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THE EDITOR'S POINT OF VIEW

THE NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

Its Cause and Prevention

WE are told that the nervous breakdown is a form of sickness peculiar to civilized man. There are very few records of this type of ailment among primitive peoples, not because primitive society is without its problems, but because it is not essentially problem that produces the breakdown. It is the human reaction to problem that causes the nervous breakdown, and the reaction of intellectual man is nearly always complicated by factors and conditions unknown to primitive man. What we call the nervous breakdown actually applies to many different phenomenal groups of symptoms, but we may assume, for the moment at least, that this breakdown is associated with extraordinary fatigue of the nervous system, either under long and continuous stress, or under sudden and tremendous climactic tension of some kind.

As a result of man's present way of life, he has become increasingly involved in long-range plans which exhaust him. He now looks forward to an ordinary commercial existence in which he will be under continuous responsibility for from twenty to fifty

years. He sees very little escape from the pattern of burdens which he is required to bear. And because, for the most part, he has very little internal foundation of individuality, he finds very few defenses or escapes within himself. He takes it for granted that he is supposed to be a worrier; that it is necessary for him to react in an exaggerated way to the challenge of living. The more intensely he reacts, the more seriously he carries his responsibilities, and the more involved he becomes in situations which he cannot control, the more fatigue he develops within his nature.

We do not know exactly how much nervous strain the average person can bear, but we know that nature is constantly informing us, by giving us danger signals, bringing to our attention indications of rising fatigue-levels. One of the most common of these symptoms is irritation. When we observe that we are getting short-tempered, that we respond in an exaggerated way to trivial incidents, that we find ourselves less and less able to control our emotional reflexes to pressures and conditions, we know that these symptoms are pointing toward fatigue. If we take our fatigue problem to a reputable physician, he can only recommend certain things. He can prescribe medication inclined either to improve nerve tone or to reduce the emotional stress which batters nerves. This recommendation is at best only a stop-gap. It does not cure the situation, but merely alleviates the immediate problem. The hope is, of course, that this alleviation will carry the individual across some critical period, and protect him from an actual nerve collapse.

The physician can also recommend that the individual reorganize his life in a manner to reduce these tensions or to bring them within the control of his natural personal endowments. This is usually the kind of advice which we regard with little favor. We do not know how we can reduce tensions; nor de we recognize the wisdom of attempting to reorganize a life, inasmuch as this reorganization may give us further problems and new causes for tension. Thus, in the practical way of things, we depend upon a vacation to pick us up out of a nerve tension situation, or we turn instinctively to auto-corrective mechanisms, which we know do exist.

One of the problems which always emphasizes fatigue is one-pointedness of interest or activity. The individual whose life becomes more involved every day in the advancement of a single intensive program, is always in the greater danger of developing acute fatigue. In the modern way of life, most people forget how to rest. They forget how to relax, and gradually they lose even the interest in trying. They are no longer able to "let go," and as tension increases, they find a whirring or whirling within themselves. They become almost afraid to "let go." They seem to feel that if they ever relax, they will collapse.

From such causes as this, we lose perspective on the importance of breaking down patterns which are leading to excessive personal tension. The greatest defense that we all have against fatigue is the power to break chains of mental-emotional processes. We try to prevent these chains from becoming automatic. If these sequences pass out of our control, so that they control us, we are nearly always headed for disaster. If, however, we can consciously and intelligently break down these immense pressures, reducing them and scattering them over a larger area, we can frequently recover without reaching a point of critical danger. If a person really wishes to be healthy in these trying times, it becomes very important to examine his own internal resources.

Our only defense against the world is our own internal organization. We can, of course, plan lives in which tension is reduced by sacrifice of various material achievements, but we cannot entirely escape the responsibilities that life brings to us. Therefore, instead of trying to escape the circumstances around us, a process which does not usually bring satisfactory results, it is far better for us to attempt to change the psychic integration of our internal living, realizing that tension requires an attitude as well as a condition. If we forbid ourselves the attitude, the condition is far less likely to arise.

Naturally, it is foolish to say simply, "I will not be tense." We cannot fight tension merely by an exercise of will. In fact, there is no doubt that will-fatigue is involved in tension problems. Tension is the old problem of the irresistible force meeting the immovable object. The immovable object is problem; the irresistible force is our own energy. And when energy locks with problem indefinitely, we have an extraordinary measure of fatigue. Yet energy can never actually overwhelm a problem, because problem

is universal. Even if we overcome one difficulty, we move on to others. We can never overcome the world, which is the symbol of problem, for it represents a series of circumstances, every one of which can be difficult.

Actually, therefore, the only way we can attain our peace of mind, or peace of soul, is to reduce the pressure of this so-called irresistible force—the drive within ourselves. If this drive is brought under control, we will have less awareness of obstacle. And as obstacle itself is more or less strengthened by the very force we turn against it, to the degree that we transform this inner polarization, we free ourselves, in large measure, from the fretting and the fussing which are involved in the gradual disruption of our nervous system.

In the search for personal integration lies the answer to our great fatigue issue. And this personal integration involves the ability of the individual to let down certain determinations which he possesses. To do this, he must also correct certain errors of his own judgment. The great error with many of us is the feeling that tremendous activity is associated with achievement. In other words, we must really fight every minute; we must fight desperately, or the adversary will overwhelm us. Actually, this is not true, and this great struggle is almost completely an imaginary mental and emotional phenomenon arising from attitude rather than from reality.

I do not mean that we should simply allow ourselves to drift away from those values and purposes which animate us and toward which we direct our activities. What we must do is to take the fight out of the battle of life if we intend to survive. And the battle can be won without the fight. We can win just as much by direct action without tension as we can with tension; in fact, we can achieve much more. There is a simple, direct, factual approach to everything, and nearly any subject upon which we exert tension, could be solved better without the tension. Yet to us, tension has become inter-related with attention. The moment that we give our attention to anything, we follow this with a sense of personal tenseness.

We can gain considerable insight into this problem from our study of philosophy, particularly Oriental philosophy. Oriental philosophy emphasizes the tremendous importance of action without stress. People can say, of course, "Well, that's fine to talk about,

but how are we actually going to live this way? How can we reduce tension in situations in which our instinctive reaction is to be tense or to become involved?" There is only one answer to this, and that is the re-education of instinctive reaction. There is no real reason why we should react to every problem with an attempt to fight that problem. There is no answer in continuously facing life belligerently or aggressively, or with the preconception that everything must be difficult.

Let us begin to think for a moment about the Zen concept of direct action. The idea involved is that the individual should accomplish any given task with as little waste of energy and damage to self as possible. For example, let us say that a certain person, comfortably and happily situated in a certain condition, is suddenly required to make a journey. It is obvious from the beginning that this journey is inevitable. He must make it. Therefore, what would happen if this occurred to primitive man? He would gather up his resources and make the journey, and that would be the end of it. Whether he liked the journey or not, whether he wanted to go or not, would be of little consideration, because his natural, simple, primitive instinct would tell him that he had to go. If he went, and even if the journey was difficult, he might have a great deal of physical fatigue, or be under some stress and danger, but he would achieve his purpose with a minimum of exhaustion.

Now let us imagine that a modern person, established in some line of activity, suddenly realizes that his job demands that he must move to another community. He cannot approach this with the natural instincts of the savage, and he has wonderful explanations as to why he is legitimately perturbed. He can show good cause for tension, but he can never show any good results from it. And if the results can never be good, then there is also something wrong with tension as a method of procedure. Assuming that he has to make the move, he still proceeds to work himself gradually into a state of complete mental agitation. He worries about the possibility of having to sell his home at a loss; the need to take his children out of the school they like, and his family out of the community in which they have been happy. He debates with himself about changing jobs; perhaps he even looks for other work, without success. In the end, he arrives at his original conclusion

that he must move, but in the intervening weeks his dissatisfaction, worry, and tension have spread through the entire family, and everyone is upset.

This is the type of problem that can lay the ground for the development of an extreme nervous-fatigue pattern. The Zen philosopher would simply sit down in the first place, and decide whether or not the move was necessary. Having decided that it was, he would immediately proceed with the simplest and most direct way of making that move. There would not be one single moment of regret, confusion, discord, or rebellion. The only decision that must be made is: Is this move actually the right thing to do? If it is the right thing to do, then it must be done, and all energy wasted in fearing it or scheming to avert it simply amounts to lost resources. In other words, judgment must make the decision, and the mind and the emotions must serve the judgment instead of declaring war on it and fighting it to the bitter end.

Nervous breakdown is a term given to almost any kind of psychological fatigue. Actually, the nervous system is much better insulated than we realize, and it can withstand a tremendous amount of emotional-mental punishment. It can survive many shocks; it can go through the most terrible situations with a wonderful recuperative power. But after a long period of time without rest, with a continual building up of critical nerve-pressure patterns, the nervous system can reach a degree of acute fatigue in which it is truly exhausted. At this point, it seems to collapse, and the individual is faced with a long program of rehabilitation. The nerves break slowly, and they heal slowly, and to recover from a serious nervous breakdown is a matter of from two to three years. Frequently this involves a series of symptomological situations that require considerable therapy.

A nervous breakdown does not necessarily take the form of a mental breakdown. It may do so, and some so-called mental breakdowns are nothing but acute nerve fatigue. It is more common, however, for the individual merely to pass into a condition in which nerve control is lost. He cannot control the emotional reflexes of his own nerve structure. As nearly always a nervous breakdown is associated with a series of events, a pattern, an attitude, or a concept about living, its roots lie in certain constitutional

peculiarities of the individual. Thus it takes a more or less individual appearance when it manifests. As a result, it becomes a psycho-somatic symbolism, and from the particular way it attacks a person, we can gain some knowledge about its cause in that instance.

Usually, recovery is reasonably rapid in non-sensitive areas of the psychic organism. But that center of energy most directly involved with the tension which produced the final break, is slowest to recover. Thus, after six months or a year, the person may engage in various activities with comparatively good health, but if he places himself again in a situation similar to that which actually caused the difficulty, he will find very little immunity, and will collapse again almost immediately. It follows, therefore, that for two, sometimes three, years, the individual should avoid the activities which caused the breakdown, thereby allowing the nervous system to develop considerable immunity.

The cause of the breakdown must also be rooted in the mental and emotional structure of the sufferer. Therefore, his inevitable reactions to certain stimuli must be changed. He cannot go back to his old pattern, for if he does—even if the body is now strong enough to resist it—the psychic organism begins to take it on, producing perhaps an acute neurosis or something of that nature. If, then, the nervous breakdown is the result of an intensive development of patterns, and a gradual transference of energy from the normal processes of life to one of these highly patterned conditions, it would seem that the ailment can be prevented. As it is long and difficult, and inevitably leaves psychic scar tissue, the ounce of prevention policy is highly recommendable.

Each person who finds himself under any nerve fatigue should therefore begin to examine into his own nature. If he finds that he is not a well-adjusted human being, if he cannot find a natural and simple pleasure in living, he is already in a troublesome pattern. When life is no longer interesting, when the individual no longer looks forward to tomorrow with a certain degree of natural anticipation, when he is not glad that he is alive, and when he is not able to look around him and find some proof to his own satisfaction that there is a worthwhile pattern in life—all these symptoms indicate that it is time to stop and consider.

The nervous breakdown nearly always develops as a result of gradual disillusionments; the lowering of our ability to enjoy living. It develops along lines of mental and emotional fatalism. It comes when the person feels himself totally blocked in the natural expression of his own thoughts and emotions. He sees no way out of a situation; he senses a future that is an endless continuation of an unsatisfactory now. He sees only added responsibilities; he begins to contemplate the natural diminution of his own energies; he finds that he is growing older without growing any wiser or better. Blocked, frustrated, and held in bondage to some pattern or situation, the individual begins to weaken inside, or else he begins to thrash around in a desperate effort to break through what he regards as the bonds that hold him. Both of these courses will end in nervous breakdown if they are allowed to continue.

Since the nervous breakdown develops slowly, the person in the process of getting it usually does himself a number of bad turns along the way. We noted that he becomes irritable. Irritations interfere with whatever adjustment remains, undermining it, creating a series of vicious circles. If the individual who does not have an optimistic outlook becomes irritable, this will cause his outlook to change for the worse, and his friends and associates will be less friendly, thus supporting his negative convictions. By degrees, he isolates himself by his own temperament. He cuts off what good might still come to him, and thus hastens the crisis of his own affliction.

Also, in the course of these neurotic pressures, he may develop bad habits. Attempting to support a lagging optimism, he may turn

to stimulation, or sedation, or narcotics—anything to get rid of this mood of darkness that is slowly closing in on him. The more desperately he fights or opposes it, the more anxious he becomes, and the more rapidly this mood darkens, until it truly becomes a black night—a terrible darkness upon the inner life of the person. When this happens, his own resources of adjustment and relaxation are ruined. He no longer has the power to pray; he no longer has the means to relax. The moment he tries to relax, he falls into this dark hole which he himself has created. Under such conditions, the vicious circle moves with increasing speed until the climax strikes.

Actually, the nervous breakdown is nature's way of saving man. It probably saves him from insanity or death, but it is a hard way to be saved. A nervous breakdown around the age of forty-five, in the life of the average person, is regarded medically and scientifically as money in the bank, because it means that for the first time in an ambitious, career-pointed situation, an individual suddenly pauses and thinks. He suddenly realizes that if he continues his irresponsible, unreasonable procedure, he is not going to be here long enough to enjoy anything that he has. He also discovers his own breaking point. He sees how quickly and suddenly every plan, hope, and purpose that he has can be taken from him.

In the first six months of a severe, thorough nervous breakdown, the sufferer does not care whether his stocks and bonds rise or not; he does not care what happens to the world; war or pestilence or depression mean nothing to him, because he is in a situation in which a person coming in and closing a door softly will sound like an artillery-piece going off. He will jump out of bed because someone speaks his name in a whisper. He is completely exhausted; he is just nothing but raw nerves; and at that moment, his community-standing, his political ambitions, his economic projects, are of no importance to him. He is an utterly miserable person. Gradually, however, he will begin to observe his own symptoms of irregularity. He will become very self-conscious, and in this situation he inevitably begins to take some stock of his own thinking. He realizes, at least to a degree, what a fool he has been.

After a nervous breakdown, therefore, the average man or woman of middle life begins to take vacations more regularly. He develops auto-corrective activities with considerable enthusiasm.

