarine, may function independently of its periscope. Since life begins with a matter of roots, and even as a tree's roots may exist without any external trunk, it is not the head but the navel-area of the human organism where the magnetic centre lies, the well-spring from which its basic material and nourishment proceeds.

The core of one's being – the navel pit

It is a natural process, therefore, that to renew itself the mind extricates itself from the brain, where it exhausts itself all day, and sinks below, down to its roots, to rest and sleep. Insomnia, and other related ills are the result of this inability to sink below when the appropriate occasion demands, caught in the incessant web of office-work which the brain employs. A return to the roots in sleep, however, does not automatically ensure stability or peace of mind, since in a somnolent state consciousness is beyond control, at the mercy of every random dream and nightmare. It is only when the peripheral mind, in full consciousness, contacts its roots by the meditational technique of sitting still (and raising itself just above the sleeping stream) that it is able to control and enrich itself at the very source.

The problem is to establish a psychic connection with the bottom, so that an inner illumination may burst into the upper levels of consciousness. The peripheral mind, however, is so emotionally involved in the outer bark and twigs of externality that it becomes almost impossible for it to accomplish a basic return to the roots of internality, where lies its real strength. The consequence is that even in this very life schizophrenia becomes a general malaise, to be followed at death by a more irrevocable split due to the inherent plurality of the psychic system which, unable its cohesion any longer to contain, arrives at its inevitable breaking point with the collapse of the organism, and psychic disintegration occurs.

Research reveals the extreme tenuosity of the psychic structure, with its plurality, tensions, archetypes, and stock of previous lives. Lack of *inside* information, failure to get to the bottom of the

plurality implicit in psycho-physicality leads to a misguided interpretation of the whole existing scheme. The value of inside information in matters of the mind lies in its ability to make things, which would not otherwise combine, fall into place and fit. The fact that a plurality of psychic levels exist reveal that much may be in process at the bottom without the top knowing anything at all. The dilemma is that top levels fail to recognize what bottom levels signify, or even dream that they exist. When discord eventually arises and a psychic tug-of-war ensues, the natural reaction to this disconcerting ferment is to foist the blame onto externals. In psychic conflicts such as these it is the top which usually 'wins', at the expense of all that is of value below. In point of age and experience, however, it is the bottom levels which are superior to the top, but their backseat capacity has come to such a pass that control of life's wheel has fallen almost completely into the hands of the inexperienced and conceited top.

Personality structure, for it to be accorded its due content, is to be analyzed not in terms of the one but the many. The amorphous activity which persists incessantly among man's psychic levels, however, is not something which is conveniently isolated and identified, as in atomic physics. The undue reliance which is placed on the intellect and its deductions only leads to an overblown sense of superiority, which it in reality does not possess. The intellect educates itself primarily through hearsay, and generally succumbs to the position of becoming a relic of sense-contact. It is only in the nether reaches of a meditational technique that psychic plurality may be isolated and identified with rewarding results.

Contradictions of character, expressed within the context of psychic plurality, reveal the kammic tensions of the good-evil axis which inhere, and for which responsibility must be borne, even though it becomes a moot point to which psychic level that responsibility must accrue. The area of this complexity extends over a vaster context than can be arbitrarily adduced, since it inevitably involves an amorphous succession of antecedent lives.

When antecedent lives crop up as a topic of discussion, it is customary to impatiently brush the matter aside as though it possesses no basis in fact or relevance at all. For the majority only the immediate life is relevant, whereas past lives, if any, mean next to nothing. This attitude belittles the significance of the subconscious, in whose subterranean passage these past lives lie. The tendency to identify the total personality only by the conscious data which prevails upon the surface undercuts the significance of subconscious continuity, in so far as the survival of individuality is concerned, because the psyche for its survival requires not merely conscious directives but a subconscious network of machinery, automatic in its propulsive functionality. It is the automatic current of the subconscious which enables the mechanical function of the organism to continue without the conscious mind's volition, for it is beyond the capacity of the conscious mind to regulate functions of which it does not possess the expertise, or play watchman to functions over which it has no control, always preoccupied as it is elsewhere, even when asleep. Moreover, the peripheral mind is under an obligation for its very existence to the corresponding undercurrent of the subconscious past, in whose under-drift the debris of past experience remains salvaged and preserved from the erosions of time. It is the overload of the past which pushes its way into the present and determines the possibilities of process, without which memory and consciousness itself would dissolve into a mere mirage.

It is in the context of past lives that the future already exists, in that for the individual the kammic momentum of the past and present merge only into those possibilities the seeds of which have already been sown within the track of the revolving psyche, dependent on the line of greatest preponderance for their inevitable enactment in the dimensions of spatio-temporal fact. The ultimate worth and trajectory of man, therefore, hinges to an imponderable degree on the extent of accumulated potential which his psychic substratum contains, outlasting as it does the peripheral appendages of the immediate life.

It is not the acquired prejudices and attitudes of the surface personality but the substance of any inner layers of experience which provide the individual with stability and foothold. The conscious mind, being only the tip of the psychic iceberg, is by itself only of passing interest, an offshoot of environmental contact, cognizant of merely a fraction of its total antecedent heritage. The subconscious, on the other hand, possesses a fascination of its own, in that its vast tracts of territory contain subterranean deposits which enrich. The fact that antecedent data recede into the subconscious background with the advent of fresh life and material, in no way renders the previously accumulated store inactive or extinct. Even if memory flounders and becomes indistinct through rebirth, the immediate personality is always coloured by its subconscious past in a wide variety of incoherent ways. When focused on through hypnotic regression or meditational techniques, however, antecedent processes and impressions prove to be in retrospect just as conspicuous and relevant as they ever were.

The matter is one of priorities. That is, without a generous background of psychic stock from the aeonic past, the evidence which the mind can glean from its present environmental span is extremely small. Life for its enlargement requires perspective to consolidate its gains. If it is true that the mind in retrospect is always looking back for happy morsels from the past, often in futility, it may be that its failure to proceed back far enough deprives it of the elusive reward. By pressing back far enough it is always possible that something in the past may contribute to present felicity and future hope, since the future is not a coincidence which is created out of nothing but depends for its fruition upon (past and present) collective force. It is not a psychic law, however, that present action (or kamma) must necessarily produce *immediate* returns, rather it may lie within the subconscious for many an age awaiting its fruition, until such time as favourable circumstances elicit its external release.

If it is valid that kammic experience lies within the subconscious for many an age without revealing itself explicitly, then if it were induced to expose its stock by some radical technique, the cumulative experience of past lives could serve as a more stable guide for right conduct in present affairs than a mere handful of terrestrial years spent in circumscribed pursuits. A mind is measured, or should be, by its scope. A billion-year old mind would obviously contain more potential than one of only three score years and ten, for it would have registered data far beyond the range of the average life-span, and witnessed events unheard of before. Connected by a series of life-spans, psychic records could be exposed, establishing this billion-year old mind as a potential resource ready to be tapped.

Physicality blocks the eye on every side. Scanning the landscape for possibilities, the apprehensive eye flounders in its probe of the future and the past. The intellect with its meagre stock of data proves inadequate whensoever it aspires to penetrate the mysteries of a psyche whose origins remain unplumbed. If this immaturity disqualifies it as a guide on a conducted tour of the psychic past, the prospects are rendered not so bleak by the alternative faculty of recollecting previous lives, so as to elicit data and reallocate positions by the fitting of bits and pieces together, whereby the psychic pattern (vaguely intimated heretofore but not schematically introduced) may become an established fact. Also, if the mind were to turn in on itself, it would discover that the future, so anxiously pondered on, already exists, in that the ingredients for its evolution are collectively available and present in embryo. If the past cannot be re-formed, as kammic consequences will have their day, yet in the future may be structured hope. From this kammic collective the mind cannot select what it likes and reject the rest, since the lesson of kammic liabilities and assets is that they evolve accordingly as external circumstances provide the opportunity. Nevertheless, the wise investor, by consolidating his assets, draws them to the fore, enlarging their immediate impact and expediting their priority, while relegating his liabilities to some distant corner of his psychic space.

The hope for the future is that wholesome kamma may be adroitly induced and unwholesome repercussions sagaciously side-stepped. There is a fallacious concept in some Hindu religious sects, however, that if kamma is allowed to exhaust itself through repeated rebirth and no fresh kamma

made to accrue, liberation from the round of rebirths will automatically arise. This concept is categorically refuted by the Buddhist position as a mere sophistry. If it were necessary for kamma to be completely exhausted, then liberation becomes impossible, since not only is antecedent kamma so vast, the very fact of immediate living produces fresh kamma without pause. Kammic exhaustion as a prerequisite is rendered superfluous, and liberation made possible, when ignorance and attachment have been eradicated from the mind. It is not in drastic techniques but in psychic subtlety that the Buddhist ethic lies.

The psychic landscape of future lives, by subtlety, comes within some measure of control, and as such may be reasonably foretold. With dexterity the evolving psyche, as it tends its assets and augments them on the way, keeps its turbulent liabilities at bay. Meditation, in this context, is a major tool in attaining this end: by sitting still it, paradoxically, dodges the knocks and jabs of life effectively. Moreover, in so far as projection into the future is concerned, the developed meditational-mind renders extra-mobility archaic, for through its agility in traversing space-time it leaves physicality way behind. What represents for physicality (such as the projection of a rocket to some remote star) a future, becomes for the meditational-mind a present, and even a past. That is, as psychic projection reaches for the star in an instant, and returns (maybe discovering the star to be already extinct), the labouring rocket must proceed towards the star as existing in the realm of some remote futurity. The relativity of space-time plays havoc with physicality, while leaving psychic mobility unscathed.

As long as the psyche is connected to the body, however, tension remains. For even though it is true that the mind is superior to the body in matters of mobility, nevertheless its connection with the body irksomely enforces that the past remain where it is, and the future remain a quantity yet to be achieved in terms of physicality. Even if the mind can leap a star the body remains behind, outflanked by molecular drag. Only total liberation from the body enables the mind to transcend its conditioned relativity, to attain a position of near absolute ascendancy in so far as space-time is concerned.

It is typical of the scientific technique, however, to attain its secular objectives without any motivation based upon religious values. Until human nature possesses the emotional stability not to fly off the handle under the merest pressure, to probe the universe so as to reveal its secrets can be disastrous. The devious tensions which already exist as the result of nuclear technology is only a brief preview of what could occur if fresh discoveries are revealed. A sound approach to knowledge, therefore, always resolves itself to a matter of morality and emotional control. It is in these values that knowledge itself becomes secure. In this context the art of sitting still, anti-climatic as it may seem, becomes a deed heroic in itself. Heroic in that, perceiving the transience in all things, the mind exerts itself towards tranquillity, inflicts no harm, develops benevolence and peace. Not in mindless movement but in tranquillity lies the true human advance.