As a result of taking these precautions, and following an improved regime, the individual probably will add five to ten years to the length of his life. So the nervous breakdown can be profitable, because it brings the person face to face with the fact that he cannot break the law.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to go through such a strenuous circumstance in order to discover that we must go into partnership with law. We can begin early in life to cultivate an appreciation for values, rather than wait until it is forced upon us by disaster. It has always seemed to me that there should be greater instruction in these simple facts in the early years of education. No educated person should be allowed to simply drift along thinking that there is no law other than civil law. He knows that he must keep traffic regulations, or he will be in trouble. So he takes lessons in driving. These are useful; but it would also be very useful if he would take lessons in keeping universal law, so that he will not drive his car carefully and then succumb to a nervous breakdown. This is just as serious as any accident. To teach the person that there are rules in the game of living, and that to be healthy and happy he must keep these rules—this is the essential part of practical education. It is all right to have mathematics so that we can add up our profits and losses; but we should also have some kind of scientific method of adding up our assets and liabilities as persons, and discovering what is wrong with ourselves.

If we wish to prevent these critical situations from arising in our lives, we must recover from certain attitudes. One of these attitudes is the desire to conform with the lives of those around us. If we insist upon copying other people, basing our codes of sufficiency upon the conduct of our associates, we will have exactly the same problems that they have. This conformity principle has become automatic in our civilization, and it is time to question if we should wander about worried, frightened, miserable, and in constant danger of losing health and happiness, simply because it is fashionable. Of course, there are advantages in teamwork and group endeavor, but there is no advantage if the individual in the group must make all its mistakes simply because he belongs to it. So we must realize that in order to be ourselves and to do those things which we know to be right, we must have a certain amount

of courage which enables us to stand up for what we believe, and stay with it.

Having the courage to stand up and do what we know we should do, the next important problem is to find out exactly what it is that we should do. On this, there seems to be more difference of opinion than on any other subject. Primitive man, faced with a situation, saw only one thing to do, and he did it. Civilized man, because of the breadth of his intellectual program, is immediately confronted with a wide variety of choices. He imagines that there are hundreds of things that he can do in any particular moment, and falls into a confusion of multiple choice.

In any unpleasant condition, there are certain things which are causes, and these should be avoided or remedied. There are other things which are opposed to these causes, and which must be more strongly developed. Thus, in any sickness, including the nervous breakdown, we must look for the cause, and then do something about it. One of the basic causes of all nervous tension problems in the individual is lack of internal core consciousness. The person has very little basic idealism on an operating level. Many of us are heavily indoctrinated with ideals, but we cannot apply them to ourselves. We know exactly how everyone should act, but we do not act that way. We know that certain emotions and attitudes are dangerous, yet we cannot resist the impulse to exercise them. The answer must lie in the fact that our core consciousness has not been adequately reached by our so-called ethical processes. We believe in honesty; we believe in good fellowship; we believe in optimism; yet the moment pressures move in upon us, these beliefs are not as strong as the pressures.

The fact seems to be that our relationship with the constructive attitudes we claim to hold is in the nature of fair-weather friends. We regard them with fondness as long as there is no particular reason why we should not follow them; but in an emergency, we become atavistic. We become primitive again, but in a negative, decadent way, because we have lost the simple honesty of primitive man. This means that we have not really built constructive ideals and attitudes into the inner life. We have not had the time or the inclination and, until trouble starts, we have not had the tremendous need brought face to face with ourselves. We can see why others

need these things, and we can advise that they cultivate them, but we do not sense this pressing need in ourselves until the emergency is with us. At that point, we have neither the strength nor the patience to begin educating ourselves.

Actually, however, the problem of education for internal enlightenment is not so very complicated. We do not need to know everything in the world before we can behave well, and we can learn all the facts in the world and still live badly. The answer does not rest in how much we have learned or how much we may know. It lies in the simple relaxation into law and the acceptance of lawfulness. A great many very simple people have possessed this concept and made it active. It has also occurred in the lives of many religious mystics, and is strong in some religious creeds, such as the Quakers and the Friends. It is not a fighting with evil or with ignorance; it is simply becoming what we really are, instead of trying to be something less. This tremendous conflict of false values moving on the surface of us is simply spurred into existence by our thoughtlessness, ambitions, prides, jealousies, and hatreds. These pressures are not real; they are not essential; they are not useful.

The problem of fear also complicates conduct, for it causes man to live in a perpetual emergency which constantly exhausts him. And of what is he afraid? Is he afraid of truth? Is he afraid of life? Is he afraid of God? The answer is no. He is afraid of opinions and prejudices; he is afraid that he will not make friends and influence people; he is afraid he will not be rich, or that he will not be honored and recognized. So, by degrees, the individual compromises every principle that he has for some advantage, and then finds himself, in the end, at the grand disadvantage. Actually, we must either have the courage to fulfill certain lawful patterns, or we must have the greater courage to bear sickness and misery with some kind of dignity. We have very little choice in this.

In order to prevent the nervous breakdown, we must answer certain questions in a simple and direct way. First of all, we must accept the concept of purposeful living. The purposeless life is already defeated. We must have certain basic beliefs strong enough to live by, and in this believing we have the foundation for religion and philosophy as medicine. The individual who wants to escape mental and emotional sickness must have values within himself. This point was illustrated in the reports of thousands of shell-shock and battle-fatigue victims during World Wars I and II. In the overwhelming number of cases, the shell-shock occurred in individuals who were mentally and emotionally unstable before they entered the army. The majority of these battle-fatigue victims were products of broken homes and homes in which moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings were deficient or absent. Most of these people broke simply because they did not have archetypal strength available in themselves. It is possible that without war, many of them would have drifted along throughout life without an actual breakdown, but the statistics from parallel cases would indicate that probably seventy to eighty per cent of these people would have had broken homes of their own in time of peace, would have reared children under-privileged in mental, psychological, and emotional values, and would have had unsatisfactory business and career lives, because they had made no conscious effort to meet any deficiency or need in themselves.

In life, therefore, the nervous breakdown affects the individual who does not have organized internal strength. This strength cannot be conferred by words; each individual must achieve it by placing himself under discipline. Without discipline, man can seldom, if ever, become a reasonably adjusted adult human being. In youth, discipline is presumably imposed upon us; in maturity, however, it must be self-imposed, and the individual who can impose a proper kind of self-discipline upon himself will escape most of the ills that affect our time. Through self-discipline, the individual learns to control his own inner life and to direct his own actions. Using his faculties of mind and emotion, instead of being used by them, he plans, and places his life upon a good foundation. Once he is able to plan, and has the courage to stay with what he discovers to be true and necessary, his probabilities of nervous breakdown diminish very rapidly.

Often a contributing factor in a nervous breakdown is a chronic pattern of disappointments. Zen again tells us that the individual who thinks straight, lives straight, does not need to fear disappointment, for we cannot be disappointed unless we expect some-

thing unreasonable. If we expect our friends to be honest, we may be disappointed, but if we really understood them, and accepted them for exactly what they are, we would not be disappointed, nor would we hate them or condemn them for dishonesty. We would simply not expect more from the average individual than he can give. Nearly all of our disillusionments are nothing but monuments to our own bad judgment, and if we could get out of the habit of being in a mental daze and gradually falling to pieces because the world has betrayed us, we would ultimately come to face the fact that the only reason it betrayed us is because we invited it to do so. By creating patterns and imposing them upon people, we visualized a kind of world, and we are angry ever afterwards because that world was not forthcoming. We must realize that we should not have expected the unreasonable in the first place.

If we once learn to build a reasonable pattern, we can begin to enjoy the good in people. The overtones and the tensions begin to vanish, and life becomes a more simple procedure. There is a direct way of accomplishing everything with a minimum of energy and a maximum of results. And with limited resources at our disposal, we, as human beings, must seek these direct roads. There are more glories along these simple, natural roads than we can ever find in the wild detours that we attempt to make. The simple road is full of the sovereign beauty of the universe, and by it we discover the heart and mind of Deity.

We therefore find in a simple code of direct action the fulfillment of religion in its truest sense. For the real purpose of religion is to give man the courage to do, with a whole heart, that which is next; to do it with a full realization that according to his own conduct, so shall his future be. Religion is the thing which gives us the courage to move from within ourselves to the full stature of our capacity. It is that which makes it easy for us to keep the faith by keeping the law, and it bestows upon us the simple, natural resolution to preserve the God-given dignity of our own conduct. When we begin to understand that, we will not have so many nervous breakdowns.

Philosophy and religion therefore constitute tremendous therapeutic agents, not while they are in the mind or on the lips, but

when they move into the consciousness to become the directives. Any person who has a strong conviction of value within himself, is going to be in a far better position to preserve his health in the next fifty years of our way of life. It is not important that we should all agree as to what this inner conviction is. We do not all need to worship the same, feel the same, or think the same. The important thing is that something within us is stronger than the pressure on the outside. If the instinct to abide by principles is greater than the instinct to depart from them, we may assume a reasonable probability of fair health. If there is an almost balanced situation, but we have enough of an edge so that our departures from principles are rare and of short duration, we will probably recover from most of the dangers that have beset us. But if, on all occasions that conflict with our desires, we lose center, never having anything in ourselves but the sense of our own insecurity, we are going to drift further and further into trouble until sickness will inevitably come.

It is a purposed fact in nature that man is a being requiring an inner life, with consciousness of God and of truth, in order to function. We may want to deny this—materialists certainly have tried to—but wherever we deny this natural instinct, we are poorer. We have nothing to take the place of this basic conviction. The advancement of society is not a substitute for the God-concept in ourselves. The hope that we can build a better world for those that come after us, is a noble hope; but it is not a substitute for the conviction of man's moral responsibility to God and himself. All so-called objective achievements fall short of being the complete solution to our internal needs. The solution lies in meeting those needs while we are still well, and still able to do what is right and to observe the symptoms when our own conduct breaks faith with our convictions. The moment we see ourselves departing from our ethics or from universal law—no matter how noble or necessary the rationalization for our actions may be—it is time to do something about it.

These first breaks away are usually accompanied by fear, worry, and anxiety, and these are symptoms that should warn us. They tell us that we must find a faith that is stronger than our fear; a conviction about life that is stronger than our desire to com-

promise. Such a faith builds the greatest strength there is, and until it is found, we are in constant danger of assault from the outside. The moment we find it, the probabilities of having a nervous breakdown are markedly reduced. Probably not over ten per cent of nervous breakdowns occur in persons who have made any sincere effort to integrate their own conduct.

We mention the ten per cent because there are certain cases where, due to tremendous shock or stress, it is highly improbable that the individual can avail himself of his own resources. It is exactly the same as in the case of automobile driving. Care, thoughtfulness, intelligence, courtesy—these forces, if stronger than the individual's desire to do what he pleases, would probably cut down automobile accidents ninety per cent. But there would still be the ten per cent due to mechanical defects, or to what appear to be acts of providence. In the nervous breakdown, too, there is a small group about which we have very little available information. We know that such cases fit into the law, but we do not know just how. The average nervous breakdown, however, due to occupational fatigue, a broken home, religious controversies, or the conflict between the individual and the things he wants—this can be almost entirely eliminated.

The important thing in prevention is that the person should impose discipline upon his own conduct. Through discipline he must determine values, and dedicate enough of his time and energies to the strengthening of these values so that they will be available when he needs them. It is well worth while, therefore, to begin now to build for psychological health by creating within ourselves the kind of an internal life that was intended for us—a life of ideals, convictions, principles; of natural, gentle emotion, the kindly desire to help and serve, and a very large measure of unselfishness. When we begin to live according to these values, we will be building the kind of life that we really want to live.

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.
—Chinese Proverb

THE MYSTICAL AND MEDICAL PHILOSOPHY OF PARACELSUS

Part III: Fundamentals of Metaphysical Healing

In formal histories of medicine, it is customary to orient Paracelsus as the last of the great medieval doctors and the first modern physician. He was bound to the past by his numerous metaphysical, magical, and talismanic theories; but he was also a man far ahead of his time in his chemical researches, his ideas of hygiene and eugenics, and his emphasis upon psychotherapy, diet, biochemistry, and sanitation. He may also be considered as one of the last great philosophers of medicine, and a staunch supporter of the use of religion in the treatment of disease.

According to Paracelsus, sickness always arises from disobedience to the divine or natural laws which relate to health. He assured both his friends and enemies, however, that he was not a perfectionist, nor inclined to condemn anyone who, for one reason or another, had failed to maintain his energies and functions. It was his observation, unburdened with complaint, that the loss of health is due to a falling away from the necessary harmony by which the human being shares in a universal life-principle. As long as he remains harmoniously adjusted to this principle, he cannot be sick, if we except injuries and accidents.

There are many ways by which a person may deprive himself of nature's benevolence. He may disobey the rules of health because of ignorance, which is unfortunate but not reprehensible.

He may be the victim of superstition, which causes him to cling to false doctrines or suffer from the popular prejudices of the medical profession. He may lack the courage to face emergencies. For example, he may delay having his ailments diagnosed because he fears the verdict. He may also be under a pressure of conditions which impel him to sacrifice his own well-being in the service of something or someone which he regards as greater or more important than himself.

If disobedience to natural law arises from spiritual motivation, from heroic resolution, or dedication to the service of God or man, the individual will be rewarded by internal consolation; but this cannot save him from the physical consequences of neglecting his body, disregarding his needs, or living contrary to the rules governing the distribution of universal energy. Paracelsus held it to be a fundamental principle of medicine that once sickness has endangered the bodily economy, every possible and reasonable means, scientific or unscientific, should be made available to the patient to assure and hasten his recovery. One of the first factors in the restoration of health is a firm and simple faith. He affirmed that faith was a real and vital aid to health, and insisted that faith-healing was as scientific as any other form of therapy. While it may not be so regarded by many practitioners, it is a scientific fact in nature; otherwise it could not be successful. With faith strengthening the internal resolution of the patient, he becomes receptive and hopeful, and the tranquilizing effect of such attitudes is better and less dangerous than relaxing drugs or sleeping potions.

Faith helps the patient to overcome resentment toward his ailment or the causes to which it may be ascribed. Patience makes a good patient. By natural believing and a simple, genuine optimism, the sick person places himself psychologically in the keeping of powers and energies greater than himself. He seeks to understand them; he accepts them as the ministers of a divine purpose; and having in this way relaxed the tension and fear which ailments bring, he may even recover without medication. If he still requires treatment, he can cooperate genuinely with the physician, and allow the remedies to accomplish their maximum results. Paracelsus said that it is the first duty of the medication to overcome the disposition of the patient. The modern tendency in medicine to treat persons rather than diseases is an extension of the Paracelsian concept. Between the doctor and the disease, the sick man himself often acts as a barrier to his own recovery. If he is cynical and critical, if he doubts both the physician and his remedy, or regards himself as a victim of some complicated injustice, he will not react well, but will be reluctant to accept advice and will not remain under medical guidance after the first symptoms have been alleviated. Such attitudes lock the magnetic field of the body and restrict the flow of those vital energies upon which recovery depends.

Paracelsus therefore explains to us, in his own way and in the language of his time, that many ailments begin in tension, and that any device which will reduce or remove tension is valid therapy. He therefore emphasizes the healing power of prayer, which he also regards as a scientific fact. Prayer is a positive and objective statement of conviction, and is naturally associated with a strong and sufficient faith. In prayer, thoughts or words stimulate the mind and the emotions with noble sentiments, and encourage the realization that God is the Great Physician. If, for any reason, a man has separated himself from communion with Deity, he must achieve a proper reconciliation. When this is accomplished, a larger measure of relaxation is possible. Convinced of the healing power of the Divine Mercy, the devout person becomes expectant, watching eagerly and hopefully for the signs of heavenly grace. This is far better than allowing the mind to brood upon its negative symptoms, or to be hyper-observant of the inroads of the disease, leading to the total loss of optimism.

Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds help to maintain health or restore it if it has been lost. Recognizing the importance of man's spiritual nature, Paracelsus clearly states that it is according to the will of nature that each human being shall in time become his own physician. We depend upon others because we lack wisdom and understanding. If another man can attain to the knowledge by which he can assist our recovery, we may likewise attain to that knowledge. While it requires much training and specialized research to restore the sick, preventive medicine is not

Title page of *Basilica Chymica* by Oswaldus Crollius, amanuensis to Paracelsus. At lower right of plate is portrait of Paracelsus.

nearly so complicated. While there may always be need for scientific guidance, such need will be the exception rather than the rule. By the integration of his life around constructive and natural procedures, the average person will enjoy a greater measure of good health than he at present regards as possible.

It was the opinion of von Hohenheim that the adverse effects of tension or stress may first be noted in those bodily functions associated with digestion, assimilation, and excretion. If these

processes are disrupted, the body becomes toxic, and the individual slowly poisons himself. Toxin, in turn, contributes to the problem of obstruction. If this is permitted to continue without adequate correction, the flow of energy is impeded. The vital essence of life moves through the body not only by way of the physical structure, but by means of a vital etheric counterpart which is called the vital vehicle. Through this vehicle flow countless tiny streams of semi-fluidic energy. The common experience of an arm or leg going to sleep because the normal circulation is temporarily impaired, results from the obstruction of the vital body. As this returns to its normal relationship with the physical member, there is a prickling sensation, and sometimes minor discomforts.

Paracelsus believed that when a limb is amputated, its etheric double remains with the person, and that it also continues to have a sympathetic association with the dismembered part. He gives an example where an amputated leg was put in a wooden box and buried in the ground. The patient continued to report discomfiture where the leg had been. Finally, the box was unearthed and opened, and it was found that a nail used to fasten the lid had penetrated the severed leg. The nail was removed, and the patient no longer suffered discomfiture. Lord Nelson also wrote that he felt pain in his own amputated arm for years, and when in the dark, often had the feeling that the arm was still present.

Realizing that mankind in general was not yet wise enough to preserve or restore health by spiritual means alone, Paracelsus advanced one of his best-known medical theories. He said that because of the infinite love of the Creator, there was an immediate and available remedy in nature for every inharmony of the human flesh. While some of these have not yet been discovered, the search must continue until proper medications of a non-destructive nature have been found for all physical ills. The tendency of the physician is to overlook natural remedies because they are too obvious and too simple. If he had cultivated his intuitive power as well as his analytical faculties, therapy would have advanced more rapidly. If there be energy in everything, suitable to all needs, then there must be one basic energy or principle of life. This is the mysterious "Blood of the Messiah," the very life-power of God. All energy, therefore, in any of its myriad forms, is essentially

sacred. It is sacred because no human being can ever become its master. The only way the individual can fully participate in this life-force is by controlling himself, not by controlling the energy.

Nutrition involves the procedure of sustaining the body of a creature by feeding it the bodies of other creatures. Energy derived from food is not actually due to the digestion of a physical substance. All bodies exist because they are focal points of energy. This is also true of medications. They set up poles which draw energy of a certain kind, according to the specific nature of the remedy. All such remedies operate only within fields of suitability. A remedy given at the wrong time, or to the wrong person, though indicating the treatment of an ailment, may fail to accomplish the desired purpose.

Paracelsus also gave some thought to the preparation of foods and drugs. He pointed out the danger of preparing them in ways which would damage or destroy the energy-focus. He would therefore have been strongly against the de-naturing of foods, the over-refinement of products, and the use of by-products from which most of the essential virtues have already been removed. To burden the body with adulterated substances was to permit malnutrition to arise in the presence of abundance. On the other hand, he admitted that it might be possible to reduce the gross substances of foods, so that their essences could be more immediately assimilated and produce more rapid results.

Man himself is not a simple organism, for within his body are creatures belonging to several kingdoms of nature. Within him are mineral, plant, and animal organisms, and nutrition must provide each of these groups with the energy necessary for its survival. Units of nutrition are like seeds having various layers surrounding their energy-cores. Thus Paracelsus said that the body-energy of the seed feeds man's body; the soul-energy of the seed, man's soul; and the spirit energy of the seed, the spirit-energy field of man. Unwise tampering with foods, which in their natural forms meet all reasonable requirements, may thus unbalance their nutritional value, supplying one part of the body, but denying nourishment to another part.

Realizing that the prime purpose of therapy is to supply a particular energy at a particular time to a particular part of a body,

From *Opera*, Strassburg, 1616.

PARACELSIAN TALISMANS

The symbols used on these medical charms are cabalistic formulas.

Paracelsus did not hesitate to consider magical and sympathetic means of achieving his cures. In harmony with many ancient writers, he was convinced that many metaphysical practices could be used with success, especially when more conservative methods were ineffective. He thus prepared a group of talismanic remedies. A talisman is a magical formula or symbol, usually written upon paper or parchment or engraved into the surface of some metal or gem. Paracelsus highly favored metallic talismans resembling rather closely the familiar medals of saints, which are still regarded by many as having spiritual power.

These medical medals were cast from various alloys or pure metals, as gold, silver, iron, copper, and the like. The work was

done under the conjunctions and aspects of planets, according to the phases of the moon, or with special ceremonies of consecration. The inscriptions and devices upon them were derived from the most sacred sources, including the magical writings attributed to Solomon, King of Israel. In some cases, talismans were designed particularly for a special patient, but often they were kept in readiness in the same way that drugs were available from the compounding of prescriptions. When Paracelsus observed that a patient was suffering from a particular debility, he would prescribe one of these talismans which was to be worn by the patient, usually over the heart, for the purpose of attracting sidereal energies from space and focusing them within the magnetic field of the sick person. Small amounts of magnetic metals and other materials were also administered internally, often in the form of powders to dissolve in wine. Recent experiments with the therapeutic properties of meteoric iron and the elixir of gold seem to sustain the Paracelsian concept.

Discovering that plants and shrubs growing in various regions, as upon high mountains, or where the earth is strongly impregnated with metals, absorbed special qualities, he selected even his most common remedial plants with the utmost care. Thus he might have several varieties of the same plant, carefully labeled as to the time and region associated with their gathering. While he was ridiculed for such practices, his adversaries were forced to admit that he attained extraordinary success where orthodox methods had been ineffectual.

The Swiss Hermes fashioned a ring of antimonium. Upon it he caused sacred signs to be placed. This he wore when treating the sick. When he observed certain symptoms, he would place this ring on the finger of the patient. On one occasion, it has been testified, the ring drew the poisons from the body so rapidly that it seemed to melt and literally fell from the finger of the sick person in a semi-dissolved condition. In his search for curious remedies, Paracelsus made several discoveries which were far out of the thinking of his time. He presented an idea to the professors of medicine at the University of Basel which horrified them. Von Hohenheim told them flatly that the excrements of the human body contained powerful remedial agencies, and that this field

should be thoroughly explored. Such research, however, held slight charm for distinguished savants who would not even contaminate themselves by taking the pulse of a sick man, but employed a secretary for the purpose.

If bodily health is endangered by deficiencies which Paracelsus sought to correct by means of his magical devices, why do such deficiencies exist in the human constitution? Both unbalance and deficiency are traceable to several causes, some internal and others environmental. Unhealthful attitudes dominate the internal group, and unhealthful environment, the external group. Man, exposed to the intemperances of his own living and the dangers and uncertainties of his surroundings, is subject to countless injuries. Paracelsus did not believe that most diseases are hereditary, or that sickness must usually follow exposure to contagious disease. The degree of susceptibility to different ailments is determined by imbalance and deficiency. Man may inherit a tendency to the ailments of his forebears because he has also derived his body from his parents, but he could not inherit energies deficient in themselves. If, therefore, parents have reason to suspect that they have a predisposition to certain ailments, they should immediately protect their children in every way possible. The diet should be rich in those elements which will tend to build up deficient areas and neutralize such imbalance as might be expected under the circumstances. Care in this respect may assure that the child will be completely free of the debilities of preceding generations. Mental stress can also be communicated, so that tensions perpetuate themselves not by heredity, but by association. If no effort is made to break these vicious circles, they may continue for several generations.

Paracelsus believed there was a remedy for all human ills, and was convinced that all things in nature are useful and benevolent in some way. That which is meat to one thing is poison to another. All substances are of themselves good, unless they are distorted or disturbed through the interference of mind and emotion—usually man's mind and emotion. It is therefore not necessary to destroy what is not useful to man; rather, we must find the proper use for everything, for by so doing, we maintain the balance of nature, which in turn is the greatest cause and source of protec-

tion for ourselves. Energy patterns are eternal, and energy contains within it a wonderful richness of nutrition. Diseases are entities or beings of some kind. They are not merely names or temperatures, or outbreaks upon the skin, or the disarrangement of functions. During the days of Paracelsus, Europe was plagued with periodic visitations of terrible pestilences. None knew where they came from, nor could any tell what happened when their fury was exhausted and they appeared to depart. For example, what happens to the attack of measles after you get well? We already know that *measles* is a name for a widespread ailment which asserts itself in various locations, and attacks particularly certain age groups. Obviously, measles are of very little practical use to man except in maintaining certain systemic processes which, in the long run, contribute to human economy. We have no way of knowing, however, how measles as an ailment can ultimately be eliminated.

Our present program in all such difficulties is to try to create immunities. Yet there must be in nature, according to Paracelsus, something that needs the measles, some form of life to which this peculiar kind of energy could be of the greatest value and service. He uses this merely as an example, perhaps a homely and insufficient one. What he is really trying to tell us is that the mind of man makes it possible for the human being to become an orderer of nature. Man, dedicated to the search for truth, can find the real and appropriate place for all things, and can labor to put these things in their proper order.

The concept that a disease is a metaphysical entity has not endeared Paracelsus to the medical profession. He defends his belief, however, with considerable logic. If we understand by an entity something similar to a psychological complex, we must acknowledge that it is some kind of an energized organism. Diseases develop through orderly sequences of symptoms, attack various parts of the body, and some of them seem to survive, like parasites, by devouring the very flesh which they have assailed. In epidemical disease, it has been pointed out that man is relatively powerless if he cannot curb the epidemic at an early stage. The great cycles of plagues were not cured or terminated by medical skill. They

exhausted themselves, and disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared. Paracelsus believed that some of them, at least, were due to mutations of the atmosphere, configurations of planets, and broad psychic disturbances, such as might arise from war, panic, or fanaticism. Negative and destructive attitudes and emotions held in common by vast numbers of persons, may generate artificial organisms, or supply polarities through which invisible supermundane creatures may gain access into the theater of human affairs. The idea appears at first fantastic, but will no longer amaze the modern world with its addiction to science-fiction.

Deriving certain inspiration from the records of the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, Paracelsus experimented with phases of optical therapy. He assumed it to be possible that remedies could be devised which could be taken into the body through the eyes, or, for that matter, through the ears. A man listening to good advice may find his health improved, as the result of what he has heard, if he will follow the recommendations. Under this heading, also, would be music therapy, religious ritual, sacred chants and mantrams. Therapy through the eyes has been noted in the constructive effect of great art, and through living in a cultured, artistic atmosphere in which harmonious surroundings contribute to contentment. More technically may be mentioned the Egyptian belief that each of the basic symmetrical geometric solids had therapeutic power when seen or meditated upon. Here symbolism exercises a remedial power; forms, designs, arrangements, and patterns, capture and hold energy. This is no more than an extension again of the Pythagorean formula that if man can produce or construct a completely perfect form, it will convey back to him, through his sensory perceptions, a powerful energy for the restoration of his own normalcy. The Greeks went further, recognizing the therapeutic value of the dance, the theater, and architecture. All mathematical sequences, proportions, designs, colors, arrangements, and tones, can be elements of a grand cosmic therapy. The art is to distinguish clearly the proper tones or forms to apply in particular instances. Such a quest is endless, but its difficulties in no way deny its reality.

Our great physician visited Constantinople, where he gained considerable knowledge of transcendental magic from the Arabs,

From Stoddart's *Paracelsus*

PARACELSUS
After an original painted in Nuremberg about 1530.

whose researches had not been blocked by theological restrictions. From them, Paracelsus learned the effects of various designs, tones, and movements upon the human mind. He further discovered the possibility of a direct transfer of mental energy from the physician to the patient. This is not mental healing, in the popular sense of the word, but rather the direct stimulation of particular functions, by focusing mental energy as one might focus light through a lens. By the power of will and mind, functions can be stimulated, at least temporarily. Paracelsus believed that this was not purely suggestion or auto-suggestion, but a native power resident in man, available to the physician, but not generally studied. He also recognized the dangers which would result from the misuse of such power, whereby mental magic could degenerate into mental

sorcery. He therefore held that such power should be available only to the most dedicated physician, one entirely beyond selfish or ulterior motives, a true servant of God and nature.

It is also reported that while in Constantinople, Paracelsus was instructed in the mysteries of alchemy, and secured from the Near-eastern savants the wonderful stone, Azoth, which he carried in the hilt of his sword. One of the principal ends of alchemy was the compounding of the universal medicine. Paracelsus made use of alchemical terms quite frequently in his writings, but not always in a conventional way. He seems to have had a special interpretation of Hermetic chemistry, but he did recognize the principle of transmutation. This means literally the regeneration of chemicals, minerals, substances, and elements. In each, a process occurred by which the soul, or inner life, was liberated from the gross parts to become a pure essence, in this way becoming compatible with all pure essences. Such alchemical medicines were particularly suitable to the transformation of man's inner life. They strengthened his spirit and made possible the victory of consciousness over matter. This process, also, Paracelsus affirmed to be completely scientific, free of all metaphysical speculation and vagary. It depended upon man's discovering the essential nature of each substance, and assisting this substance to the perfection of itelf. Such perfected substances in turn became available as medicines to restore the harmony and equilibrium of troubled bodies, hearts, and minds.