In the world of circles momentum is king. By the way men carry on their lives it would seem that by endless circles life attains to mastery. Yet momentum, the mobility of life, is in fact a state less of body than of mind. For without a step out of doors, the Chinese sage observes, the whole world may be known: the further one may travel the less one may know. As he dances on through life the last thing man sees himself hopping as is as a frightful joke. The fright is that he cannot stop, enticed by invisible machinery to move from one illusion to the next. Extra-mobility in such a context becomes a gymnastic compatible merely to the emotionally immature or the very young.

As clouds arise to fall as rain, consciousness lifts itself for a moment merely to spill back to earth again, and yet again. Fleeting, insignificant, and formless are the days which go to make up hope, a world of make-believe, the cloud-drift as of dreams. The substance of hope stands fast only in mountain calm. For cosmic consciousness, the evolution of psychic reach, to become a reality,

physicality has to be relegated to the ground. The way within is in fact the way out, with the everlasting tenure of the overall expanse as its objective mark.

The body is an able servant when it is moved, but far from able when of movement it becomes the slave. Much has already been made of the difficulties attendant on the attainment of mind-control. So habitualized is the mind to physical diversion that enormous obstacles arise when an attempt to sit still even for a minute is made. Yet to elicit all that is felicitous in life entails an enlarged landscape, of sitting still, for physical activity reduces psychic sensitivity. The sophistication of sitting still lies in its psychic polish, of anchored activity in a high degree. Although it may be confused with idle daydreaming and hypnotic techniques, nothing could be further from the truth. If daydreams and hypnotic spells rely upon suggestion for their induction into trance, insight-meditation is a completely volitional state within its own control, depending upon a high degree of vigour for it to attain its mark.

Depending on Self for salvation

To offset the overload of hours, wherein the mind fritters its life away, and to coalesce in equilibrium demands a rather generous spinal outlay. The tendency of minds without backbone is to hang on to a leader's coattails, without any impetus of their own. Buddhism, for one, has never been a 'saviour' religion, with no claims made to be able to lift humanity up by its boot-strings. The naive who await the millennium await in vain, for only personal effort and resolve enables the mind to attain whatever golden age the far futurity may contain.

If the total personality of the individual is to receive its due, therefore, it would be most salutary if the bottom levels of the psyche were to be permitted the benefit of an airing, a constitutional, from time to time so as to forestall their premature suffocation and demise. For that is what it resolves to when the subconscious is bullied into a backseat by the peripheral mind, it wilts from neglect, and the surface personality becomes deprived of its active cooperation in matters of the past, not to mention the abandonment and loss of a major portion of its psychic heritage.

In the preceding pages much has been made of the individual approach to the whole secular-religious context, seeming to create the impression thereby that merely the salvation of the individual is at stake, as if it were the only standard of values. The fact is that man as a species of animal is instinctively dedicated to saving his own skin. And as such it is necessary to appeal in large measure to his self-centred instincts, even in the religious context. The mind is weaned of its selfishness only step by step, and after an aeonic ordeal, whereby it is eventually made to realize that it is actually in the sublimation of selfish instincts such as these that the ultimate course of life steadily proceeds. And it is to the degree that he is dedicated to a collective good that man in an ever-ascending scale sheds his animality behind to become a psychic masterpiece.

Until such time as man's sensibilities have been purged in the crucible of life, it would be presumptuous to appeal to his better instincts by an invitation to sacrifice his personal felicity for the benefit of the common weal. Any appeal, for it to generate response, must rest upon the considerations of individual values, and the concrete results that they bring. In calls to better instincts there always lurks the danger involved of providing incitements to ambitious minds which harbour illusions of grandeur, to give rein to their baser instincts for domination, cloaked under a heroic guise of leading the mass. Man's naive demand for heroes to lead him out of the wilderness would seem to elevate these personages into a godly necessity. The lesson of history, however, is that no hero is so significant that he becomes indispensable to the general weal. Dispensability is life's order of the day, whereby heroes, both imitation and genuine, after having had their say, fade desperately away.

The Buddhist ethic bases its veracity on personal example, in that he who would aspire to be a hero must by an all self-effacing humility first make a heroic conquest of himself, for only in such a context can his credibility lie. The Buddhist ethic by not paying homage to any social philosophy would seem to recommend an attitude of irresponsibility, repudiating the fate of those less fortunate. If so, it is not to appreciate the elevation of the concern. For it is not when the mind is inextricably involved that it is at its best, but only when it ascends to a remove that it attains its peak. The very fact of the mind's being emotionally involved signifies its subjection, in contrast to the impartiality of outlook which illuminates it when emotionally at a remove. Not to be subject, yet free to participate, is the essence of the liberated mind.

THE RELIGIOUS APPROACH

Beyond reason and intellectualising

A prominent fallacy concerning Buddhism is that it is a 'rational' system. Approached merely from this standpoint it may eventually be a disappointment to discover that it is neither specifically 'rational' nor 'intellectual' in the commonly accepted sense of the terms. Fallacies such as these, and the eventual disillusionment attendant on misplaced expectations, arise from the belief that rational or intellectual explanations of life are the only legitimate explanations. Much of the interest in Buddhism today, if it is not merely of the casual sort, stems from a natural distaste for the limited quality of previous religious beliefs and social mores, bolstered in this context with the hope that Buddhism will conveniently provide instant answers to the problems of life. When it is subsequently realized that it entails, as a prerequisite, living the routine life of morality and other forms of psychic discipline involving strenuous effort, discouragement and boredom are the inevitable result.

This sorry situation has not been alleviated by the manner in which Buddhism itself has been presented to the public by the over-zealous and the naive. The great drawback of Buddhist exposition so far has been its almost total dependence on scholastic structures rather than a meditational-experiential process. When religious areas of experience are driven into a corner by artificial intellectual devices and matters of semantics, confusion prevails.

Religion, if it is to endure and serve some useful purpose, must rest on something more fundamentally stable than the luxuries which over-sophisticated palates irrelevantly demand. In no wise should it succumb to the pressure of being presented as a 'fashionable' system, with an acceptable facade of rationality as a lure, while completely ignoring or rejecting the more 'irrational' aspects which are an inevitable portion thereof, dismissing them as the mere accretions of a later age. The value of a sound religion does not lie in what sophisticated sections of society find agreeable to its taste, but rests upon the degree of veracity and resilience it is able to muster under stress. The very structure of the religion is to be verified only through the experiential approach, no matter how disagreeable that verification may eventually prove to be. The tendency to select merely the more agreeable titbits at the expense of the overwhelming bulk is a symptom of irresponsibility, revealing the emotional immaturity with which the whole subject is approached. It exposes the sophisticated artificiality which is content merely to be entertained by the posturing of form rather than penetration into depth. The value of experience, moreover, is appreciated in proportion to the labour which has been invested in excavating it to light. Any form of experience which can be purchased for a dime becomes a highly dubious asset, considering the ease with which it is so cheaply bought.

Regarding the 'rationality' of the Buddhist structure which has been so much extolled, kamma and rebirth, to mention only two of the aspects (of which so much is made in Buddhist exposition), are not peculiarly rational explanations of the life and death process. Their factuality does not depend upon any intellectual gymnastic; they exist independently within their own modes of irrationality and discontinuity. Kamma and rebirth gain relevance, in fact, only in a specific context: the questioning of the morally-conscious man, who is compelled to question the significance of life as it is, unconvinced that its inadequacies and injustices are the natural heritage of merely a single life (the immediate) in the birth of which he has had so little hand. Not content to exist in the primitive somnolence of a beast-like mentality, his questioning becomes endowed with a singular relevance, implying that his conscious personality (a mere fraction of the total man) is being pressured by certain areas of the subconscious, instigating it to an activity demanding definite and conclusive replies. It is to be

assumed that the long-faring psyche, with its overload of perplexity concerning the life-situation, when it reaches saturation point is compelled to seek solutions or erupt.

Science vs. religion

The objectivity of religious truth is always implicitly challenged by the scientific or rational approach. The domain of science, however, devoted as it is to the exploration of the visible universe, employs a methodology whose functions are in direct contrast to the directions predicated by religion, whose prime concern is to attain the inner security of an invisible truth. It is too much to expect that the terms and restrictions of methodologies so disparate can ever possess a common ground. Nevertheless, the claim to objectivity advanced by more sophisticated forms of religious truth asserts that extrasensory perception and its methodology, when developed to an adequate degree, produces facts which do not collapse even under the strictest scrutiny. It is claimed, moreover, that it is not a prerequisite that the truths vouchsafed be first accepted theoretically, to be at a later date objectively confirmed. The contention that certain intellectual priorities of attitude (through anticipation and suggestion) determine the discovery does not bias the case in this context, because the extrasensory approach is confirmed by the discovery itself. All that is demanded as a prerequisite is that the mind be alert, so as to observe details whensoever they appear, in the right direction and within the proper perspective. That is, if a certain star were declared to lie towards the north, its location could hardly be substantiated if the psychic telescope were to be trained in the opposite locality, scanning the starry horizon to the *south!*

Leaving other religious abstractions out of the picture for the present, it is sufficient in this context to confine attention to less controversial concerns. When Buddhism claims that the world-process is subject to transience, vulnerability, and psychic plurality, it would be an incorrigibly biased critic who refuses to admit the objectivity of the observed claim. The observation that all is not as well with the world as it would at first sight seem, however, is further pursued by the religious approach, so as to discover whether a methodology exists whereby this sorry state of things may be rectified, counteracted, or redressed. The whole structure of counteraction implicitly contained in a sound religious approach is merely the consequence of its consistent objectivity.

For long religion maintained its position as a matter of mere geography, by its close confinement to a certain locality imposing an uncomfortable restriction upon the mentality of the individual, often with deleterious effect. Today, with instant mobility offering opportunities for travel, together with the wide dissemination of literature on the subject, religious values have been made available for comparison and selectivity in an enlarged context. In view of this, religion, like other concerns today, exposes itself to the vulnerability of being reduced to a matter of mere compatibility, of what personally appeals and what does not. The merits, or demerits, of a religion have therefore come to be measured by the demands which its devotees importunately impose thereon. Left to itself, without the biased hand of importunity involved, a sound religion passes beyond the bounds of mere geography and compatibility, to set a pattern for universality.