One of the most fabulous of the Paracelsian remedies was his *mumiae,* a substance originally derived from the mummified remains of the Egyptian dead. Later, however, the concept was extended to certain materials which served as energy-magnets. They could draw toxins of many kinds from the body to themselves, as the lodestone attracts iron. Once permeated with the vibration of a disease, the mumiae could be taken away and brought into contact with some organism which, for the preservation of its own life, could assimilate the vital forces detrimental to man. For some reason, Paracelsus regarded with extreme anxiety the idea of simply attempting to destroy a disease. Perhaps he regarded it as having a kind of immortality. If taken from one body and not provided with a new habitat, it might continue in the atmosphere

and attach itself to some innocent person. Oriental magic includes such beliefs, and in certain forms of demonism, it was necessary to find for an evil spirit some place where it could reside. Thus, in the Bible, demons driven from men were transferred to a herd of swine. Reasoning from his favorite concept that everything was useful for something, Paracelsus sought to achieve a universal benefit, even as he treated the sick.

The concept of sympathy immediately suggests the concept of antipathy. If certain things are drawn together by similarities, other things may be strangely bound by their dissimilarities and antagonisms. By opposing motives, a man may be as dependent upon his enemies as upon his friends, and one may influence him as much as the other. Therapeutically speaking, sympathy consists in supporting like with like, or nourishing the good by supplying it with more like itself. Antipathetical medicine consists in neutralizing a negative force by balancing it with something equally antagonistic to itself. Here, Paracelsus made use of the old rules of astrology, as these especially apply to astro-therapy. The two malefic planets known at that time, Mars and Saturn, believed to be associated with iron and lead respectively, represented the polarities of stimulation and crystallization. Plants, herbs, minerals, and metals under the rulership of Mars, were therefore used to combat ailments under the rulership of Saturn, and vice verse. This opened an interesting concept of therapy. Assuming that certain aspects of planets were involved in the appearance of diseases in the body by providing a situation suitable to the inroads of that disease, it seemed obvious to our ancestors to devise appropriate remedies. This was done by capturing the rays of sympathetical or antipathetical planets and stars, as the need might indicate, and making these available to the sick.

In his estates at Hohenheim, Paracelsus captured dew on plates of glass. He gathered this dew under various configurations of the heavenly bodies, believing the water to carry within itself the energy of these planetary combinations. This impregnated dew he gave to his patients, and was highly satisfied with the results which he obtained. It is easy to doubt the validity of his practice, but it should not be condemned without investigation, for he may have

hit upon an unsuspected truth. Much as in the case of the dew, mistletoe and orchids, because they seem to live upon the atmosphere, were regarded as gatherers of sidereal forces. The old Druids realized the secret powers of the mistletoe, which they gathered on sanctified cloths, never permitting the mistletoe to touch the earth because this would drain off its atmospheric virtue.

Throughout the Paracelsian corpus, it is noted that this great physician familiarized his mind with the folk-lore and beliefs of every group of healers with which he could come in contact. He discarded no remedy brought to his attention without first experimenting with its virtues, and analyzing the theoretical explanation of its properties. By this systematic endeavor, he made many real and vital contributions to the pharmacopeia. He was long ridiculed for his gullibility, but in recent years he has been more than vindicated. It is not uncommon these days to read of recognized scientific groups traveling into some distant or savage region to study the remedial practices of witch doctors and medicine men.

In summary, therefore, it will be noted that Paracelsus combined empirical attitudes with ancient lore, bringing them into compatibility with a devout religious nature which recognized the omnipresence of divine energy and life. He sought to restore health by natural means, so that it would not be necessary for the sick first to recover from the ailment and later recover from the cure.

One pound of learning requires ten pounds of common sense to apply.

—Persian Proverb

Double Jeopardy

A highwayman named Bolland, confined in Newgate, sent for a solicitor to know how he could defer his trial, and was answered, "By getting an apothecary to make affidavit of illness." This was accordingly done in the following manner: "The deponent verily believes that if the said Bolland is obliged to take his trial at the ensuing session, he will be in imminent danger of his life." To which the learned judge on the bench answered that he verily believed so too. The trial was ordered to proceed at once.

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF ZEN BUDDHISM

It would profit little to attempt a formal definition of Zen. For our present purpose, therefore, we shall limit ourselves to an interpretation of certain of its principles in terms of the life of Western man. With due apology to the sensitivities of the ancient masters of this sect, we can suggest that Zen is a philosophy of immediacy. It has something to do with the tremendous importance of *now* in contrast to all other aspects or concepts of time. If *now* can be adequately comprehended and its implications directly and forcibly applied to action, much of the confusion which burdens us can be clarified. Man exists simultaneously in two dimensions of time. One of these consists of the concept of past, present, and future, and the other, of an eternity existing forever in the state of *now*. Some may feel that the term *present time* is equivalent to *now,* but this is not exactly true. We use the idea of present time rather broadly. It may mean the generation in which we live, and signify that which is contemporary. It may be refined to our present today, this afternoon, this evening. Distinguished from this, *now* stands for a precise instant. It is the living moment. Historically or chronologically, the present slips into the past, but *now* remains, completely unhistorical. That which slips away is not *now,* but something which, departing, leaves *now* untouched.

It appears to me that Zen, by taking exception to historical time, simply affirms that reality is timeless, and that past, present, and future are static concepts, and are therefore illusional. It would warn us that the moment we accept the familiar time dimensions which we have been trained to regard as important, the mind comes

under a tyranny of pressures which originate in that which is not *now* and therefore is not real. The problem is subtle, but if we simplify the austerity of the basic statement, we can begin to appreciate its practical meaning.

In the life of every person, *now* is the focal point of all available energy. That which is done now is supported by the coordinated resources, and is not subjected to the censorship of uncertain viewpoints which may ultimately completely frustrate the action. We have instinctively realized this, and regard it as a poor policy to procrastinate necessary decisions. The fact of *now* is suspended between the pressures of past and future. To the degree that we become over-mindful of the past, or permit it to overshadow the vital instant which alone belongs to us, we burden our mental and emotional lives with remorse and misgiving. Likewise, if we permit our attention to focus upon the future, we may fall into the most common trap which can contribute to suffering; namely, ulterior motives. Zen does not recommend that we perform any action because it is pressed upon us by past necessity, or because we hope that it shall be rewarded by future benefits. It is obvious that such an attitude must be well understood, or it will be badly misunderstood.

We all feel a strong indebtedness to the past, and regard it, with some justification, as the possible source of practical instruction. We appreciate the art and literature, the philosophy and religion, which have descended to us as a priceless heritage. Does Zen mean that we should eliminate or ignore these apparently real benefits? Actually, I do not think that such is the case. Rather, Zen would invite us to realize that we cannot depend upon history to improve us simply because we can remember or read or recall things that have previously happened. Zen takes the attitude that all that is real in the past is already available to us within our own subconscious psychic core. If, at a given instant, we are moved to a certain decision, this movement is itself the expression and fulfillment of all knowledge which has been accepted and experienced within ourselves. Some persons seldom read; others are not inclined to contemplate upon their own yesterdays. The temperament of the individual in relation to total available knowledge determines what part of that knowledge he will make his own. In that instant which

is *now,* there is no time for recall or regret; in fact, most decisions are made with little consideration for universal factors. We move because we will to move, and in fulfillment of impulse and desire. The important thing, therefore, is the integrity of the instinctive impulse. This reveals our real orientation. Man is no better and no worse than his conduct at this instant, and if something must be done to improve the quality of his immediate conduct, a broad program of self-education is in some way indicated.

Zen, although it regards itself as a completely emancipated science of values, is still indebted for the machinery of its basic concept to the teachings of Gautama Buddha. Zen may go so far as to deny the historical existence of this great Indian teacher, but the real purpose of this denial is to negate the historical significance of persons and ideas. Zen imposes upon its disciples a rigid program of simplification and clarification. It encourages a new kind of experience, which can come only to those who emancipate themselves from the stream of error which has flowed down through the mystery of time. All valid knowledge comes from experience, but *now* is also the moment of supreme experience, for it is in his immediate reaction to the challenge of the moment that man reveals to himself his total assets and liabilities. If man is insufficient to the needs of *now,* he is insufficient as a person. Neither excuse nor explanation is of any avail. Hopes and regrets do not correct the weaknesses of character, nor is it meaningful to hope that in a year, five years, or ten years, we will improve. Normally and naturally, we should improve, but we must also bear the burden of the mistakes we now cause, and the laws we now break.

Buddhism advances a doctrine of a self and a not-self. The self is personal, transitory, and essentially illusional. The not-self, in this case, is not a false self, but that which, by its own nature, cannot be captured in the concept of selfhood. It is a universal principle, energy, or substance, abiding forever in its own state or quality, and identical with the substance of *now*. The problem, therefore, is to release in ourselves the mystery of eternity, and with this release, to dissolve the tyranny of the concept of time. As the goal is the immediate experience of reality, it is the attitude of Zen that we must overcome the illusion that reality is distant, unapproachable, or, in terms of time, remote or inaccessible. The story is told that the Greek philosopher Aristippus, while on a ship, was asked by the captain of the vessel how far it is from this world to the next. Aristippus replied, "How thick are the walls of your ship?" The captain said, "Three inches." "Very well," observed Aristippus, "It is therefore three inches between this world and the next." In Zen, this kind of a statement might be called a *koan,* a sort of eye-opener, something that challenges immediate awareness of an unsuspected truth.

The distance, therefore, between one state of consciousness and another cannot be measured in feet, rods, or miles. Nor can it be said to be in terms of years, centuries, or millenia. To describe the true significance of metaphysical interval, the Zen master may simply snap his fingers to remind his disciple that now, this very moment, transcends the ages, embraces all dimensions, and makes possible the immediate experience of reality, if the disciple is qualified. Zen leans upon Buddhism in the essential concept of its disciplines. Man cannot look firmly in one direction and see clearly what is occurring behind his back. If he resolves to be aware only of certain dimensions of living, he closes himself to other dimensions. He cannot, therefore, proceed on the assumption that fullness of knowledge is to be gained merely by extending his present knowledge through further intensity and specialization. It may be that he is moving along a path which will end in discouragement or disillusionment; it is quite possible that he does not know where he is going, and is depending upon favorable winds of fortune to bring him to a safe harbor. While the mind is captured by phenomena, and held within the limitations of time and place dimensions, the experience of reality cannot be expected.

Buddhism therefore taught the need for the quiet development of discrimination. The end was not addition to knowledge, but a kind of internal relaxation away from error. The person must become capable of pure thought immediately released. Pure thought, in turn, must be free from prejudice, opinion, egoism, intolerance, bigotry, or ulterior motives. It must be a liberated thought; it must be able to move through an unpressured mind and an emotional life without tension.

To most persons, such a heroic reformation of character appears more difficult even than the problems of the hour. Many choose,

From Favier's *Peking*
Bodhidharma, Patriarch of Zen, carrying a symbolic tea plant. He introduced tea drinking for monks keeping vigil.

therefore, to struggle with problems rather than to solve the mystery of problem itself. If the disciple should ask how long it would require to overcome the psychological pressures which distort our mental and emotional natures, the Zen master might again snap his fingers. How long does it take to awaken from sleep? How long does it take to become aware of sunrises and sunsets that have always existed? How long does it take for a man to experience the universal good in which he forever lives and moves? Ignorance

is a weary journey through time; true wisdom is an awakening that cannot be measured by time. A man climbing a hill does not see the view on the other side until he reaches the top of the hill. With the last step, the entire panorama becomes visible, and the meaning of the whole journey is made known.

Zen is rather brusque in its statement of things. In spite of the great world teachers who have come to us through the ages; in spite of great religious and educational institutions that have been generously supported for many centuries; in spite of our own most cherished convictions which we cheerfully distribute among our friends; at a particular moment, under certain pressures, we still make fools of ourselves. We perform some unreasonable action, inconsistent with everything that we claim to be right and necessary. This is due to the tyranny of a feeling or the dictatorship of an attitude. We cannot justify it to ourselves, but we must painfully repair the damage we have done, and face inevitable retributions which follow at the heels of indiscretion.

Zen is aimed at the roots of this inconsistency, and of the many schools of Buddhist conviction, it is one of the most severe in its demands upon the life of the truth-seeker. It measures all results in terms of the quality of activity. What we affirm means nothing; what we accept means less. Only action is a trustworthy key to the degree of attainment reached by the individual. Action cannot be controlled by intellect alone, for the mind is forever overshadowing action with qualifications and delays. Even right action arising from the ponderous mechanism of moral indoctrination, is not considered adequate. Action must be completely simple, natural, and totally correct. This correctness, however, is not one measured by human authority. Man is not accountable to any other person. He is accountable only to the eternal rightness by which all action is measured. Everything we do is either real or not real; everything we say is either so or not so. There is no place in Zen for the almost true, or the nearly right, or the approximately correct; nor is there any place for excuses. The teacher might or might not accept the excuse, but the universe will reward only the truth itself.

Like most schools of Buddhist thinking, Zen does not fight its way to truth; rather, it relaxes itself away from error. As in the

case of Tao, the Zen effort is effortless. This is especially difficult for Western people. The dynamics of suspended action seem beyond comprehension. Buddhism has long claimed that silence will clarify more situations than words can ever make clear. Zen believes in a transmission of values by silence. It is said that Buddha revealed the doctrine of Zen without speaking, simply by a symbolic action. While sitting quietly in meditation, he lowered his gaze to an open lotus blossom that lay in his lap. He did not speak, but one of his disciples apprehended his meaning and received the illumination.

A Japanese student of Zen once told me that all essential growth he had gained within the sect was due to one thing alone, and that was continuous observation of the conduct of the Master. He saw this strict disciplinarian correct the mistakes of his disciples without any overtones of reproach. When ridiculous situations arose, the Master never lost his serenity. The old Zen teacher referred to was delightfully human, however. He had a grand sense of humor, quick sympathy, and genuine understanding. It seemed that he could read the minds of those associated with him. Always, however, the little moods of the moment flowed across his features, and beneath was an undisturbable tranquillity. He could be all things to all men, yet forever he was the instrument of an unconditioned reality. This reality was as distant as the stars, but as near as the immediate need of his humblest disciple. He seemed to ascend and descend, flow out and return again. He was wise one moment and a child the next. Yet in all these moods, there was no conflict. He had discovered that the dynamic *now* enclosed young and old, ancient and modern, joy and sorrow, life and death. Gradually, this tremendous poise without pretense, this natural and unassumed strength-mildness compound, seemed to unfold as an unwritten book of unspoken instruction. The disciple began to feel this dynamic tranquillity within himself. He sensed how it operated, and found it easier and easier to capture the shadow of this patient eagerness within his own internal life.

The disciplines of Zen appear so methodical and so orderly, and even so commanding, that they would seem to offer little opportunity for the individual to unfold his own submerged potentials. Actually, these disciplines make possible the revelation of all potentials, because they do not contribute to the dominant expression of any single faculty or group of faculties. The student of Zen does not sacrifice the life of music for the life of mathematics. He does not become a scholar at the expense of the skill of his hands. His life does not end in an ivory tower, far from the little problems of average persons. He seeks, rather, the release of the full experience of the universal purpose. He is aware that the common experiences of mortals cause them to become fishermen, storekeepers, scholars, or soldiers; therefore all these different vocations are specializations within the complete energy of reality. If we release this energy, it will strengthen all our works, and cause us to perform our selected labors with the skill, the truthfulness, and the certainty of direct apperception. If, however, we lock ourselves in our separate undertakings, we may merely force our own opinions beyond a reasonable degree. The important thing is to experience activity, to know it in ourselves, and to recognize it in others.

In Japan, the Zen doctrine has always especially appealed to the military class. This may seem strange when we realize the essential pacifism of Buddhistic belief. It may well be that the hazard of the military occupation is responsible for an instinctive realization of the Zen doctrine of *nowness*. The soldier knows that his life may be short, that any moment may be his last, or that he may be required at any time to engage upon a dangerous or fatal enterprise. For such reasons, he must live now. He must make moments long, for years may be short. He also realizes the tremendous diversity of situations which may confer spiritual insight. Alone on a battlefield, he must call directly upon his own inner faith and resolution. He must live ever ready to die; yet he cannot afford to destroy his moments of life by fear of death. He is therefore accustomed to live on the brink of countless uncertainties, and find peace in this precarious situation. Actually, war is not so different from the competitive lives of those engaged in struggles for success or for security in various lines of activities.

The dynamics of the moment are more long-range than might at first appear. If the moment is lived fully, wisely, lovingly, and

serenely, it may be said to cancel the past. To the Eastern mind, this does not mean escape from karma; rather, it takes the punishment out of retribution, causing it to be recognized merely as a normal part of the processes of growth. If this immediate moment be lived correctly, it becomes the sure foundation of a proper and adequate future. Tomorrow is dangerous only because we have lived today unwisely or unrealistically. There can be no evil destiny for the person who, at every given moment, keeps the laws governing human conduct. If, however, we waste energy, regretting what we previously did, or morbidly anticipating future difficulties, we have, so to say, destroyed ourselves, for our self is really that *now* in which we are capable of direct action.

We all experience a common phenomenon. We notice that when we are happy, time passes quickly; when we are miserable, the hours seem endless. Yet the tempo is only in ourselves. Clocks do not reflect such differences. We also know that in sleep we can dream a lifetime in a few moments. Reality has two kinds of timelessness. It can gather all eternity into a moment, and it can distribute a single moment throughout all eternity. It is part of the concept of Zen that the *now* shall expand its inclusiveness so that we dwell in it forever. By so doing, we also become perpetual participants in that kind of energy which operates only in the state of *now*. Thus *now* is the time of all becoming. It crowns the ages that have gone before, and is the enduring foundation of ages yet unborn. The affairs of men may forever change, but the substance of reality, known or unknown, never changes and is ever present. The first man stood in the midst of the same universal mystery in which the last man will stand. Throughout all man-made time, there is a procession of mystics who have found eternity by inward experience. They lived in history, but their experience transcended history, and after it occurred they likewise transcended history.

There is a certain austerity about Zen, but it is the simple austerity of man's heaven-given internal insight. It reveals the firm decision to walk with the law, to proceed only in courses that are lawful, and to constantly cultivate the eternity which is concealed behind the mystery of time. To live totally in the *now* is, in a strange way, to become eternal, to lose all sight of coming and going, adding or detracting. Thus discipline must help man to release himself from bondage to such attitudes as detract from his own immediate immortality.

In the East, this may certainly lead, at least symbolically, to an intensive asceticism, but in the West, there can be a very different, but equally legitimate course of procedure. The early Christian mystics dreamed of the time when the kingdom of Heaven would be established upon the earth. Thus, they were not content merely to escape this world for refuge in a better one; they desired to bring this better world to this plane of confusion as an essential action of spiritual responsibility. This concept can also be applied to Zen. It is not a saintly departure into some Nirvanic state; it is the bringing of saintliness into its fullest expression while in this world and while concerned with the proper duties of this mortal life. Properly understood, the Zen doctrine can help modern man to attain a serenity from within himself.

Zen might not like to affirm that it is a religion, but its effects can be religious, according to our way of thinking. To achieve this, however, we must escape from the false mental concept that we have built around our theory of piety. Those who have attained Zen may appear a little different, but only because they are a little better, in the fullest meaning of this word. There is no obviously sanctimonious air, and no frustrating of the natural pleasure of themselves or others. I have known a number of Oriental disciples of Zen. They are consistently a happy and amusing group, excellent company, and without any trace of artificiality. They make no claims to being deep or wonderful or emancipated. They are not brittle or crude or argumentative. They are trying, according to their teaching, to instruct only by demonstrating through their own lives that they have found what most persons are still seeking—a dynamic contentment, a serenity that is active and purposeful, and a joy which is sincere and complete. What they have really accomplished, if they have succeeded in their disciplines, is a larger appreciation of everything of which we have an incomplete appreciation. They may seem a little brusque at times because they do not cater to deceit or worldly wisdom.

We might recommend a simple experiment in Zen, remembering that the validity of the doctrine is to be determined only by the experience of the individual directly concerned. Let us imagine

that you have your share of common burdens, and that these pile up to produce critical times which make heavy demands upon your resources, energy, and natural optimism. How would Zen help you? First of all, it might recommend that you divide the factors involved in your concern into two groups: first, such factors as have an existence that is factual; and second, those which are only the productions of your own thoughts and emotions. First eliminate all overtones bearing upon your dilemma. Certain things are true or untrue; certain responsibilities are factual or non-factual. These should be carefully separated, and all overtones, concerns, doubts, fears, and anxieties, separated from the facts. You might be surprised to realize that the facts themselves are not nearly so serious when they have been taken out of historical context, or when we have removed from them the dramatizations with which we have clothed them. We may arrive finally at some rather simple conclusions. "I owe more money than I can pay; I want things that I cannot afford; I am doubtful about the sincerity of my associates; the tranquillity of my home is in danger; I fear for my health; or I am anxious about the conduct of my children."

As we remove emotion from these situations, we release energy from useless and purposeless agitations. The moment that we can see the problem with complete clarity, and no longer invest it with the dazzlements of our desires, the troubles have begun to shrink. We can come to some very plain answers, and we gain the full realization that certain things must be done now, and if they are done now, the problems will be further reduced. Every day that we put off decision complicates the issue. Having determined what must be done in order that our personal honor and universal law may be satisfied, we move into direct action. We have a quiet heart-to-heart talk with ourselves, and fearlessly apply such measures as will bring our living within our means. We will also face the other worries by taking firm hold upon reality. If we are neglecting our children, we will mend our ways. If we have failed in our homes, we will search out the condition and correct it. If we can free ourselves from hate and jealousy and revenge-mechanisms, if we can stop disliking people—often for what we have done to them—we will begin to have available vital power to do things now and do them well.

From this, we shall see the merit of the Zen concept of direct action, and recognize that neurosis is largely the result of neglecting the moment. If we neglect enough moments, or procrastinate enough decisions, we will ultimately find ourselves unable to cope with the accumulated monument to neglect. If asked, therefore, how long it should take for us to make up our minds to lead our lives in a completely contemporary way, the Zen master may again answer by snapping his fingers. Improvement begins when the individual experiences *now,* not only the possibility of improvement, but the fact that at this very moment, he can do that which is necessary. The main consideration is that he shall not think himself out of his own realization.

Actually, the course of action requires a minimum of thinking. We think mostly to avoid or evade. Moving head-on into a fact, we usually discover that there is only one correct answer, and that is obvious. All depends upon our willingness to apply the total remedy available to our consciousness. This is a rapid, lasting action, against which the elements of delay cannot prevail. Most of the miseries of life result from the failure of clearcut decisions. They cannot safely be made from the level of opinion, or from our prejudices, but if we can penetrate these false values, we are not without necessary guidance, for every problem has its solution built into itself. The detached person, restraining his inclination to imagine about his problem, can discover this innate solution, and apply it with the highest confidence.

The Strength of Humility

Modesty is the feeling that others will discover how wonderful you are.

—ANONYMOUS

Gentle Destruction

A gentleman who was requested to value the books of a deceased clergyman, found that most of the valued works were imperfect, having leaves torn out. Upon asking a servant, who had lived with the divine some years, if he knew anything of the circumstances, he replied, after some hesitation, "Why, to be sure, sir, I did now and then tear a leaf out, but I never went twice to the same book, so it couldn't be of much consequence."

In Reply

A Department of Questions and Answers

QUESTION: *The present researches in nuclear physics, such as the H-bomb, the testing of nuclear weapons, with the resulting radio-active fallout, present a problem awesome in magnitude, and affecting the personal lives of most human beings. Is it hysterical to take the attitude that nothing matters in the whole realm of man's thinking unless this problem disappears from the face of the earth? Are we approaching a frightful disaster which will affect not only ourselves, but unborn generations to come?*

ANSWER: This question is typical of a growing concern and anxiety. A number of persons have approached me in recent months asking for some expression of my opinion bearing upon the dangers of atomic experimentation, especially the frequent detonations of atomic explosives. As I am not a scientist, I cannot attempt an analysis on a scientific level, and I am not altogether sure that even technicians could give direct answers to all the probabilities that arise in the thinking of ordinary mortals. There is certainly a strong public opinion against these atomic tests, and if we may believe the press, many scientists are themselves apprehensive as to ultimate consequences. A moderate pessimism may not be an unscientific attitude, and most of those involved in research in this field justify themselves solely on the ground of expediency. It would be nice to hope that in some way

all nations engaged in the atomic research race would agree to discontinue such experimentation as may be dangerous to the wellbeing, and even the survival, of the human race.

Unfortunately, those religious, philosophical, and cultural groups which are striving for a peaceful arbitration of international differences, exercise only a minority influence. They are not adequately supported by the public, and have no means to enforce their recommendations or even present them effectively. There is very little that the average citizen can do, unless a situation arises in which he can unite with others of similar mind in some well-developed program of procedure.

It appears highly probable that for some years to come, we must live under the shadow of the atomic peril. Nuclear physicists continue their projects, and these increase in both number and tempo almost every day. We are reading constantly of the speeding up of defense programs, and have been indoctrinated with the concept that nuclear physics is our first line of defense and our greatest assurance of the continuance of our troubled peace. We may wish to hope that this is true, but must also be pardoned for the gravity of our doubts.

As in most other emergencies, modern man must turn to religion and philosophy for security and peace of mind. It is not as though we were passing from a serene way of life to one of extraordinary peril. Humanity has never actually known the comfort of real safety. Existence has been hazardous from the beginning, and every generation has been confronted with terrifying emergencies. As we look back over several thousands of years of recorded history, we cannot but admire the courage with which our ancestors, remote or more immediate, have carried the burden of worry and anxiety. We can be heartened by their example, and comforted by the irrefutable proof that individuals of every age have fulfilled, as best they could, the essential pattern of their hopes and purposes under the most trying and dismal situations. We can come to realize, at least, that it is possible to live gallantly even in the presence of disaster, and to plan for a better future while the world seems to be crumbling into chaos.

Fear is a difficult thing to analyze. It is a kind of emotion which is neither reasonable nor consistent. We accept certain disasters

as inevitable, giving them slight consideration, and even accepting them as matters of course. We are momentarily shocked when we receive news of some catastrophe. The great Japanese earthquake of 1923 destroyed the city of Yokohama and devastated large parts of Tokyo. There is no accurate information as to the number of human fatalities. I was in Yokohama a few weeks after the disaster, and it was estimated at the time that over a hundred thousand persons died. Countless others were injured, and the property damage was enormous. Such an earthquake could occur in other parts of the world at almost any time, but anxiety about this possibility is not especially noticeable. In 1935, a little city in India named Quetta, capital of British Baluchistan, was completely destroyed by a most disastrous earthquake. Of the city's population of fifty thousand souls, between thirty and forty thousand died. This received only passing notice in the press.

More interesting perhaps, from a psychological standpoint, is the habit of the Sicilian farmer. Mount Etna erupts periodically, but as soon as the lava flow cools sufficiently, the people rebuild their towns and villages in the most dangerous locations, completely ignoring the example of perpetual hazard. Our medieval ancestors were visited by plagues for nearly four hundred years. Often the outbreaks were separated by only ten or twenty years. No effective remedies were available, and, again, it is impossible to estimate very closely the numbers who perished. For practical purposes, however, we can guess that these periodic outbreaks were responsible for between twenty-five and fifty million casualties. In spite of this horrible record, men continued their usual pursuits, paid their taxes, and transacted business, with no noticeable loss of enthusiasm.

Since the rise of the era of rapid transportation, hazard to life and limb has come closer to all of us. It is recorded, for example, that in 1956, forty thousand persons were killed, and one million four hundred thousand were injured in automobile accidents. It should certainly be added that this appalling record includes a large number of avoidable tragedies. Even if we allow that a percentage resulted from faulty or defective mechanisms, we cannot overlook the carelessness and indifference to human life hidden beneath the surface of these statistics. Alcoholism no doubt

contributed to these figures, and so did discourtesy, wilful neglect, and total indifference to rules and regulations. How does it come that such a dangerous situation also passes without causing sufficient anxiety to inspire an adequate remedy? Every citizen has a part in this accident record. He is either contributing to public safety or he is increasing the motoring hazard. No one has yet come to me in a state of psychic panic over the fact that he may be an accident casualty at almost any time. He simply continues to know that such a thing cannot happen to him.

Over three hundred thousand accidents were caused last year by what we now call "do-it-yourself" projects. Yet enthusiasm for this type of activity continues to grow. Industrial accidents are rather numerous, but are taken in stride as inevitable to the rapid expansion of our economic structure. Perhaps our most vulnerable and dangerous field lies in the area of preventable disease and sickness. Through deliberate violation of the basic laws of health, we live constantly in the presence of premature decease, or at least incapacity. The rise in insurance rates should tell us that all is not well. But this is also disregarded, as it does not seem particularly tragic for an individual to kill himself in the fulfillment of his desires and ambitions. Death lurks in every corner, but we have become so indifferent to the rudiments of safety procedures that we have lost even the instinct to be amazed. The point is that if we insist on worrying, there is no place to draw the line. One old philosopher observed rather drily, "No man is safe until he is dead."