Although the appeal of religion diminishes in proportion to its inability to produce instant happiness and visible rewards, it still remains a substantial source of restraint in tempering man's inhumanity to man. To hope that some form of social humanitarianism may eventually serve as a satisfactory substitute for religious values fails to penetrate the heart of the distress: man's agonizing quest for ultimate meaning, and some assurance, through survival after death, that compensation for all the tribulations and humiliations of his earthly sojourn exists. Unlike any other secular substitute, it is only religion which supplies the material to accommodate this need.

The distress which religion is encountering at the hands of secular society, however, is due in large measure to the erosion of its basic motive for existing at all: the ability to satisfy. Its credibility has

declined to such a point that it only elicits incredulity, so that the only occasion wherein a non-religious man is compelled to visit a religious institution is when he is laid out in a coffin, stretched out in un-protesting rest. After all the centuries of glory at its peak, the religious momentum finds itself winding down almost to its dregs. And it would seem that modern man could not care less. This careless rejection, the ruthlessness and disdain contained in this attitude, however, betrays an inner hunger for provision and the resentment harboured against religion for somehow failing to supply what it is its basic business to satisfy.

That whole nations and societies are able to exist without so much as a religious afterthought is not so much a symptom of having attained to moral maturity and self-sufficiency, as it is evidence of how simple it becomes to slip into the position of being a victim of spiritual illiteracy. A dog recognizes no necessity for religious values because its chief concern is determined by the uncertainty of where its next meal is coming from. For man to regress likewise to the point of basic needs would be merely to underwrite his inherent animality. The prosperity of non-religious societies, therefore, is no argument for religion's superfluity, but merely provides edification regarding the degree to which material gain advances at the expense of moral under-nourishment, a spectre which shrivels up the mind.

That environmental pressure exerts a prejudicial pull on the understanding is an established fact, whereby lines of discrimination become fixations in the mind. No where does this apply with greater pertinence than in the sphere of religion, where mental movement becomes tainted with the stigma of narrow provincialism and rigid locality. Smug satisfaction and casual acceptance where religion is concerned suffer from the same malaise as total rejection, evidenced by a certain lack of reach. Not content merely to grasp that which lies nearest to hand, spiritual breadth invites a widening of receptivity, which can do no harm and may, on the contrary, prepare the ground for achieving a world of good. By wider receptivity a mere outward stretch (like secular science) is not implied, nor does a mere inward contraction (like hermeticism) signify sensitivity. The ideal combination would be receptivity to outward contacts and the sensitivity of inward reach. If secular science represents an outward stretch and religion an inward trek, the possibility of their future cooperation would set the stage for a coming to terms with the extremities with which life is perennially beset, lending hope to the eventual consolidation of experience on universal lines.

If religion proves unacceptable to a majority; it is not so much because of its inability to satisfy as a fear that acceptance would invite ridicule. It is a mark of the age that it has given precedence to a set of values where, amongst other things, to be religious is only to be weak. In a society which elevates secular success as its measure of strength and religious faith as a symptom of debility, it is only inevitable that the indigent majority should tremble to expose themselves to the scorn of an affluent minority, to be numbered in whose sophisticated ranks is to be considered *chic*. Fear, as always, remains an unpredictable factor in the affairs of man. No where is this more apparent than in the individual's relations with his fellowman. In such an ambiguous scale of values, it is better to writhe in pain rather than be a social outcast. To be stigmatized with the lash of poverty is an even greater humiliation than to be spiritually bankrupt. Society's stamp of approval measures more than any form of divine endorsement.

Another element which has contributed to the early demise of religious values is religion's traditional identification with God, whose existence the contemporary sophisticated man feels he cannot rationally accept. The error is to equate religions with God, considering that religions exist which postulate no such principle in their universal scheme. The term must in fact be first defined. In incomprehension of the source of things, man's forefathers conveniently shifted the responsibility for their ignorance onto some unknown quantity and called it God, as though by so doing all things were summarily resolved. The ancient convenience, on the contrary, today ushers in more perplexity than light. The concept becomes at best a device for disguising man's vulnerability, while God becomes a scapegoat responsible for all man's inadequacies, at worst. On the pious assumption that it would be

sacrilege for the mind of God to be explored, over-simplification of a subject as complex as the origin of life only deals an unjust blow to man's intelligence, relegating it to a hopeless servility.

The fundamental premise of unsophisticated ideologies is that all men are created equal. The fact that man creates himself unequally is by this premise divested of its due impact. Equality remains as always an ambiguous concept, in so far as mental bias is concerned. In the religious sphere, the concept of equality provides a convenient explanation for the human predicament, shifting the inequalities of life onto another level, a plane on which all creatures become complacently the same. In the secular field, the concept becomes a pose whereby the more affluent delude the sensibilities of the less fortunate, buttering over with sophisticated terms their fundamental inequality. That equality has always been an unfeasible objective in the realm of human affairs is a fact which establishes itself without the benefit of external aid, human or divine. Shifting of responsibilities and sophisticated justifications in no way remove the liabilities of illusion and the humiliations of inequality. The ambiguities of human inequality persuade the intelligent man to seek other forms of psychic superiority as the ultimate objective of life. If man is to outlive the frustrations of his fundamental inequality it is only logical that he undercut the drift to fritter away whatever purpose he possesses on futile and irrational claims, and build up to the mark instead the standard of his potential count. The explicit endorsement of kammic inevitability, as asserted by the Buddhist stand, is that it distributes the portions of life's liabilities and assets according to individual deserve, and with unambiguous impartiality.

A reliable substitute for religious values has not yet been found, in so far as a sedative for the fever of life is concerned. Turning to secular idols as a projection of muddled emotions and vociferous demands serves only as an invitation to dismay, as the idol eventually topples leaving nothing in its train but disarray. If traditional religion's struggle to survive has become plagued by the locusts of appetite, devouring everything in sight, instant idols appear on the scene as a substitute, and flourish, possessing the ability to make its devotees content. The widespread popularity of 'secular religions', bordering on the ridiculous in some of its more extreme forms, is really a painful reaction to a materialistic age, is hardly a substitute for a true religious sense. Whatever genuine nucleus exists amidst the antics of 'occultism', to mention one of the secular religions in vogue, in no way compensates for the lengths of senselessness to which it becomes exposed, reducing it as a 'religion' to one of ridicule. The 'occult' world of disembodied psyches, exotic though it may sound, is really a realm in which the majority of its denizens were never anything much in their terrestrial life, so that it becomes extremely naive, therefore, to assume that any contact therewith on the disembodied plane will produce any elevated effect. The eventual discovery that nothing of intrinsic value is to be found in these 'contacts' leaves the gullible mind more disillusioned than when it began. Novelty, and the thirst for it, possesses an attraction in that its life is extremely brief, for to prolong it would only force it into becoming a bore. To be perceptually diverted from the genuine article is a fate which the novelty-seeker must be prepared to accept, until such time as he has become tempered to a degree where a decent deal becomes his natural deserve.

In such a state of affairs, where it has invited so much competition from the secular field, the only resource left for religion is to invoke the invisible, by attempting to make it visible. Attempts to achieve this have given rise to bizarre and astounding results, tending to repulse the sincere seeker rather than attract. The naive belief that religious values may be transmuted bodily into secular forms creates an overload with a sickening aftertaste, for whenever extremes burst upon the scene whatever balance there ever was is hopelessly upset. Even if it is granted that personal involvement is a basic factor in the verification of religious experience, the drawback is that though the experience may be valid for the experiencer it may not be so for all men. By attempting to translate his experience into the terms of daily life, any experiencer may overstep the mark. The discord which results from each one claiming his experience as genuine (and, by implication, the other is false) only leads to the very ferment of intolerance which it is the business of a sound religion to prevent. The necessity for

conciliation in this respect is something which a sound religion should be able to recognize and ameliorate.

It is impossible to appreciate religious values without first possessing a certain measure of receptivity. It is a mark of the educated mind that it accepts something not merely because it has been so informed but because some inner chord already exists which, tuned-to in advance, responds to a familiar theme even at the slightest contact. Without this high-fidelity of receptivity, it is less than likely that any invitation to acquaint the mind with an unfamiliar or alien idea will produce anything more than a polite response. It is a matter of psychic background. Without a background of antecedent experience, without a memory-bank to refer, an idea only superficially registers. Receptivity, the readiness to register, depends for its reaction and response not on pressure but on an adequate psychic computer. Adequate receptivity pervades as a sensor the whole structure of the religious life. To the extent that the mind is not adequately prepared to engage its subject, the search for the stability of an inner life remains barren of result. So complicated is the structure of the inner life that even when a considerable degree of receptivity is produced, psychic stability eludes the reach. Contrary to expectations, therefore, a sound religious life, even if experimented with by the many, remains confined to the province of the few.

In so far as the Buddhist stand is concerned, such receptivity becomes a crucial factor to its appreciation. The so-called Noble Truth of Suffering, for instance, of which so much is made, has been translated into terms which prove unacceptable to secular society, since the world for the worldling is by no means a graveyard but offers ample opportunity for fun. By an over-simplification in its presentation, the significance of the Buddhist stand loses its impact. That suffering is a factor of life is self-evident, and is not something which it is necessary to emphasize. To reduce everything to suffering is, in the opinion of the layman, to overstep the mark. According Buddhism the benefit of the doubt as to its sagacity in not being superfluous, its statement that suffering is at the basis of things must signify something more complex, especially when it is asserted that it is a *noble* truth. Since suffering obviously is never noble in itself, something else must be implied. What is actually meant is that only the mind which has attained to a certain pitch of nobility is able to penetrate the fog of life so as to appreciate the implications. Not a mere grasp of the relativity of individual suffering, but the penetration (in a meditational-wisdom context) into life's origins and the mind's illusions is what enables the matured mind to apprehend the intricacies which lie at stake.

It is the transient hollowness, the lack of an enduring ego, which consigns life into a pile of irrelevant dust. In his zeal to redress the ill of the world, the secular-oriented man seeks external remedies, ignoring the fact that what is essentially at stake demands inconspicuous internalities. Despite all the effort in the world (past and present) the facts of old age, disease, and death are vulnerabilities which remain basically unchanged. It is the relentless persistence of these elements which render attempts at change by mere secular methods so presumptions and futile, since individual life has barely begun to function when it becomes time to unceremoniously depart.

Living under the compulsion of a tight schedule, the legacy bequeathed the mind by life's brevity is a series of unfinished experiences in the vortex of things. When unfinished experiences become the order of the day, it becomes convenient to exonerate failure by erecting an edifice of sophisticated sophistries. To alleviate the suffering of the world in a secular context, although an admirable objective merely touches upon a skin-infection, eradicating in no way the root causes of the disease. The naive assumption that suffering can be eliminated by mere material amenities completely evades the fundamental facts. It is fashionable to assume that economic sufficiency and social equality negate all ills. The assumption implies that if humans have enough to eat, they will have no cause to envy their more affluent brethren, and the baser passions will thereby be automatically erased. Although it is possible for man to become less malignant when his belly is full, the fact remains that fulfilment itself is always a complete relative and subjective affair. Since views differ regarding fulfilment, the

flexibility of values provides ample scope for diverse interpretations, whereby any sector of society may marshal an array of devices to support its view.