Why, then, have we become so concerned over the atomic hazard? Perhaps it is because it has been highly publicized and includes mysterious factors which are difficult to rationalize. We cannot say that it represents anything more than an outstanding example of man's inhumanity to man. We have always destroyed each other, usually for selfish purposes. Cannons were first used in the Middle Ages at the siege of Constantinople. To the folks of that time, they must have seemed as terrible as modern nuclear warfare. There was no adequate defense against them except to build more and bigger cannons, and the armament race began. Until man finds that there is no excuse for war of any kind, this armament race will continue.

In his ancient perils, man turned to God for courage and understanding. That which is beyond human power to control, must rest with Deity, for we are assured that with God all things are possible. This does not mean that we should not attempt to correct the situation, but it does make possible a serene life based upon a faith greater than fear. Down through time, humanity has expanded its understanding of the divine plan and universal law. It does not appear reasonable that the sovereignty at the root of life is unaware of the precocity of its human creation, and certainly, if the all-powerful principle which sustains all things decrees that the world shall survive, because that world is part of a universal program, we must take consolation in this dynamic concept.

We need not accept this idea on faith alone, for again, history is most inspiring. It has seemed on countless occasions that the whole pattern of civilization must collapse. Yet always, fortuitous situations intervened. Men have tried to conquer the world for ages. Some have come very close, but none has succeeded, and all together have ultimately bowed to the will of Providence. If foolish mortals do foolish things, they will certainly suffer. But it appears doubtful that man actually possesses the strength or the skill to destroy himself. Immediately upon the appearance of some excess, nature moves in with corrective mechanisms. The law has always been *survival by continuous adjustment*. New situations can reveal new potentials of defense.

We observed this not long ago with the development of penicillin. To the microbe this wonder-drug must have been as dangerous as atomics is to man. Germs perished in uncounted millions, and it was sincerely believed that penicillin would prove our first line of defense against numerous infections and contagions. After the first onslaught, however, the microbes rallied, developed increasing immunity, until today, they are able to withstand about as much penicillin as the human patient can endure. If microbes, with their limited resources, can accomplish so much under immediate necessity, we may be underestimating the greater resources of the human constitution.

We must not overlook another important point. The atomic peril presents another way in which human beings can die. Without any atomic bomb, there are only a handful of persons alive now who will be alive a hundred years hence. Realizing that there are countless ways in which death can come, but only one way in which it can come to any individual, we have perhaps as much cause for comfort as concern. It is not natural to fear death, for both religion and philosophy, founded largely on human instincts, refuse to accept physical dissolution as the end of human consciousness. What we are saying is that an atomic bomb cannot destroy the God-given life in man. It can destroy a body, which we all know to be corruptible, at best. It can separate consciousness from form, but this separation is destined, regardless of circumstances, at the moment of birth. Birth and death are those inevitables about which, according to Indian philosophy, we should not grieve. Our real concern should be to live well while we live, fearing a useless life more than a premature decease. Thus, our fear is closely associated with a kind of ignorance about the true meaning of life.

It is certainly important to protect ourselves against hysteria. This can be as dangerous as the object of our fear. Every day of life is valuable to the individual in terms of experience and achievement. Excessive anxiety robs us of our participation in the opportunities and advantages available to us today. At present, we are alive, and we look forward with some assurance to useful years ahead. If we become obsessed with doubts and misgivings, we have neither the strength nor the inclination to face the present or the future. If, after years of morbid reflections, we discover that our fears were ill founded, and that the worst does not occur, then we also contemplate a wasted lifetime, impoverished by an unjustified melancholia.

I know from experience that there is a considerable group of persons who have dedicated their minds and hearts to the practice and perpetuation of gloom. They are constantly in a state of fear. Everything that happens is viewed with alarm. They are prophets of doom, and their voices will always be raised. Every symptom has cosmic significance. Every ache and pain testifies to the victory of evil. When no national emergency troubles them, they fall back upon personal grievances and uncertainties. We

must all protect ourselves against the subtle indoctrination of such negative points of view. I am not saying that our situation is happy or reassuring, but I am recommending that we continue to live as normally as we can, keeping our minds constructively occupied. If hysteria spreads, it can lead to the very end we seek to avoid. We are told that what we fear will come upon us, and there is no doubt that negative emotions can precipitate disasters.

Every moment we live we face hazards of one kind or another. Yet most of us survive both real and imaginary dangers, and complete a reasonable span of mortal years. We can all stand ready to contribute in every way possible to the preservation of our world, but we gain nothing by surrendering ourselves to the apathy of despair. A few years ago, we were dismayed at the prospect of possible invasion from Mars. This furor subsided in due time, and today the average individual is not overly concerned.

There is some thought of a consoling nature when we realize that both statesmen and scientists are at least partly aware of the magnitude of atomic warfare. The armaments race has reached such an impasse that the impulse to destroy others is mellowed by the reflection that we shall probably destroy ourselves. It is quite conceivable that a strong revulsion will set in, and that the whole world will unite against the use of atomic weapons as these become ever more terrifying. We also have the spiritual promise that the just man shall not be moved. The universal good has demonstrated its power and its continued leadership over all the mutations of existence.

If the atomic peril brings us back again to a simple and childlike faith in the love and wisdom of heaven, we shall have learned a lesson worth any price that it may cost. Death is not the greatest disaster, and many situations which appear to us as relatively unimportant can have far more serious consequences. To live idly, to practice a code of selfishness and competition, to ruthlessly exploit each other, to renounce kindliness in favor of criticism, to substitute materialistic ends for those divine purposes which nature intended—these are the larger calamities.

As long as we cannot discriminate, and our anxieties are not even associated with those problems which should most concern us,

we should not place too much reliance upon the value of our own fears. If we must fear at all, let us fear that this day will pass without self-improvement. Let us fear that we will overlook some kindly human action which will strengthen the life and hope in another. Let us fear that we shall die without having grown in wisdom and understanding. Concerned deeply with these reflections, we shall discover that we can correct negative causes in ourselves. While this is possible, this is our real job. Dedicated to those labors that are possible, we shall find new internal resources unfolding within us, and we can meet the uncertainties of the future bravely and serenely.

QUESTION: *Nearly everyone has been taught the importance of loving one's fellow man. Most religions seem to stress this, even to the point of loving one's enemies. Medical science and modern psychology appear to be re-discovering the importance of loving and being loved. The problem seems to be this: we are told that we must love, yet it seems to be something that we have no control over. Do you have any practical advice that will help a person to increase his love for his fellow human persons?*

ANSWER: The first thing that must be considered is a definition of love, and immediately we perceive the substance of our dilemma. To us, the word *love* simply means a kind of personal affection or regard, frequently dependent upon a pattern of outside circumstances. We find it easier to love persons for whom we feel a natural and immediate sympathy, and the real quality of our emotion is subject to almost innumerable modifications. We must therefore realize that there are many levels of love, and that the human being evolving his affections ascends from one level to another, according to his understanding and the maturity of his consciousness. To expect, therefore, a quality of affection superior to the normal attainments of the individual, or contrary to the degree of his growth, is unreasonable and opens us to disappointment.

The Neoplatonists created a symbolical ladder of affections, beginning with the lowest form, which is love of self. The person who

is locked on this level cannot express a quick and natural sympathy for those around him, for he interprets all experiences only in terms of their effects upon his own desires, purposes, and ambitions. Gradually, man evolved past this stage as a collective, but many individuals still function on this immature emotional platform. Love of self enlarges to include those things nearest to self, or necessary for the expression of various phases of selfhood. The first inclusive is love of family, which is a refinement of love of belongings or possessions. The family also constitutes an immediate area of experience, and by continuing proximity, provides us with greater inducements to understand, and a natural tendency to be patient or considerate.

Above and beyond love of family is affection or regard for community, nation, race, and finally, of total humanity. Unfortunately, however, the average person does not experience sufficient emotional contact with these larger groups. Therefore, his affections take on an abstract quality, become theoretical, and are stirred more by customs, traditions, and religious admonitions, than by any real and immediate association. The moment love becomes theoretical, or is applied to something imperfectly known or only remotely recognized, the emotion either becomes forced and unnatural, or else it simply remains as an undeveloped potential. Our duties and responsibilities to the world are rationalized rather than felt, and the misfortunes of others excite a measure of sympathy, but not a lasting, dedicated regard.

On an entirely different plane of values, man is capable of directing his emotions, especially the most exalted of them, toward the love of principles, or a strong emotional response to qualities and values. Of such affection is the love of beauty, of truth, of wisdom, or of the world around us in the sense of nature, rather than of human nature. The highest of these idealistic emotions is the love of God, but we must always remember that idealistic affection is a refinement or transference of our human emotions to a level of sublimity where they express themselves as reverence, worship, or mystical union.

It has long been held that all abstract emotions must arise from human emotions. It would be true, therefore, that if man cannot love his brother whom he has seen, he cannot love God, whom

he has not seen. There is a tendency to compensate, however, and many persons who have been entirely unsuccessful in the expression of their human affections, seek release, escape, or solace by attempting to experience the love of God or a dynamic affection for great humanitarian or altruistic causes. Such transferences, however, are not as satisfactory as may at first appear; for unless they are grounded in the sincere experience of the need to love and to be loved, they are only intellectual concepts of a state not actually known or felt within the self.

Why is it necessary to struggle so desperately to overcome instincts of antagonism or indifference? Actually, this problem also exists on other levels of human activity. Why is it necessary to legislate us into a state of honesty by penalizing and punishing dishonest instincts? Why must we struggle to be thoughtful, generous, liberal-minded, tolerant, and free from prejudices? In substance, why are we always confronted with the dilemma of personal perversity? St. Paul experienced this problem when he wrote that whenever he would do good, evil was ever near unto him. One reason that we cannot love perfectly is because we are in no respect perfect, and we can function only in part on most levels of self-expression. Buddha would probably insist that our inability to express our affections naturally and honestly is due to our self-centeredness. As long as we strive to preserve our individuality, we must defend the total pattern of our conduct, and many elements of this pattern are not lovable. We cannot express a pure emotion while we are under the heavy pressure of psychological tensions, for the mind then burdens us with ulterior motivation. We are afraid of other persons because they are a danger or hazard to our own rugged individuality. We hate to admit that we are in need of love, and we dislike the thought of involving ourselves in emotional attachments that may require continuing attention and regard. Love appears to be loss of liberty, and it requires a degree of maturity for us to cheerfully and forthrightly sacrifice freedom for the larger privilege of common service and cooperation.

Many people feel that love opens them to pain, sorrow, disappointment, and disillusionment. In their effort to protect their egos from scars, they build walls around the deeper emotional core

of their natures. They allow emotion to have only a superficial place in the major decisions of living. As always, barriers are most dangerous for those who erect them. If we protect ourselves totally from being hurt, we shall also lose the possibility of the constructive and happy emotional experiences which might otherwise come to us.

In life, we must remember that each individual is in a state of constant defense against all other individuals. Each one knows himself to be a person surrounded by shadows—other people. There seems to be no way of really bridging the basic isolation which separates each of us from the rest of living creatures. Also, this total world around us is continually pressing in upon our personal centers of consciousness. Other people prevent us from doing what we want to do. They have concepts which disagree with our own; purposes which conflict with our purposes; temperaments not compatible with our temperaments. Thus, our natural instinct is to fear other people because we do not understand them. Captured in the Aristotelian technique, we consider it obvious that those who attempt to hurt us, or to cross our purposes, are symbolic personifications of the idea that everyone is against us. We must struggle on, not because of others, but in spite of them. We magnify this hazard, justify it by reference to specific incidents that have occurred to ourselves and our associates, and continue industriously to build our defenses against an unkindly humankind. After a few injuries, we resolve not to expose ourselves to the continuous discomfort of emotional reverses. That which we do not love drifts out of our immediate emotional environment, and that which we cannot love, gives rise to hatred and antagonism. Where, however, we cease to have a warm and natural regard for others, we so conduct ourselves that their regard for us is correspondingly diminished. Not to love, ends in the state of not being loved. If others resist our advances, we resist theirs, feeling a certain security in the skill with which we preserve our own poise or studied indifference to natural emotions.

It would seem to me that the answer lies in a fuller understanding of what constitutes true love. As long as love is linked with advantage of some kind, it must bring unpleasant reactions. Emerson points this out. He tells us in his essay that love rewards itself because of the wonderful transformation it causes in our own

nature. Emerson was convinced that love is important, even though the object of our affection might not in any way return our regard. Love is a purifying emotion in itself, making the total person a nobler creature. It is the power to move through the boundaries of personality, and to express one of the deepest needs of our human natures. The moment we understand that it does not require reciprocation, and that we have no right to demand love from others simply because we have bestowed it upon them, most of the hurt generally associated with emotional experiences is removed. Also, others may love us whom we never know, and to whom we are not drawn. This is good for them, however, for love is its own reward, giving to those who experience it their first conscious kinship with universal regard and divine affection. If we demand nothing from love, except the light that shines within our own hearts, and do not use our affections to bind others or impose restrictions upon their conduct, we shall not be disappointed in love, and will not instinctively defend ourselves against the danger of personal pain.

According to the Pythagoreans, all emotions are of one basic quality. Therefore, hatred is not a separate emotion, but is the least degree of love. It is the privation of natural affection; the comparative absence of all forms of regard. It is therefore a negative and dead emotion. It is not good, nor can it produce good. The instinct to dislike people is too expensive to be tolerated. As love is a positive experience within ourselves, rewarding us with its own warmth, so dislike is a negative experience, punishing us with its coldness, and contributing to a psychological death. Hatred springs from real or imaginary wrong, but regardless of the causes, each individual has the right to love, even while he is being hated. It is far too dangerous for him to return hatred, but he can frequently transmute it.

As we gain deeper insight into the real meaning of love, recognizing that it is inherent in the universal life which we all share, we shall approach it with greater reverence. We shall know that it flows into and through all human souls, and is the great remedy against the innumerable ills of mind and body. Nothing can prevent us from loving, nor can we ever actually suffer from having loved, unless we first dilute the emotion with selfishness, or with the

false desire to possess or to be possessed. Pure love is free, moving like a spirit among spirits. According to the Greeks, love brought cosmos out of chaos in the beginning of things. The right to love, the power to love, and the noble resolve to love—these bring cosmos out of the chaos of our own doubts and misgivings. When we understand this, we will realize that emotional negations originate in ourselves, but the divine aspects of our affections originate in the universal nature which we will naturally follow if we can overcome our allegiances to lower standards of conduct.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

BY MANLY PALMER HALL

The questions selected are representative of those most frequently asked by students of philosophy and comparative religion. The answers are derived from man's ageless heritage of wisdom, blended with Mr. Hall's own knowledge and understanding. There is a wealth of information on vital subjects such as:

God .... Creation .... Time Cycles .... Consciousness .... Laws .... Races .... Continents .... Bodies .... Truth .... Love .... The Masters .... Omens .... Philosophy .... Religion .... Christ .... Science .... Miracles .... Baptism .... The Resurrection .... The Great White Lodge .... Black Magic .... Mysticism .... The Mystical Experience .... Regeneration .... The Aquarian Age .... Health .... Initiation .... Cosmic Consciousness .... Death .... Reincarnation .... Karma .... Suicide .... War .... Education .... Marriage .... Psychic Phenomena .... Sorcery .... Right and Wrong .... Peace .... The Bible.