In so far as economic and social equality is concerned, it always seems unjust that a minority should possess the best of the world's goods at the expense of the indigent majority. Consideration, however, should be directed to the possibility that if antecedent kammic causes determine to an indefinable extent the prosperity of individuals and communities, then they are only reaping their deserve for that which they established the groundwork in the past. If this fact proves unacceptable to the mass, any attempts to disrupt the *status quo* on their part, by coercion or by force, only reveals that very inhumanity and bias of which the more affluent stand accused.

Suffering a reality

The weakness of over-simplifications in the secular context lies in the assumption that all difficulties resolve themselves once desire has been fulfilled. Observation reveals, however, that desire remains constant, only its objectives change. If inherent passions such as greed, hate, and delusion, could be eradicated by social and economic policies this would have since occurred. Only a subtle mind appreciates subtlety. Utopias, and visions thereof, are not new. They have existed in the past in various forms, and will reappear again. Yet suffering remains. It is not to appreciate the significance of transience, which bypasses man's presumptions prescriptions even before they have begun to formulate. Sophisticated intellectual approaches to the problem and actual moral living may, moreover, be witnessed in all their discrepancy. It is fashionable today to express moral indignation at humanity's ills, while the extermination of other animal life is witnessed without a pang, or with a delicate display of outraged sensibilities. Since all forms of violence are equally abhorrent, the discrepancy between mere pious postures and actual living only creates a jarring discord.

Secular solutions can be a very good thing. And it is true that to talk of religious values to human beings who are starving to death becomes a mockery. Nevertheless, it is the business of the religious experience to define that even if suffering is a deplorable evil it is by no means the end of the affair. Disillusion is the inevitable outcome of placing all life's hopes in the promises of the secular arm. No matter how ably educated, technically efficient, or politically conscious society becomes, it does not lie in the scope of the techniques it employs to eradicate the root cause of the concern. The lack of secular interest in pursuing the disclosure of ultimate causes and objectives, and the preoccupation instead with merely current issues and the administering of palliatives, no matter how necessary they may be, fails to do justice to the whole problem of causal complexity, and only gives rise to situations of mistaken identity, of putting the finger upon merely peripheral items as the culprit, overlooking the major roots. If material sufficiency and technological ingenuity serve well in a transient context, their significance fades in proportion to the role they are able to play in the larger context of ultimate values. If man does not live upon bread alone, neither can his salvation exist in the fluctuations of the stock exchange. There comes a moment of truth when the mind is faced with the decision of a lifetime: of whether it is to go on living as it does, or to dedicate the rest of its days to an ultimate quest. If the latter decision is affirmed, then all else fades into relative insignificance.

If suffering is deplorable, it may be alleviated to a large extent, not merely by social welfare programs, but by the psychological impact it may produce upon the individual when considered in terms of the relevance, or irrelevance, it possesses in an ultimate context. The irrelevance of suffering lies in its victims neither knowing why they suffer or for what. Even when it is alleviated by material aid, suffering such as this exists in a meaningless context, with its vulnerability consigned to a vicious cycle, without any compensating avenue of ultimate relief.

The relevance of suffering, on the other hand, lies in the mind's attitude, of being irradiated with the understanding that even if suffering is a liability of life, it is far from being the end of the world. An

insight into the consequences of kammic action and rebirth, morality and integration, buttressed by a belief that liberation as an ultimate objective (no matter how distant) exists, endows life with the compensating elements of direction and purpose, enabling the mind to rise above its immediate agony, sustained by a certain measure of projected felicity.

Even if for nothing but its shock-value, suffering possesses relevant impact. The loss of someone near and dear inflicts merely a self-centred shock. This shock in a personally-oriented context, however, may pass into a more impersonally-oriented field, such as the emotion aroused by the hapless loss of distant millions, whose fate evokes a more humane response, containing a relevance of a much superior kind.

The relevant and the irrelevant aspects of suffering stem, therefore, merely from an attitude of mind. A synthesis is achieved in the life of a man when the realization dawns upon the evolving consciousness that life's seeming injustices and inequalities are but a transient thing, the result of circumstances seeded in a distant kammic past, and that if future felicity is to be attained it can be best achieved only in the context of a deeper reality, through moral persuasion and not coercive force.

The greatest barrier to a synthesis in the affairs of man, however, is attitude. Observation reveals that attitudes are rarely innate but adopted from externality, and may be eventually reversed. Nevertheless, any intrusion into these private preserves poses a threat to the well-established ego, offending it to the quick. The tenacity of attitudes adopted or otherwise, often soars even above the attachment to material possessions, exposing the mind to an enormous vulnerability, which consequently must be defended at all costs by the erection of a whole battery of psychic equipment that becomes more sophisticated in proportion to the intelligence of the individual concerned. This inflexibility of attitudes slams the psychic door upon life, depriving the mind of the ability to readjust its sights when other forms of direct evidence appear upon the psychic scene. If the virtue of the open mind lays in its limitless expanse, so the artificial defences of the mentally-closed circuit only serves to display its boundless conceit.

The argument for a synthesis of values, religious and secular, is that the ills to which humanity is heir demand in ultimate terms, not merely a secular but a religious solution, since the secular life is a mere matter of three score years and ten, whereas the religious life embodies a vision whose perspective extends far beyond the grave, into an aeonic context. The Buddhist ideal, therefore, is no mere call to do nothing in the world of spatio-temporal fact (as widely assumed), but explicitly persuades the individual to do what he can, in the context of a process which has the eternal as its mark.

The intelligent man seeks objectives which endure. How can he hope to realize these objectives when he himself does not endure? Since even organic transplants are unable to indefinitely extend the life-span, what is man, lying on his back and breathing out his last, to hope for from a world bursting with abundance? If religion is to survive it must definitely define that it is not a contradiction in terms if man, in seeking objectives which endure, himself does not endure. For endurance is eventually to be measured not in terms of bodily life but by the psychic wave-length of survival after death. Psychic life possesses a certain inner structure. In so far as survival after death is concerned, the lengths to which the psyche is able to endure will determine whether it is a fitting vehicle for the achievement of an enduring objective. To the extent that the psyche is able to survive the battering of physicality it inches on towards its objective, fulfilling the structure of its master-plan. Purged of all the litter with which its conduits are choked, and the dependence on external stimuli for its support reduced, the psyche may properly consider itself well away upon its survival course.

The long-term view of life, however, possesses no appeal for those who know no better measure than the terms of instant gain, and are unable to acknowledge the less than concrete as their mark, or afford to await a distant and dubious good, which may or may not exist, when something substantial stares

them in the face right here and now. The terms of today and what it can bring are the worldly man's concern. Such an attitude invites nothing more constructive than a ruthless drive for acquisition, in the performance of which the feelings of others measure nil. The demon of acquisition breeds an ominous and chilling spirit in its devotees. When man comes to the stage when he no longer sees anyone to whom he owes a thing, believing that for whatever he has achieved he has only himself to thank, then the jungle has sneaked into the city and each one is on his own. Since each life owes a debt to preceding life, such a phenomenon, with its focus fixed solely upon the self, arouses no emotion in the cultivated mind but one of recoil. If water flows over a stone without leaving an impress, or a cancer gnaws out a man's entrails leaving only a grinning hulk, even so the memory of creatures such as these is always instantly erased from the minds of their fellow men once they pass out from the human scene.

So riddled with superfluity has life become that it is forgotten that man needs only something on his plate to make him live. The argument for survival is that it is healthier to exist upon a minimum of wheat than to become bilious upon a maximum of trash. After having had their fill, it is considered appropriate for humans to instinctively lift up their eyes, rather than cast them down to scrounge for more. The gradual ascent from animal standards of gratification up to the cultured summits of the mind becomes a matter for appreciation only after its workings have at first-hand been observed.

The intelligent man cannot fail to be impressed by the senseless veneration which an advanced technology today commands. Commitment to the premise that man's wellbeing lies in an expansion of the technological structure is a way of thinking made possible only today. Little consideration is accorded to the fact that a high-productivity ratio, at the expense of a stunted psyche, is hardly the answer to life's agonizing needs. It is not the standard of living as such but the standard of understanding which agonizes to be raised. It is not the quality of the food he eats by which man's sights are raised, but the quality of the thoughts he thinks that lifts him up above the level of the beast. It becomes the height of arrogance, therefore, for a technological age to superciliously reject ancient civilizations as being underdeveloped and defunct. That societies without any vestige of technology worthy of the name persist even to this day is evidence enough of their basically sound potentialities. Due credit is rarely given to the fact that the value of a society is not elevated in proportion to the amount of products it can sell, but is measured rather in terms of the commodities of spirit which it can raise. It is, in fact, the mark of civilizations fresh with youth to glorify themselves at the expense of the old, with no sense of obligation to the fact that they owe their very existence to the past, upon whose shoulders they have so arrogantly climbed to see the light of day.

Wants unlimited

It seems that there is no limit to the levels of comfort about which man dreams. The more 'educated' he becomes the more sophisticatedly his so-called standards rise. An education such as leaves the individual's inner resources neglected to an all time low is evidently an achievement of less at the expense of more. Of the real comfort of an inner life he has none, the pressures to preserve his status symbols consuming his drive with each hour of the day, and as his more extravagant instincts are being entertained life's deeper realities slip imperceptibly away.

The fact is that it takes more than a college education to reach a level of comfort whereby the sensibilities become totally refined. In so far as standards of living are concerned, the term of comfort resolve themselves to a psychic rather than a physical thing. The ease with which the 'educated' mind is distracted from a certain course is evidence enough of how unsettled and fragile its mental fabric fundamentally is. In what would the comfort of an easy-chair consist if the man sitting in it could not his restless mind control? With all the technology at his command, man's resistance to shock has not improved, the embarrassment of an age whose technicality should have produced a more self-

sufficient piece. It is a mark of life that as the amenities increase, the will to greatness is proportionately decreased.

Some form of education other than the common brand seems called for, with a formula for endurance woven into the fibre of its psychic fabric, enabling it to withstand the greatest wear and tear, arrayed in which a superlative level of comfort may be reached. The stability of an inner life, which a sound religious sense provides, is not achieved at the expense of a lowering of psychic standards to gratify a majority, but consists of an uplifting of levels to consummate objectives appreciated, unfortunately, only by the minority. The embarrassment of technology is that its net result has been the capacity to produce an abundance of goods but not a superior brand of mind. To conceal this inferiority an even greater abundance must be produced, at an ever-increasing pace, to reach a mythical superiority. That this panic for superiority defeats its purpose from the start by the very methods it employs, is not something which such a society will ever admit, for it is the utmost ledge on which all its hopes are built.

The vulnerability implicit in this struggle for material superiority is not something of which a sound religion lives in fear, since its base of support rests upon an order of things which lies above the material storm. The difficulty in penetrating to such an order, in view of its very height and the psychic clouds which it obstruct, demands another form of technology, an adventure into another dimension of psychic space. The illumination attending an uplift of psychic levels is an experience which is dearly bought. Once it has been attained, however, it will be appreciated to what an extent the superlative inner life possesses a capacity for psychic space, characterized by the effortless wing of a mind, spaciouly at peace.

If society is to redeem itself of its vulnerability to endless cycles, the development of a technology other than that of the machine should be its dominant concern. Man's pretensions to superiority should lie in the development of his humanity rather than his personal gain. Among primitive societies sophisticated gestures and grimace passed as polish, but now they only serve to display to what lengths of extravagance the mind convinced of its own superiority will go to buttress its conceit.

Solution to end suffering?

No where is this conceit made more apparent than in man's ideas of freedom and choice to determine his own destiny. By virtue of his being able to move his body he is led to believe that he is endowed with unlimited freedom and infinity of choice. Yet even in the matter of bodily functions the mind's will displays its irrelevance, since the organs function of themselves, mechanically, and if left to the mind's dictates would summarily collapse, so incoherent and inconsistent is consciousness itself. The law of life is that it depends upon coherence for its survival, without the consistency of which all things would come to grief. It is fortunate that life has seen fit to look after itself by functioning mechanically, instead of leaving it to the shaky mind of man.

In the realm of external affairs, man is led to believe that freedom of action is always his. In the context of a limited range of alternatives, however, choice itself is rendered academic. While living under the impression that it is exploring alternatives and initiating directives, the mind is in reality behaving like a puppet, a willing tool to further ends which are not its own but the dictate of forces of which it is not fully cognizant, and over which it possesses negligible control. Observation reveals that the mind is pressured to react to circumstances which it did not originate, and although it may propose alterations and remedies it is not in its domain to impose. In that activity is involved does not necessarily imply that movement of substance occurs. In the face of all human attempts, if the conditioning and timing is inopportune, man will always be stricken with dismay if allowances are not made for invisible forces which aid, or subvert, the direction of life's play. Of itself the universe whittles man down to size, forcing him to admit how small and insignificant his pretensions are, since

even his own body does not lie within his control. In fact, there are limits to what can be empirically mastered and explored, and the mind's power over situations is extremely circumscribed, confined in the bodily context to minor movements of arms and legs. Circumstances beyond its control are the order, and disorder, of the day.

The recognition, amorphous though it often be, that freedom is a fake is in part a contributing factor why violence rises to fever pitch at times, the rebel realizing that there is nothing about the human condition which can fundamentally be redeemed. It becomes the business of religion, therefore, to clarify to what extent freewill is possessed by man, and where it ineffectually stops. The benefit of the clarification is that it reveals that the limitations imposed on man's ability to react is not merely the result of pressures from an external world, but depends to a high degree upon the specific kind of individual he kammically is. What appears to be freewill or spontaneity is in reality the effect of reflexes conditioned by characteristic psychic grooves. Even children are no exception, for that which seems to be spontaneous behaviour is actually a characteristic reflex.

If a limitation of freewill appears irksome, it is not the environment so much as individual kamma which is wanting found. The responsibility to react, deliberately or distractedly, is always squarely lodged upon the shoulders of the individual mind. The heart of the matter is that it is not so much that man cannot choose his world as choose himself, for he is what he is through the momentum of antecedent push (from an aeonic past), and wallows in a fate which is really self-imposed. The instinct to rebel at the least provocation, therefore, only reveals the emotional immaturity on which it is based. It is not so much externality but man himself that agonizes to be changed. If he is really concerned to seek objectives which endure, the direction in which a start is to be made begins not with the world but with himself. For until his instincts and reflexes have been completely overhauled he will continue to make of the world a limited place in which to live.

If it is true that in his birth man possesses no choice, since the foetus is unable to select its womb, restrictions on its liberty exert their presence even before birth. The Buddhist stand, nevertheless, is that it is antecedent kamma which determines the reincarnating entity's descent into a certain womb and not some other. If these restrictions, therefore, persist into a continuum which evolves within a specific environment from birth onwards, and whose pattern is set from the very start thereby, it is only in accordance with its kammic deserve. If the kammic pattern cannot be utterly revoked, the alternative is that it may be modified. It is in this margin for modification that individual freedom lies. And this reveals how disastrous Rousseau's rhetoric can be: that man is born free, but everywhere finds himself in chains! The fact is that man is born in chains, paralyzed by his kammic past, and it is only by a superhuman effort that he shakes himself from his shackles free.

Although the kammic stand may seem a convenient excuse for disposing of all the difficulties that clamour for illumination, it is still the most persuasive that exists. And even if it is not, it in no way hinders man from shaking himself from his shackles free. In any case, if man prides himself upon the conceit that he is always his own man, it is more than likely that he is far from that ideal. For it is only when man loses himself in a consideration for the welfare of his fellows that he regains his own. If consideration for the welfare of others possesses no general appeal, since it is measured in terms of a dubious futurity, it nevertheless presents subtler satisfactions than the gratifications of self. A rapport with ambient life proves salutary not only in terms of man's baser instincts being proportionately reduced, but implements life's basic sense of hope in some distant futurity.

In seeking to be free as best he can, and the area of life in which he can best benefit himself and his fellowman, it is only well for man to take cognizance of the fact that time is never on his side. Since it is time that imposes the heaviest restriction on his achieving his aim, the only way the obstacle may be overcome is not by frantic movements to materialize his goals right here and now, but extend them into a more enlarged context. It is here that religious values possess a fundamental ascendancy over

the limitations of the secular product, in that its premises are not constrained by the tyranny of immediate gain, but exerts a steady trajectory with the transcendent as its mark. The fascination with a standard of values whose measure sinks or rises with the price of gold, is a form of security which offers little competition to an objective which assures that, with a combination of time and will, even the lowest forms of life may attain to an elevation beyond their wildest dreams.

If all things end in the grave, nothing that man does can matter very much. The future of the disembodied psyche, therefore, and the possibility of doing something about it in advance, is not something with which the average man is anxiously concerned. Since the flesh is all he knows, the best is to be made thereof, for time is short and endless sermonizing a bore. The dream is to carry his happiness around in easily convertible forms of ready cash. A pocketful of cash, in short, is a pocketful of bliss. Yet the real cash lies in the pocket of the psyche, able to elude the fatal hand of time as it cuts life adrift from its erstwhile flesh into the world unseen. If in this life the psyche is on its own, it is even more so once its enveloping form is cut, and left to wander on unheeded and alone, a beggar not worth a passing glance. For its prosperous survival provision must be made, in that no coin is convertible in the psychic after world except that of self-sufficiency.

Whatever may be said for the joys of instant gain, therefore, they are in no wise the measure of what life really means in terms of inner worth and aim. Since universal transience defeats any hope of sustaining present projects indefinitely at their peak, some other more enduring resource must be recruited in reserve to surmount the ever encroaching inroads of an uncertain world. It is a matter of financial verve. A motivation based on present profit at the risk of future loss is an investment plan without a range. The splendour of walking with a belly full today is no compensation for an empty one the next. The soundness of any investment plan lies not merely in the ratings that it boasts today, but the peaks to which it may soar to in the next. Without this degree of anticipation involved, no interest or momentum could ever be aroused in the whole investment scheme. The wise investor, to avert disaster diversifies his purse, fortified with the assurance or immediate trends as well as prospective gains.

The present life, therefore, and any future ones, for their success depend upon the delicate balance achieved between liabilities and assets, and the facility wherewith investments may be redeemed for instant cash at any time. It becomes the dilemma of the disembodied psyche that once it is severed from its erstwhile flesh and discovers that it still exists, the dismay is to find itself without a peg on which to hang its coat. It is self-evident that a well-stocked psychic portfolio is meaningless if one life is all there is. But if another world exists, then the psyche must moulder for its lack of foresight, in its failure to build an ample pile of stock. It is in this context that the penalties of the psyche vary in proportion to the extent that its vision halts, and fails to pass beyond the grave.

SURVIVAL

Only one life, or more?

If all things end in the grave, nothing that man does can matter very much. The fundamental Buddhist stand, however, is that life proceeds beyond the grave. In fact, it is not the lack of life, but the abundance of it, which renders accommodation and disposal embarrassingly acute.

In any consideration of life, and its survival after death, the element of time plays an indispensable part, for it is upon time that life proceeds, a fuel which it cannot do without. In the Buddhist context, time is a crucial factor which cannot be detached from all that has to be accomplished, in so far as the emancipation of the mind from the ceaseless round is concerned. The immensity of this project, for its achievement, demands a comprehensive sweep of time, of trial and error, something more than the brevity which merely one life-span can provide. The life capacity for experience matures only in proportion to the period of its terrestrial exposure and sojourn, and as such demands an enormous supply.

Time asserts its inextricable nature into whatever values that exist. The fact is that a state dissociated from time does not appear. The very nature of the universe involves an implicit built-in temporal process, and if it is true that time is relative to frames of reference and form, an absolute time equivalent to the universe as a whole also exists. Despite this basicity of time, however, it is fashionable in sophisticated circles to talk about 'timelessness' as a transcendental state. Timelessness is in reality an unsophisticated concept, associated with many a fallacious philosophy. Since temporality is built into the very structure of space, it becomes mere sophistry to claim the existence of a timeless state. Nirvana itself is the consummation of an effort which possesses immense periods in the world of spatio-temporal fact as its support. Buddhahood, in fact, is the supreme example of how spatio-temporality eventually produces an enduring masterpiece. The concept of timelessness, therefore, must remain what it actually is, a figment of an armchair prophet's dream.

The concept of commitment in the Buddhist context, is the consequence of the realization that nothing, least of all eternity, is ever gained without a generous measure of time and energy devoted to its end. It is life's way of learning for itself the fact that all the baubles, on which man places such great store, are really bubbles bursting in his face with the passage of temporal fact. It is not mere otherworldly obscurantism which asserts that the psyche is the product of an aeonic past, a sweeping landscape of lives, until its accumulated potential translates it decisively to some transcendent mark. That a prospective Buddha, as he traverses space, is prepared to commit life after life, and age after age, to a long-term travail in the world of temporal fact, with the ultimate aim of augmenting his psycho-physical potential, is hardly an approach emasculated with the passivity and obscurity of an otherworldly dream.