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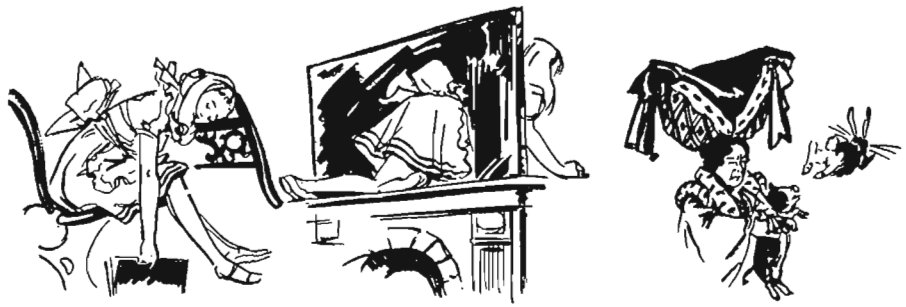

Curiouser & Curiouser

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

OF SOUND AND BESTOWING MIND

It is regarded as a serious oversight to depart from this life without leaving adequate provisions for the distribution of our estates. If this is now a serious legal oversight, it was, during the Middle Ages, little short of a cardinal sin—perhaps not so much because it left the family in a complicated dilemma, but because it was little less than obligatory that a man should remember his Church among his beneficiaries. It is noted that in the 14th century, the clergy of Brittany claimed a third of the household goods, and in one of the French diocese, the death-bed became ecclesiastical property. After the Reformation, however, there was a general disinclination to enrich the clergy by such generosities.

The practice of leaving funds or goods to animals, or for their support, has long been common, and this still leads to occasional lawsuits. It is not so frequent, however, to discover a will supposedly composed by an animal. This gives special interest to the last testament of a pig, by name of M. Grunnius Corocotta Porcellus, which is of considerable antiquity and is mentioned by St. Jerome in the 4th century. M. Porcellus, after noting that he cannot write, states that he has dictated his testament. After bequeathing to his father thirty bushels of acorns, and to his mother forty bushels of Laconian corn, and to his sister, at whose nuptials he may not be present, thirty bushels of barley, he then disposes

of his mortal remains, and asks that a monument be erected to his memory. The will is then duly attested by seven witnesses.

A French priest, dying in 1740, declared that he had brought into his parish only his cassock and his breviary. These he left to his successor, and the money which he had accumulated from his parish he returned to those who had given it. It is difficult to determine the circumstances leading to the famous clause in the will of Shakespeare, "I gyve unto my wief, my second-best bed, with the furniture, and nothing else." Why the second-best was directly specified is as great a mystery as the identity of the recipient of the best bed. It is possible, but not likely, that the bard was as addicted to his best bed as M. Halloin, a judge in Normandy, who loved his rest so well that he tried cases in his bedchamber without bothering to rise. His will contained a clause that he desired to be buried at night, in his bed, comfortably tucked in, with pillows and coverlets as he died. As no objections were raised, a large pit was dug and the judge was lowered to rest, bed and all.

Legacies to servants can also be humorous. One master specifically left nothing to his steward because he had been already under wages for eighteen years. There is a legend, we know not how true, of one canny ancient who left to his servant all that the servant had already stolen. In those good days, when epitaphs were fashionable, human vanity required some splendid verse to testify to the attainments and qualities of the deceased. Many persons wrote their own epitaphs, including our own Dr. Benjamin Franklin. Others, however, feeling that they lacked the literary attainment for an appropriate masterpiece, left sums of money for professional poets. These have sometimes been called bribes. Competitions were announced, and the author of the most extravagant words of praise was awarded the promised sum. Evidently lies told in honor of the dead came to rest heavy on the conscience of the living, for there is at least one record that the headstone poet finished his laudatory falsehood with the remark that he would not perjure himself further for the stipend of twenty-five £.

Practical jokers have not failed to perpetuate their jests beyond the grave. One, for example, left to his sister-in-law four old

stockings which were under his bed; to his nephew, two more old stockings; to a friend, a blue stocking and a red cloak; to a cousin, an old boot, and a red flannel pocket; and to another happy recipient, a jug with the handle broken off. It can be surmised that these bequests brought little pleasure until, by accident, the jug became broken and was found to be full of gold. The stockings and so forth were then hastily searched, and large numbers of coins were found in each, to the general rejoicing of the heirs.

A curious will left an annual pension to a monkey, a dog, and a cat. In the event that any died, his share was to accrue to the others, until the death of the last survivor. When all parties to this were deceased, but not until then, the money passed to the daughter of the dead man because she was poor, had a large family, could not provide adequate food, and had no means of educating her children.

A certain Mr. Berkley, who passed to his reward in 1805, had great affection for four mongrel dogs. They were the descendants of an earlier mongrel that had saved his life. When death approached, he had the dogs brought and placed around him on the bed, and he died caressing them. He left these dogs a pension, and sculptured representations of their heads were placed at the corners of his tomb. When his attitude was criticized, Mr. Berkley would say, "Men assailed my life: dogs preserved it." These and many other accounts are to be found in *Curiosities of Olden Times,* by S. Baring-Gould.

The father who does not teach his son his duties is equally guilty with the son who neglects them.

—CONFUCIUS

The Shining Example

It is reported of Thomas Carlyle, that he once half-jestingly declared his intention of writing a life of Charles II as one who was no sham, or half a man, but the perfect specimen of a bad king.

Since many folks like to have Mr. Hall's writings in permanent book form, we have made arrangements to have one hundred sets of his lecture booklets bound in one substantial volume. For details, please see the outside back cover of this magazine.

Happenings at Headquarters

Mr. Hall will give a series of three lectures in Portland, Oregon, at the Portland Woman's Club on April 5th, 6th and 9th. There is a possibility that he will then go on to Seattle for six lectures at the Seattle Masonic Temple, beginning on Sunday, April 12th. Programs will be available in March, and if you would like to notify friends in these areas of Mr. Hall's lectures, we will be glad to supply programs upon request.

* * * * *

The Society's Winter Quarter of activities opened on January 11th with the first of twelve Sunday lectures to be given by Mr. Hall. The subjects of Mr. Hall's Wednesday evening seminars are "Greek and Roman Deities as Personifications of Divine Principles" (five classes) and "Reconciling Opposing Human Instincts" (five classes). Mr. Ernest Burmester is conducting ten classes, beginning January 17th, under the general title "The Way of Spiritual Growth." Mr. Drake's Saturday seminar of five classes, from February 21st through March 21st, will be based on his book *The People's Plato,* and will emphasize the therapeutic aspects of Plato's psychology. From January 17th through February 14th, Mr. Byron Pumphrey held a Saturday afternoon seminar on the basic principles of general semantics.

* * * * *

At the recommendation of their professors, a number of students from our local universities are making use of the facilities of our Library. In recent weeks, several have consulted our Oriental reference material, and have found valuable source material not elsewhere accessible to them. It is always a pleasure to assist these young people.

* * * * *

The Library of the Society has been fortunate in acquiring a collection of magnificent colored lithographs dealing principally with the great pyramid of Gizeh and related Egyptian monuments.

Photographed by Hartsook Studio, San Francisco

MANLY P. HALL

The original of this camera portrait of Mr. Hall is now in the permanent collection of the California Historical Society.

They form part of a study of ancient Egypt by Samuel Augustus Binion, published in New York in 1887 and limited to 800 sets. We expect to place these handsome plates on exhibit in the near future. We have also added to the collection a folio issued by the American Bible Society, setting forth the history of the English Bible in its various early and rare editions.

* * * * *

On December 11th, Mr. Hall flew to San Francisco to give his annual talk for the Masonic Research Group, of which he is the Patron. His subject was "Freemasonry in Islam." He traced evidences sustaining the existence of fraternities associated with Masonic principles, which have flourished in the Near East for nearly two thousand years. . . . On December 7th Mr. Hall spoke before a large gathering for the Masonic Board of Relief in Los Angeles. "Freemasonry and American Independence" was the subject of the address on this occasion.

* * * * *

We have enjoyed reading the many letters sent in by friends to express their appreciation of Mr. Drake's book, *The People's Plato*. They will be glad to know that this book was displayed at the convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Washington, D.C., and will be shown at the American Psychiatric Association meeting at Philadelphia in April. Our special thanks goes to Mrs. Mary Fox, who made a gift of *The People's Plato* to twenty libraries and universities throughout the country.

* * * * *

The Library Exhibit program continues to provide a variety of material for libraries in the Los Angeles area. Among the unusual displays featured during recent months in various public libraries were Javanese puppets, Arthur Szyk drawings, Byzantine coins, Easter Island and African woodcarvings, and Duerer etchings. A large collection of Japanese material from our Library was on exhibit at Pasadena City College, and Mr. Hall's Israel and Vatican stamp collections were shown at the Brand Cultural Library in Glendale.

Floral arrangement by Mrs. Freeman.

We have had many compliments for the beautiful flower arrangements at Mr. Hall's Sunday morning and Wednesday evening lectures, and we would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to the friends who have made this possible. For a number of years, these floral displays were prepared by Mrs. Elaine DeVore, who has long been an active member of the P.R.S. Friends Committee.

When Mrs. DeVore left the Los Angeles area, Mrs. Hallie Freeman continued the good work, and her flower arrangements are a constant source of pleasure and inspiration to us all. Mrs. Freeman, who teaches basic English to foreign students in one of the larger Los Angeles high schools, not only arranges the flowers, but actually grows them in her hillside garden. To provide the blossoms required for her large and varied arrangements through the various seasons of the year, involves a great deal of time and thoughtfulness. We are profoundly grateful to Mrs. Freeman for her fine contribution to our activities.

LOCAL STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES

A new P.R.S. Study Group has been formed in Lebanon, Oregon, by Mrs. Ruth Larson. We are indeed happy to welcome this group into the P.R.S. family. Interested persons in the area may contact Mrs. Larson at 55 Dodge Street, Lebanon (Oregon). Our sincere good wishes for useful and enjoyable activity are extended to her and all the members of the group.

We take pleasure in presenting to our readers the accompanying pictures of two P.R.S. Local Study Groups. The Judson Harriss group of Los Angeles has been active since May 1955. The Kathryn Henry group of St. Louis has a special interest in domestic relations and child development. From the happy expressions on the faces of the members, we would surmise that both groups are thoroughly enjoying their activities.

The following questions, based on material in this issue of the PRS JOURNAL, are recommended to Study Groups for discussion, and to readers in general for thought and contemplation.

Article: *PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF ZEN BUDDHISM*

1. What practical ideas have you drawn from this article that you can apply in your daily living?

2. Try to analyze your own attitudes and living habits to determine the proportions in which you are living in the past, the future, and the *now*. Do you think it is possible to live fully in the *now* and still have goals for the future? Explain your answer.

Article: *FEAR AND THE ATOMIC PERIL*

1. Do you think that the fact that human beings continue to make plans for the future, in spite of the atomic peril, is an indication of an instinctive belief in the immortality of the soul?

2. If we take the attitude that the atomic peril is no cause for hysteria, what is the element that saves this point of view from being equivalent to an attitude of indifference toward life?

THE WEST LOS ANGELES STUDY GROUP

Left to right—Standing: Mr. John Dilger, Mr. George W. Colbeck, Mr. Winfield Rankin, Mr. Tom Rankin. Seated: Mrs. Nadine Harriss, Mr. Judson Harriss, Mrs. Viola Coulter, Mrs. Mary Rankin, Mrs. Ada Fjellman.

THE KATHRYN HENRY STUDY GROUP OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

Left to right—Front row: Mrs. Kathryn Henry, Dr. Theo F. Lentz, Mrs. Sally Bernhardt. Back row: Mrs. Nancy Reed, Mrs. Jody Bailey, Mrs. Marjean Von Engler, Mrs. Jane Foster, Mrs. Carol Semmelmeyer.

Please see the inside back cover for a list of P.R.S. Study Groups.

LECTURE  NOTES

ARE OTHER PLANETS INHABITED?

(Conclusion)

The next point that we have to consider is that we are living in a universe in which there may be other degrees of attainment than our own. If we assume that these other planets are also fields of evolution, they form a ladder constituting degrees from a lesser to a greater state. Therefore, there is an orderly concatenation of ascent, in which the relationship of each planet is superior to that less than itself and inferior to that greater than itself. Thus it would be reasonable to conclude that the degree of attainment of some planets would be less than ours, while that of others would be greater than ours. Those forms of life which are inferior to our own, we may assume to be equally limited as ourselves, or to have less of knowledge, understanding, growth, security, and certainly less of sensory power than ourselves.

Let us consider a comparable situation on our earth. Looking upon the world around us, we can say that the animal is spiritually, psychically, and eternally, no less than ourselves. In the degree of its attained power or ability to manifest its own potential, however, it is less than ourselves. It is less because if it were greater, it would have conquered us. It is less because it lacks the tremendous organizing power which we have as rational beings. Thus we know that man is an animal that can build cities and can dream of a better state. By these dreams and achievements, he has conquered the other lesser kingdoms around him. This conquest does not mean, however, the right of extermination or perversion. It

simply means that man, because he knows more, could do more for the common good of all.

In the family of planets, a similar situation may exist. It is very doubtful, for example, that the peoples or creatures of other planets would be able to have any dynamic effect upon us. If they are less than we are, it is very likely that they, too, have not yet mastered space. So the question arises: In this great pattern of things, where are we? Are we at the bottom, or at the top, or at the middle? How much do we have to fear from superiors, and how much good could we do for those inferior to ourselves?

From the time of Pythagoras on down, there is a long tradition relating to our place in this great order of planetary life. The Chinese, the Hindus, the Greeks, and the Egyptians all came to approximately the same conclusion; namely, our planetary evolution is somewhere near the center of the scale. In other words, we occupy a degree of culture that is superior to that of certain others and inferior to that of some. This problem becomes very complicated because we must then make the effort to determine the total concept of relationships. Are we in a situation in which we have to compare a large apple and a small orange? Are these other planets so completely different that even comparison is impossible? Would it be like trying to compare a small, but absolutely mature, cherry with a very much larger, but unripe, watermelon, and trying to determine which is the best, and the more important?