If experience necessitates time to mature in, there is always a regrettable waste involved. What may be achieved in a single life is usually squandered on a score. The economy of time is rarely appreciated for what it really involves, vulnerability to the spectre of uncertainty. If it is contended that rebirth assures an endless opportunity for achievement, and time to spare, it is not to understand that prospective life bases its futurity upon the potential of the one that precedes, whose liabilities, more often than not, outweigh overwhelmingly its assets. In fact, the rebirth scheme does in no way ensure that the prospective life must human be, for it may into a beast-like state (or worse) return,

which will have to be written off as a potential loss, with the psyche consigned to expend its liabilities on all fours.

The average worldling is so overwhelmed by the pressures of the world that he must disguise his ill-concealed infirmity, by simulating a mundane masculinity, to achieve his objectives the worldly way right here and now, with no thought devoted whatsoever to aspiring to some state of supramundane superiority. It becomes too much for him to face the fact that all his efforts to achieve an instant gain are reduced by the very nature of transience to a mere children's game. The impatient gesture of the worldling to brush away an otherworldly aim, as being a narrow and dreamy opiate for escaping reality, is actually an accusative gesture in reverse, with himself as the mark. The man of ideals, accustomed as he is to live with his visions out in space, has nothing much to lose if immediate objectives in the world collapse. The materialist, on the other hand, once his mundane supports overturn, has nothing left him in reserve.

Survival of the fittest is the evolutionary battle-cry! Little credit is given to the fact that it is actually the unfit who survive, a fitting climax to litter down the earth. From of yore, the stage has always been left to the unfit, possessing as they do a certain brute capacity for inflicting shock, the frenzy of which tramples round the globe. It is a mark of the unfit that they seek combat. They hope to modify the world. In that their sojourn on earth is extremely long they plunge their fellows into dire straits. The shambles which results when they meddle with affairs beyond their reach is why they disqualify themselves as unfit. Not having modified themselves in the deepest sense, nor from illusions free, their bid to modify the world becomes a contradiction in terms. It never dawns upon the unfit mind that it can never hope to be the benefactor of mankind when it cannot even be the benefactor of its own. In this context, the more fit they struggle to become the more unfit is the outcome. And so it comes to pass that those who unfit live shall perish by the hand of the unfit. As for the really fit, they retreat to the woods and hills, the still abodes where the fit prefer to die, under an open sky. For it is the mark of the really fit that they return to earth no more, leaving it to the unfit.

Constant availability reduces the value of life. The number of toys which man picks up and throws down in life's long passage soon lose count. 'Outworn bodies, like discarded toys, tossed into the earth's trash-can, soon stagger beyond track. The regularity of this ritual deteriorates into monotony. Since no semblance of control exists, this monotony indefinitely remains. In that life cannot be regulated, like putting on and off a switch, the lack of this facility makes survival of the unfit a nightmare, for a nightmare can at least be shrugged away, whereas this phenomenon refuses to be shaken off.

In that a great deal of fuel and mileage may be saved, a method of acceleration must be devised as the only means whereby the psyche may be projected out of the gravitational orbit of this repetitious nightmare, its liberation to attain. Since ordinary technological procedure does not apply in the psychic sphere, its very opposite must avail. Sitting still, in this context, can be as much of a social resource as a frantic rush for instant mobility. In fact, no limits exist whereby the psyche may be accelerated by motionless means, in contrast to the degree it becomes decelerated by headlong moves. The faster that man moves the less does he accomplish in this respect, whereas the master-planner by the very fact that his bodily metabolism is slow attains, like the tortoise, his mark.

Survival of the fittest?

The unnatural selection to which the human race is prone, however, defeats this attempt at accelerated liberation from the world's gravitational pull. If it is natural selection which elevates man to a higher scale, then it is unnatural selection which reduces him to become the brother of the brute. Even as the quantity of the product increases the quality of it sinks. As unnatural selection proceeds at an alarming pace, in no time the quality-product becomes extinct. The irrefutable law of unnatural

selection is that quantity must pay the price of quality. The search for quality-products becomes increasingly hard because they have become so rare, since an enormous period must ensue before quantity can be processed into quality. In the meantime waste-products accumulate, and problems of disposal become embarrassingly acute.

The ideology of instancy produces instant products, which in turn produce instant loss. In an atmosphere of instancy, a thing is no sooner savoured than it is gone. This infatuation with instancy is merely the unconscious reflex of an age in which the anxiety over life's brevity has become a very real, if unconceded, concern. The attempt to preserve the flavour of an experience is constantly undermined by the subterranean threat of oblivion in relentless pursuit. Instant happiness is, of course, a phenomenon very much to be desired. The essence of happiness, however, lies in its capacity to last. In what lies the benefit of a happiness which keeps collapsing at the slightest touch? Its value must lie in something which the psyche must be able to carry with it (as an ever-spontaneous presence) effortlessly around. Pressured by some frantic pursuit, it is to be observed that the transition from childhood to adulthood is marked by a singular descent from innocence to artificiality. Attempts to recapture the magic actually accomplish its very opposite, becoming captivated in turn by mechanized routine. The forms of captivity which mechanize the psyche, as it flounders on its unnaturally selective course, number beyond count.

The contemporary fascination with every fresh innovation, as though it were about to reveal some spectacular experience, discloses an endless naiveté, as each innovation becomes absorbed into the everyday current of things, where it sinks into a disappointing bore, passing into the limbo of the inane. The insatiable thirst for new selections is always hounded by the demand for a further fresh supply, once the preceding selections have become unaccommodatingly old. This manner of a life-style, so-called, does not pause for breath at mere commodities, but passes on to human relationships as well. As soon as familiarity and age begin to pall the time for an innovation is ripe.

Durable happiness

A happiness which depends for its sustenance upon the peripheral stimulant of novelty, therefore, is like recycling drain-water for a drink, since it is only the same old waste-product in disguise form. The compulsion to recycle a happiness which has become frayed at the edges is only another instance of man's glorious desperation as he edges towards senility and decrepitude. The mark of unnatural selection is that its devotees are prepared to become a willing prey to self-deception, and will do anything for a mere recycled drink. Unnatural selection leaves its own legacy to an age, which becomes an age of waste-products, whose problems of disposal always prove embarrassingly acute.

If flirtation is always fun while the going is good, then the mind must be prepared not to sour when the going gets rough. If the happiness of mankind were to lie in the direction of unnatural selection, that possibility (after so long an experiment) would have borne fruit by now, instead of demanding constant frantic efforts to preserve its level at a bare minimum of existentiality. The dilemma has always been that for every selection which adds to the material ease, a corresponding vulnerability is exposed, under whose recoil the selector finds himself without a foot to stand upon. By the selection of a stockpile of seeming assets, repercussive liabilities also appear. Thus, if the best things in life are free, it is also true that for the worst things (even if on the instalment plan) there is a price to pay.

If the terms of payment for life's purchase are all too plain, the deal itself remains extremely vague, for some sections of society are observed to possess abundantly decent deals and others the reverse. Such disparity only leads to conflicting ideologies, with bitter resentment at the root. If each and all, however, were to recognize that the dictates of his birth and circumstance are (by the laws of unnatural selection) only his just deserts, then fallacious ideologies and their disastrous aftermaths, would cease to litter the already overcrowded stage. The rebel, by fiercely turning to unnatural

selection as his weapon, to offset his basic lack, only augments his liabilities (and the back-payments which accrue) without really attaining the objective which he seeks by force to gain. The fury to recycle disorders has always been the mark of the unfit and their unnaturally selective minds, resulting in the mass disorientation and anguish of the human race.

Man's primordial and persistent problem has always been the inability to live in harmony with himself. If the rebellious mind is unable to tolerate itself, it is less than likely that it will be able to tolerate its fellow-minds. The possibility for restraint, of refraining from hurling the blame for its inadequacy upon the environment and its fellow-minds, must therefore remain remote. Every perverse emotion, no matter how consummately dissembled it may be, builds up its own destructive force, easily perceived by the acute, arousing in them an instant revulsive reflex. No virus, not even cancer, is so malignant as to bear comparison with greed, hate, and delusion, and the havoc which they have caused and continue to cause. As long as they continue to activate unseen within the minds of men, it would be futile to expect the possibility of wars and conflict vanishing from the face of the earth, to usher in a millennium of peace. When the fuel exists in ample stock, to spark it only demands a match. When karmic pressures are unable to contain their bounds the holocaust erupts. Basing his hopes on transitory returns as man does, it is naive to expect that the human situation will present itself in any other improved form for the future than the sorry spectacle which now it is.

The individual mind's erratic drift, of not knowing what to do with its inadequacy, and without some ultimate objective to which to steer, would not be so hopeless if it were confined to itself. Since society is the sum of its parts, individual infections eventually proliferate to become general maladies. The proliferation of psychic maladies on a global scale, however, may by a peculiar reaction disinfect a minority, since excess eventually leads to revulsion, initiating a move to extricate themselves. When such a trend develops, the balance rights itself, evidenced by a swing towards inner experience and a quest for ultimate values.

But this quest is in itself a trial-and-error affair. Due to the meagre material at the mind's disposal, and since imitations abound, the danger lies in being duped. Of all the imitations the 'religion' of amorality is the most malignant, yet possesses the greatest appeal, for the sophistry of rising above both good and evil has its charm. But a life-style whose moral demands are nil, defeats itself eventually, bogged down in a psychic *cul-de-sac*. As a sugar-coat conceals a bitter pill, even so it is merely a matter of time that repercussions arise to confound. Other imitations abound, and the lure of occult revelation with its promise of wondrous lore excites the mind in a wild encounter, only to collapse, with a sickening aftertaste.

The Way to stability

The antidote to the mind's chronic inadequacy would be to develop some centre of stability, some meditational machine, upon which psychic-life may bank, to steer it right on course, not some loose-knit flapping sail dependent on fickle winds for its mobility. A middle position, neutralizing both extremes, would establish a balance between internals and externals, its "integrality" ensured by its central stand. Such a stand would seek to change, not the world but itself, demanding little, being content with less. To the fallacy that the world must first be changed for the self to be changed it would not subscribe, for the self would perish before such an objective could be gained. Change, in such a context, becomes its own superfluity, since for deliverance from its inadequacy the mind merely demands itself. As it waits for external change to materialize, the mind by itself becomes paralyzed. The subjugation of the mind lies in its identifying itself with what the five sense-doors and the brain imbibe. Therein lies the drag, for each sense-door filters through only what is sensed, passing on its angular distortion to the brain. The mind, however, is neither sense nor sensed, nor the space betwixt the two, and may as such be completely detached, if it so wills. In this does its deliverance from the thralldom of sense-distortion lie.

The whole structure of psychology goes away when the brain itself becomes identified as the mind, when actually it is merely the sixth sense, its position at the top appropriate for interception and condensation of the facile. The navel-area, on the other hand, embodies a central core, primal to the womb. If the pre-natal history of consciousness is to be sought, it is to this centre, original to life, that the quest must be enticed. If the brain be crucial to sense-contact, easy access to its network can draw out all that it has to reveal. The navel-area of consciousness, even more crucial though it be, is a relatively unknown quantity, providing few external clues. The low-profile of its operational base is why it is never accorded the attention it deserves. Of all human underestimations this becomes the largest loss, for it averts attention from the crucial centre where consciousness first (in the womb) appears.

To map the labyrinth of the mind the eye must first know where to look. If a goldmine exists at the bottom of a mine-shaft, it would be folly to dally at the top. Clues to the navel-area of consciousness exist, and with room to spare, if only interest is directed to its discovery. In the mind's basic incoherence lies clear perception's greatest foe. It undermines the clarity of the psyche as it flows from one life to the next, forgetful of the past, listless in the present, oblivious of the future. The senses and the brain compete to move ahead the body all the while. But movement only agitates the view. Without a step forward, the subdued mind may observe the world pass by, a spectator with a special pass. As the world passes glibly by, the mind, seated masterfully still, excites no subterranean complexes to aggravate the scene.

The penalty of consciousness is that when it is reborn into a particular form, human or animal, its processes of thought and behaviour become completely conditioned thereby, so that its reactions to life are coloured accordingly. A dog behaves like a dog (even though it may have human been before), perceiving nothing better than that a dog's life is the best there is, hoping for nothing more. When humans are reborn into a certain environment and form, their modes of behaviour evolve likewise, in accordance with the conditions that prevail, so that no vision of a higher life appears. Being really a confection of assimilated data, it becomes difficult to expect that the mind, conditioned by its confectionery as it is, behave in any other fashion than the pattern which environmental factors and its previous kamma have it bequeathed. In such a context, survival and the commitment to a higher life, is always fraught with precarious hazards and upsets, exposed as it is to deceptive appearances which beguile, leading it astray. This vulnerability to immediate conditions has, and will always be, the mind's plague, in so far as right judgement regarding an otherworldly state of things is concerned. Aeonic experience becomes the one sure resource to offset, (through total or partial recall) the temptation to squander moral-credit and psychic-cash for the lure and deceptive glitter of immediate trash.

The one durable repository for the survival of experience is a well-documented psyche, faring on its way from one existence to the next. The main barrier to the immediate appropriation of this experience is the recurrent amnesia which persists with each investiture in physicality. In so far as these long-forgotten memory-banks remain unplumbed their benefits are never utilized. Blunders of judgement and regrets would occur less if only the brain were able to recall these areas of experience in some remote life, so as to serve as behavioural guidelines and warnings in advance. But since the brain is itself a freshly-woven headpiece of this life, it possesses no awareness of this large antecedent area beyond its mental reach. Due to this inferiority in matters of internal probe, all that the brain can do is pride itself upon its surface accomplishments, at the expense of any deeper reality which may in the subterranean personality lie, becoming its own worst competitor thereby. Insensitivity to provide allowances for irrational factors in the psychic realm stunts man's outlook accordingly, confining him to a ruthless commitment to 'hard facts'. Such devotion and loyalty to merely the 'hard' is hardly conducive to psychic growth, in as much as the attitude itself is smugly extolled as a symptom of intellectual strength. Since the inexorable transience in life, however, unceremoniously disposes of all hard facts (such as physical form), it is peculiar that the 'soft facts' (such as the psyche) prove more

resistant to disposal, and continue to survive. The durability of soft facts over the hard is merely nature's quiet way of administering a rebuff to man's presumptuous claims, and his folly in underestimating the so called soft.

The 'soft' psyche's invisible survival after death is the essential property whereby the past and future becomes linked. Without this soft property the whole process of psychic development, as externally symbolized by so-called civilization, is rendered meaningless, existing as merely the vapour of a day, to merely fade with death away. The soft psyche preserves whatever significance that may in civilization lie, establishing the evolving character of the universal scheme. This long-term view of the soft facts transcending the short-term hard, is the only avenue of hope whereby some form of superiority may be accorded man within the framework of his inexorable mortality.

Continuity is what man seeks. Since he cannot live forever, his hopes for futurity are relinquished to his heirs. But the perpetuation of a bloodline is merely a grudging substitute for his own survival, and something over which he has little choice. It is not a trait of human nature to relinquish anything which can somehow be feasibly retained, and no where does this apply with especial relevance than where survival is concerned. Since life itself is at stake, to discover that he will continue to exist after death becomes man's greatest joy. The only drawback to this sense of joy is, after death, to find himself alive again, but in some infernal state of woe. After-death states of woe abound, kammically consigned. And yet, states of woe basically stem from the curse of basic character. That is, if in its life on earth the psyche was imbued with a bitter and cruel character, it thus only reaps at death the fruits of its characteristic cruelty. The significance of developing benign characteristics, therefore, becomes apparent, if only in anticipation of the basic ingredients which will carry over into psychic survival after death. Such is the nature of all psychic things.

It is to be understood, therefore, that even if the rebirth-context provides unlimited incentive and scope in terms of opportunity, it in no way lends support to the premise that capacity to relive renders man immune, so that he can do as he pleases, and even augment with impunity the spectre of man's inhumanity to man. It is not to appreciate that psycho-physicality structure itself through its own behaviour, so that evolving patterns stamp their mark indelibly thereon. The fact is that if immunity to death in a rebirth-context makes sense, a process such as retributive immunity does not exist. The very nature of process ensures repercussions, whether beneficial or adverse. Rebirth, and its kammic shadow are life's computers, as effective as they are blunt. The fidelity with which a tape-recorder registers data would do justice to the mechanism of the subconscious psyche, implementing each and every item's just deserve whenever its recording is replayed. But the drawback of the psyche is that, unlike a tape-recording, its data cannot be arbitrarily erased.

Since the rebirth-context does in no way ensure retributive immunity, a psyche writhing in the throes of disembodied torment would discover little consolation in the knowledge of its being immune to death, which on the contrary would only underwrite its pain, with no immediate hope provided of assuaging its distress. Under conditions such as these, it would be better to even succumb to an uncomplicated death, rather than prolong the complicated agony of a disembodied psyche which never dies. Even if on earth crime does not pay, and even if we still have judgement here, where bloody instructions return to plague the inventor, the rigors imposed are but dewdrops in comparison with the penalties the beleaguered psyche must pay as it pursues its disembodied way. If a man's mind is his home, in no context is this more so than when he drifts on disembodiedly in an alien after-world. For whatever experiences he has had, whether good or bad, return to please, or plague, him on his solitary way.

On terms such as these rests the survival of the unfit. It is not death as such that holds anxiety for the visionary man so much as survival on terms such as these, without an end in sight. The psyche's preoccupation with survival, therefore, is rendered superfluous by terms such as these, for it will

survive in any case. The prime objective is how *not* to survive on terms such as these. Nor is the survival and multiplication of the species ever in jeopardy, since an overwhelming surplus is already the universe's nightmare. It is not the fertility of the embodied so much as the pressure of the disembodied, seeking every opportunity to re-enter a womb, which creates a population overload. Birth and death swirl by in a two-way traffic, jamming the roads of life's entry and exit. The present preoccupation with sexual potency, at the expense of mental fertility, only displays man's imbecility, engineering on his mind a deleterious impact. What man accomplishes with his potency, of course, is his affair. Nevertheless, if the horizontal style is in evolutionary vogue, it is not when man is on his fours that he is at his best. It is a mark distinguishing man from beast that his intelligence augments in proportion to how vertical he becomes. If the short-sighted man's anxiety is extinction, the dilemma of the farseeing is to find a way whereby long-term survival may be reduced. Being shackled to low-laden survival lines presents no prospect to a mind which projects its mark to the higher reaches of futurity, for ever without human help life shackles on man its eternal overload.

If wellbeing is the supreme goal of life, a system of half-measures as proposed by secular society does not possess the generating capacity to attain its goal. Since liberation remains, as always, only in the province of the few, and since only the unfit survive, the challenge is rather to work from lower levels of animal survival up to the higher pinnacles of immunity. An evolutionary scheme which is not sophisticated enough to eliminate even unrest is a mere sophistry. It is because they never find the answer, that the unfit are to mere animal survival condemned. It is only when a step in the opposite direction is taken that the light at the end of the tunnel appears.

The short-term and the long-term views of life will always differ, in proportion to the acquisitive proclivities which the former represent, on the one hand, and the perspicacity of the latter, on the other hand, in possessing an insight into more enduring factors which exist even though unseen. The long-term goal must always appear at a disadvantage to the short term gain. And yet, if moral restraint and long-term goals seem slow to show an investment gain, sleep comes easier to the cautious investor in view of a steadily rising chart, rather than a deceptive boom replete with the ingredients of an overnight collapse. Since the weight of cash in hand is a negotiable commodity which is readily understood, however, the long-term committed man appears a dunce with nothing substantial to negotiate in his hand. But in these matters only time can be the jury and the judge whether an immediate boom is really superior to the steady splendour of a distant gleam.

The deceptiveness of appearances renders it presumptuous to discriminate between lives, which contains the greater gain. It is only in terms of survival after death, when an account is drawn up at the close of life and aligned in its true perspective, that a judgement can be made as to which has received the better deal. In fact, it would be considered fortunate for the disembodied psyche if its liabilities are balanced by its assets. Since even the better deal proves in the end to be a minor affair, if survival is to mean anything it must be based upon an understanding of why the psyche exists at all, and to what end. Without a clarification of this pivotal theme, it is only to be expected that anguish and desperation, hysterical and shrill, must continue to burden the stage.

Until the worldling is able to shrug off his preconceived notions and grooves of thought, the victim of the limited view, the realization will never dawn upon him that all that went before, and which seemed to mean so much, in reality means so little in the freshly oriented light of experiential fact. If it is true that all the ills of the world are in no way automatically removed by the perception into experiential fact, the attitude which emerges is in itself of decisive impact. If the nature of things renders life in the present a defect which cannot be completely cured, the perception of things as they really are itself shifts the defects into a psychic position which can be courageously endured, making all the investments of devoted time and effort worthy of the distant goal. A perception which possesses range inevitably arrives at the long-term view, and becomes its own immediate gain, evidenced in a concrete form by the measure of content and serenity which it brings.

The final arbiter of fact, however, must lie within death's domain, the decisive tribunal which resolves all argument. Not that the specific function of death is to 'enlighten'. It merely endorses disembodied survival as a fact, and as such provides an extension of sight. That death does in no way make the psyche any wiser becomes evident when the 'dead', in most cases, have even to be informed (by psychic adepts) that they are dead, revealing that death fails to remove the fixations with which the mind has been plastered by life. Once it has been by death to ordinary ghosthood unceremoniously consigned, as generally is the case, the psyche discovers too late that provision has not been made for its disembodied welfare, and that the best things in the hereafter are never free, but a deserve which is only earned accordingly. Restricted to this humble plane, it is too much to expect that the inventory of knowledge be offered any large possibility for an increase. Constrained to the psychic library of itself, even the fact of rebirth does not become known, in so far as actual perception of it is concerned. When its time is opportune, without any premonition the disembodied psyche disappears from its erstwhile state, and is propelled to rebirth in a womb.

If the mechanism of rebirth remains a mystery even to disembodied ghosts, it becomes fruitless to expect that embodied ghosts (which humans are) can be convinced of this fact, shackled as they are in their envelope of clay. What a ghost discovers, however, is that it possesses an 'astral' form, complete in all its limbs; the exact replica of its human past. The one advantage of such a form is that transportation presents no problem, since the facility of thought-projection provides its own mobility. If disembodied mentality does not prove enlightening, it, nevertheless, is a partial provider of moments of truth. If chronic obstinacy characterizes embodied life, reorientation is the hallmark of the disembodied state, since it has no choice but to conform to what prevails. And that which prevails cannot be gainsaid, being an order of things as they really are.

It becomes increasingly clear from this that the ladder of knowledge is a laborious ascent, evolving and emerging through many a shroud, beyond the arrogant presumptions of mere veiled human intelligence and conceit. It is thus that if humans prefer to remain merely the cannon-fodder that they are, to live and perish for they know not what, then they merit only what they deserve. Human life, exploited as it already is by the unscrupulous, becomes an even greater exploitation through ignorance, on a cosmic scale, by the invisible forces of the universe. Such is the nature of things. But that man should so ingloriously submit to this state of things without so much as a hand lifted in self-defence, is something which he has only himself to blame. The price itself is enormously high: repeated birth on an aeonic scale, with little choice but to drift, the victim in space-time of every random gust. To the average worldling, of course, this assertion would appear only as a gross exaggeration, for life is not, after all, so bad. In fact, it can be very good. If so, it is merely because it so happens that the immediate life is not so bad. In the haphazard wind of things no such future can be guaranteed.

The sophistication of religions which declare rebirth to be a process of life does not rest upon mere wishful thought, but stems from the perception that a single life proves inadequate to tame and subdue the rebellious psyche. In so far as perception into other planes are concerned, it is a misconception to regard concentration techniques as dependent on sensation rather than penetration for their firsthand experience of fact. For the authentic meditational-adept, it is always perception that provides the guarantee for the existence of extra-terrestrial planes, kamma, and rebirth. Sensation, which is not readily dissociated from emotional supports and physical overtones, is merely a side-effect, even if it becomes tinged, in this context, with an inevitable regret that all sentient life must flounder on, the willing victim of the world's relentless stress.

The history of consciousness is a history of life spans agitated in space-time, of fitful beginnings and loose ends. To bind all these beginnings and ends into a unity, so as to attain some ultimate goal, remains the strenuous task of life. And this is so because if perfection is the mark, the consequence of being imperfect is that the psyche must be recycled, to wrestle on until it makes the mark. It is in this

explicit sense that it is not the fit but the unfit who survive, since the fit return no more. Before mere animal standards of survival can be transmuted into transcendental terms, a whole chemistry of processing and refining must ensue. In this lies the genealogy of life, its offspring branching out from one linkage to the next. So it is that even the lowest forms of life contain the possibility of being transmuted to a level of consciousness beyond their wildest dreams.

The natural doubts which arise concerning the reality of rebirth, however, is the inability of the mind to usher the memory of previous existences into immediate recall. These doubts are not insurmountable when it is recognized that memory is a faulty machine, whose habitual failure is evidenced in its stumble to recall some thoughts even a moment ago. The problem is further complicated by the fact that the brain, through whose good services memory functions, is a comparatively recent product of this present life, and possesses no jurisdiction over data recorded in a remote past, at a time when it did not so much as exist. In that the data of antecedent lives coalesce around other nuclei, whose centre is not located in the brain, possessing orbits with different foci, the possibility for the brain to establish anything but a random contact with this data is extremely small, since it demands a special form of expertise to bring them into focus with decisive impact.

The mind's customary confinement to a single life-experience circumscribes its range. This tendency to identify merely with the immediate life gives rise to much misplaced loyalty. If devotion is called for in matters of everyday life, a man has just a right to be loyal to his past (from which his origin is derived) as well as his present, for it is just as valid, and possesses its own considerable weight. If no other benefit may be derived from this attitude, at least it prevents the mind from a pernicious attachment to the mere narrow provincialism which in society prevails. The mind that is accustomed to breadth of vision becomes unbiased because it possesses the ability to put its hand upon processes, experiences, and localities other than that which face it merely now. It is in this psychic breadth that the distinction between the far-sighted mind and the short-sighted lies.

Without an insight into universal fact, the chronology of inadequacy must blunder on, with not an end in sight. With the mind's vision blurred by the universe of mere physical sense, it becomes its greatest gain to develop another more far-reaching faculty, whose depth and range does not fall short. With this extra-sense at its command the burden of vulnerability to make limited judgements is considerably reduced, thereby forestalling its succumbing so simply to the random of life's sting.

Without the development of a self-sufficient inner life, inanity stares man in the face. And yet it is a world which contains dimensions that no language can express. The inner life is an ambiguous support which differs for all, possessing a particular weight, containing a certain size. The weight itself may initially be light, with the accumulation of experience it may considerably be increased. The size may start off small, but with time may limitlessly expand. The stature of the inner life is largely swelled, not merely through the favours of a single life, but through the long-term adumbration of a plurality of lives. It is the psychic stock of antecedent lives, in fact, that are responsible for so much in the immediate life which continues to remain unexplained, the key to which lies locked away in the silence of the sleeping psyche. To merely knock at one natal door in search of answers to the complex mind, is to elicit only a superficial response. A succession of natal doors must be knocked (the awakening signal hanging as upon a hinge) to recall the elusive psyche from where it dormant lies.

The value of a self-sufficient inner life is that it lasts longer than the outer life, and when all else fails it alone becomes the psyche's solace. It offers a satisfaction which is relatively cheap, and carries just as light, converting even the most ordinary of things into psychic gain. The reason why more superficial forms of physical pleasure may be readily perceived, however, is because they possess a heaviness in throwing themselves around. An inner life worthy of the name is by far a more enduring possession than the thoughtless spontaneity of a child, which is not really as spontaneous as it would seem, and whose validity lasts merely for a day. Nor is old age's resort to a world of recollections and dreams a

comparable substitute for the realities of a substantial inner life, since it is the pathos of old age to merely invest a bygone day with a retrospective glory which it never did in reality possess.

So bare of extravagance is the mature inner life, however, that it is a diet which becomes extremely hard for unaccustomed minds to take. One meal a day, and the inner life, is all that it takes. The more elaborate the table the hungrier life becomes. The simpler the fare the deeper the mind expands. The marvel is that although this is so, the mature inner life is so seldom found. The harder it is sought the less does it appear.

All life comes into the world to seek its gain. Fortunate is he, however, who limps off at the end of each round without the loss of his mind. The mind is caught between two worlds. If it has its obligations to accomplish in the world of practical affairs, it also possesses its mission to fulfil in the realm of spiritual uplift and otherworldly concerns. Yet if the mind possesses any discrimination, it will perceive that it is not in the past, or even the present, so much as the future that its enduring happiness must lie. The vision, therefore, is not to mourn the short-term loss of life, but to alleviate as best the mind can the long-term load of pain.

Since psychic debility is a chronic syndrome which calls for remedy, and only time holds the clue, for as long as life remains unfit, so long will rebirth continue to bear the agonizing brunt. In the meanwhile, merely to serve as a conduit for compassion and morality is already its own reward, being the stuff of which the real purpose of life consists. The perilous abuse of powers, whose menace rears its ruthless head in every age, symbolizing man's inhumanity to man, may be blunted of its thrust in a transcendent context only by this humane vision of the otherworldly view.

In the ceaseless game of life, it is an unwritten rule that even if the battle seems over, the victim may return to do battle again. Nevertheless, if the chips of life abound, each one possesses its price. There is not much time to be lost, therefore, if the mind hopes an immediate goldmine to obtain. Bargains are to be had for almost nothing in the world of the inner life, if only the method of approach is known.

The mind's invention of wondrous things to beguile the hours, however, is a singular attempt to seduce itself and avoid confrontation with the ever-encroaching inroads of life's stark vacuity. An inner life worthy of the name is the only certain bulwark able to withstand, without going to pieces, the stark seizures of life's overload of pain. If insensitivity to a deeper reality remains man's greatest liability, flexibility is still his best asset. With the necessary flexibility of outlook, it is possible that a time may come in the life of a man when his fascination with the superficialities of life may be channelled into more constructive insights into the ultimate destiny of things. In so far as man possesses the capacity to appreciate frustration and setback as established facts of life, so may they serve as incentives to renew his search for transcendence, not merely of the external world, but more fundamentally in terms of the inner image of himself. The ultimate realization that the course of life, for its enduring happiness, lies in directions other than that which humanity is generally accustomed to conceive, is a blueprint for success which may yet perceive the light of some distant day. It is only when the external flurry of life gives way to the perspective within that the mind becomes its own support, carrying its glory with it wherever it goes. Until such a prospect comes to pass, it must remain for what its worth itself contains, the vision and the glory of a contemplative's dream.

In the natural flow of things, survival after death will always deserve a prominent place, in view of its intrinsic significance and the vaster perspective that it brings. It is a matter for regret to what an extent the fundamental causes and the inner roots of life so seldom dawn upon the consciousness of man. It is a mark of the reflective mind, however, that it keeps its options open wide, so that with an eye trained to be adequately aware of life's approaching end, the possibility for re-adjustments of outlook may be, by the appearance of freshly-oriented facts, perceptibly enhanced. It should be the

legitimate hope of life that as it nears the end, some eternal truth may in those final moments be perceived, like sunset lighting up in one last cloud-burst the sky, before it slowly fades away... It is in moments such as these, even so late in coming though they be, that life for the living would have well been worth its longest day.