The ancients decided that comparison between planets is not incongruous for one reason: the sun is the root of a tree, and this solar system is a tree bearing fruit. Therefore, all of the fruits belonging to the tree have one source of life and one archetypal nature. Actually, we are dealing with the different degrees of growth of one type of life, and these degrees of growth remind us that what constitutes this difference is also in our own cells; for the human being consists of seven different parts, each with its own peculiar and special requirements. These various parts of man are also in different degrees of their own development. For example, although the heart and liver are the same age in the body of the human being, in the evolution of organs and functions, they are not of equal ancientness. Nor are the sensory perceptions equally ancient, for each has developed and unfolded in its own

From *Hogarth's Works*, 1827

A SATIRICAL ENGRAVING BY WILLIAM HOGARTH.

time. Therefore some are much older than others, and more universal; some are much more restricted; some appear to have almost used up their value to us, and have a tendency to diminish. Thus, even within ourselves, various organs, functions, and powers are in youth, maturity, and age, according to the uses and areas in which they are involved.

This being conceivable and, according to the archetypal pattern of our own experience, sustained by analogy upon our own

planet, I think we may with reasonable intelligence affirm that the various planets represent degrees of the development of a kind of life. This kind of life is itself a septenary, and these different sections, or elements, of this one grand life-pattern have been specialized. Each of these specializations has its own environment and its own level. Perhaps ultimately and actually the solar system, as a total, will be finally available to all of its citizens, without discrimination or restrictions. Such a totality would be possible because each citizen possesses within himself the powers of all the planets, as well as faculties which these planets sustain, enrich, and affect. This may ultimately show us why astrology, which shows the influence of other bodies upon parts of our body, may be vindicated. We will discover that we have bridges within ourselves between this world and others, and it is because of these bridges that the whole solar system is a complete structure. This would further sustain the belief of the ancients that Saturn was the begetter, because Saturn, in man, rules the bones, the basic construction upon which all other things are added.

In the various teachings, then, we have these different levels, and in our time, these are of great concern to us. We wonder, and we are to a measure upset, about the possibilities that persons or beings from these other levels may invade us, move in upon us, and participate, with or without our permission, in the affairs of our planet. There is nothing to deny such a possibility in the case of those forms of life which are sufficiently similar to our own to be able to function in our way of life. It would be improbable, however, that forms of life essentially inferior to ourselves would be able to achieve any of the major ends that man has not attained. This does not mean that such forms of life could not excel us in some specialized phases of development. Again, we can draw a parallel with life on our own planet. Man, for example, is the summit of a series of kingdoms on the earth. In these kingdoms, which are less developed than man, there are specialized attainments which may excel him. Thus, man cannot fly unaided as the bird does; he has not the strength of the elephant or the gorilla, or the swiftness of the deer; nor can he remain under water and live, like the fish, unless he uses mechanical devices.

Yet although man can be excelled by kingdoms less than himself in certain details, he excels these kingdoms in one faculty—his power of thought.

It is this power of thought which gradually organizes the resources of a planet. If, therefore, the power of intellection, or of individualized mental existence, on another planet is less than man's it would not be reasonable to assume that the beings on this planet might so excel him that they could fly here, or build devices which would reach here. For above all of these natural attainments must come intellectual integration. Again, the bird may fly farther than man, but lacking intellectual directive, it has no desire to go anywhere.

Consequently, I think we may affirm that any visitors that conceivably could reach us from other planets would have to equal us on some level of attainment, and also, and particularly, in intellection. In other words, they would have to have some power by means of which ambition, purpose, determination, inquiry, examination, perhaps even scientific programming, might cause some interest in this situation. Also, it would be affirmed that such an achievement would naturally have to arise in evolution, and therefore must have its root in a consistent preceding program, unfolding over a period of experimental research there, as it must here. It is evident that we have different faculties and perspectives to work with, but in the totality of things, we must assume that faculties or powers must be available, and that these faculties must result from the ensouling of form by consciousness. This ensouling must result from form itself having attained a degree of refinement and responsiveness in which it is capable of adequately manifesting this ensouled life.

The general thinking, then, would be that visitors from other planets would have to be within the gamut of being able to exist in the kind of world that we have. They would have to have the moral, mental, emotional, psychical, or spiritual incentive to come here; they must have had sufficient evolutionary progress to be able to develop, manufacture, and complete the means of getting here. Up to the present time, our own thinking is such that, for the most part, we assume that these visitors will arrive by some kind of mechanical means. This method may be superior to our own,

but is only a development or projection of our own speculations into something more advanced than we have yet actually attained. From this we would infer that such visitation must come from planets very close to our own in consciousness, growth, and purposes. We must assume the presence of many attributes like our own, or the entire program would be meaningless. If we were dealing with another planet on which nobody wanted to go anywhere else, we would be unable to estimate it, simply because it would be different psychologically from our own concept.

It has always been held by mystics, and metaphysicians generally, as well as some scientists along these lines, that in all probability, the only two planets whose inhabitants would be likely to be able to reach us, or would want to reach us, would be Mars and Venus. These could conceivably have a development of mechanical devices that could be suitable to our atmosphere, our way of life, or our dimensions of space. These two have sufficiently similar relationships to the universe so that we might conceive of them as being compatible. We have absolutely no way of knowing, with anything resembling rational certainty, the conditions of life upon these planets. If the theories of the ancient astrologers and mystics have some validity, and these planets do have keynotes, we might assume that the planet Mars would be associated with a martial type of life. It would therefore be aggressive and violent, or at least strong, decisive, explorative, scientific, and have certain powerful ambitional factors. Venus we would assume to be a more gracious, subtle, sensitive type of planet. If there be any truth to the astrological key delineations, Venus would therefore be a cultural, esthetic, paradisiacal type of sphere. These theories we can support only out of the general psychic life of our race, which has come to such conclusions about these things.

Assuming that the beings on these two planets could be within the gamut of availability; that they could conceivably create devices upon our level—that is, devices visible or knowable to us—how then could we explain the possibility of space travel by them? We would have to assume that these beings were of a higher order of general evolution and ingenuity than ourselves. We would have to assume it on the grounds that no single device or invention can stand alone. The Babylonian man could not have invented the

automobile; the ancient Egyptian could not have invented television; because before these things could come, great sequences of preparatory material had to be developed. Therefore, a people capable of attaining space travel, which we have not yet attained, must have had some form of specialized attainment.

We are naturally inclined to raise the question of whether some of these people might be soulless; whether they might be simply brigands in space, the deadly enemies of life; or whether they may have sold themselves to some cosmic devil and hate all life from then on. It seems to me that all such speculations are unfounded, for the reason, as previously mentioned, that we cannot imagine that the immortal and inevitable power which sustains all life can permit death within life. We cannot conceive that this life-power can be so limited that it can lose ultimate control of any part of its creation. For this creation can escape nowhere; it can never get away; it can never depart. A planet like Ragnarok may be broken into asteroids, but it cannot disappear. Nothing can die in a universe in which there is nothing but life. Therefore, forms can change, civilizations can be audacious, Atlantean cultures can rise and fall, but life cannot cease; and where there is life, the great archetype of good is indestructible.

Thus we cannot conceive that any life is primarily bad. We may conceive that some cultures might be more aggressive or more militant than our own, but any power superior to ourselves should be superior to our thoughts. Anything which knows more than we do, must know what we have not yet learned; namely, that no one can win a war. Any form of life that has greater internal spiritual integrity than our own, and is therefore able to accomplish things we cannot do, must also have a greater knowledge of universal laws and principles. Therefore, while at some time or other, like nations, it may become aggressive, dictatorial, or even militaristic, it cannot ultimately attain to its own maturity without outgrowing those limitations against which we are struggling.

As to worlds beyond Mars and Venus, we might mention that the ancients believed that the greater planets, such as Jupiter and Saturn—and perhaps even those further out—have always had contact with the earth. We learn also, in our great Scriptural writings, that the races and orders of life from the moon finally

moved to the earth, leaving this luminary in the state of a so-called desert-world. It is stated that, at the dawn of time, beings from Saturn and Jupiter did reach the earth; and that, in ancient times, the powers of Venus came to the earth and left the banana and the wheat behind them. The ancients believed that there was communication, in primitive time, between this planet and other planets, but that this communication consisted in the spiritual power of the beings from these other planets to project themselves by will, by the mysterious power of consciousness itself, in the same way that man can project his total consciousness to awareness of any part of his own body.

Beings essentially superior are also termed *hierarchies,* and these beings become the teachers and guides and leaders. It was believed that in ancient times such guidance and such leadership did exist, but that gradually man himself came into the control and direction of his own planet. It was further believed that there are forms of life on every planet which are links between it and all the other members of the system, but that finally man himself must, within his own nature, communicate with that which is superior to himself. If he wishes to communicate with that inferior to himself, he must, by his own efforts, project his consciousness downward into the specialized fields of his interest. Thus man may study forms of life inferior to himself, but those forms of Life superior to himself, he can only experience receptively. Therefore, in a mysterious way, man can aggressively examine the lesser, but must receptively accept the greater. And through his own equilibrium, in relation to all these things, he will ultimately and unquestionably come to understand his solar system, with its parts and fragments, and recognize his kinship with the great orders of life that surround him in space.

Library Notes

By A. J. Howie

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS TALES

The stories of the *Arabian Nights* are so generally familiar that they are taken for granted without curiosity as to authorship or origin. Intrigued and diverted by their exotic, Near-eastern settings, and a cast of characters that includes caliphs, sultans, wazirs, fishermen, porters, beggars, genii, fabulous animals, birds and beasts that speak the language of men, few have thought to mention that no one seems to know who collected, invented, or penned the first manuscripts of the tales told as *The Thousand Nights and a Night.*

Burton quotes an interesting comment: "It is not a little curious that the origin of a work which has been known to Europe and has been studied by many during nearly two centuries, should still be so mysterious, and that students have failed in all attempts to detect the secret." More than seventy years later, there is still mystery, and there still is speculation.

There have been a number of major translations of the *Arabian Nights*. However, we shall focus our discussion on the Burton translation for several reasons. Too frequent reference to the disagreements of various authorities can get very confusing. Burton's translation is capable, comprehensive, and sympathetic to the Moslem customs and point of view. He translated directly from the Arabic while comparing his text with the various Arabic manuscripts and published editions to which he was able to gain access or reference. He was familiar with the principal English translations and their sources. The ten volumes of the *Arabian Nights* and the seven volumes of the *Supplemental Nights* of his translation contain a wealth of reference information that should be organized because the data is distributed throughout the various volumes in no particular order. And the fact that the set is not generally available

suggests that the highlights of Burton's notes should be reproduced.

Sir Richard F. Burton was a career man in the British service. His interests did not conform to traditional patterns, and obviously he resisted proper indoctrination into the politics of the service. He writes:

"Professional ambition suggested that literary labours, unpopular with the vulgar and the half-educated, are not likely to help a man up the ladder of promotion. But common sense presently suggested to me that, professionally speaking, I was not a success; and, at the same time, that I had no cause to be ashamed of my failure." He expresses some bitterness that mediocrity won preferment and promotion; but his analysis did not deter him from pursuing his own interests and asserting his superior knowledge when he thought fit.

"During my long years of official banishment to the luxuriant deadly deserts of Western Africa, and to the dull and dreary half-clearings of South America, it [his work on the *Arabian Nights*] proved itself a charm, a talisman against ennui and despondency . . . . . From my dull and commonplace and 'respectable' surroundings, the Jinn bore me at once to the land of my predilection, Arabia, a region so familiar to my mind that even at first sight, it seemed a reminiscence of some by-gone metempsychic life in the distant Past." He developed a talent for retelling his tales, as well as facility in the Arabian dialects, and repaid the hospitality of many desert tribes by reciting the *Nights* around the evening campfires, with the men, women, and children listening with rapt attention and delight. And he found the natives of Somaliland and his own men equally responsive to the charm of the *Nights*. In fact, he recalls that on one trek his men named the two women cooks of their caravan *Shahrazad* and *Dinazad*.

As he plunged more deeply into his studies of Moslem manners and customs, he developed a deep sympathy for the people, which made him critical of the British policy in the Near East. There is a certain prophetic note in the following quotation:

"This book is indeed a legacy which I bequeath to my fellow-countrymen in their hour of need. Over devotion to Hindu, and especially Sanskrit literature, has led them astray from those (so-called) 'Semitic' studies, which are more requisite for us as they teach us to deal successfully with a race more powerful [1885]

Sir Richard Burton

than any pagans—the Moslem. Apparently England is ever forgetting that she is at present [1885] the greatest Mohammedan empire of the world. Of late years she has systematically neglected Arabism and, indeed, actively discouraged it in examinations for the Indian Civil Service, where it is incomparably more valuable than Greek and Latin. Hence, when suddenly compelled to assume the reins of government in Moslem lands, as Afghanistan in times past and Egypt at present [1885], she fails after a fashion which scandalises her few friends . . . . . When the gallant Sudani negroids were battling for the holy cause of liberty and religion and for escape from Turkish task-masters and Egyptian tax-gatherers, not an English official in camp, after the death of Major Morrice, was capable of speaking Arabic . . . . . He who would deal with them successfully must be, firstly, honest and truthful, and secondly, familiar with and favourably inclined to their manners and customs if not to their law and religion." Burton's observations in 1885 are of obvious significance when considered in relation to recent events, especially the formation of the United Arab Republic.

Burton attributed the inspiration for his translation of the *Nights* to his pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Mecca, which he performed

dressed in native garb and speaking the Arab tongue with such fluency and naturalness that he escaped detection. The work at first was to have been a collaboration with John Frederick Steinhaeuser, Civil Surgeon at Aden. Steinhaeuser died long before the translation was complete, and his manuscripts were lost, so that Burton pursued the work alone.

Burton was a comparatively late translator of the *Arabian Nights,* and it was necessary that he justify a new translation of a work that had won and held its popularity for almost 200 years. The bulk of this material is found in his Foreword to Volume I and in his Terminal Essay in Volume X of the *Arabian Nights.* He did not stop his researches, and he makes additional comments in his Forewords to Volumes I, III, V, VI, and VII of the *Supplemental Nights.*

Burton did not rely entirely on his own efforts, and as Appendix II in Volume X of the *Arabian Nights,* he published "Contributions to the Bibliography of the Thousand and One Nights, and their imitations, with a table showing the contents of the principal editions and translations of the *Nights* by W. F. Kirby." In the *Supplemental Nights,* Appendix IV, Volume VII, Mr. Kirby gives Additional Notes on the Bibliography of the Thousand and One Nights. Another contributor was W. A. Clouston with Variants and Analogues of Some of the Tales in the Supplemental Nights in the Appendices to Volumes II and IV. Mr. Kirby contributed similar material in the appendices to Volumes VI and VII.

There are multitudinous references to points on which Burton differs from his predecessors. This gives a certain critical and argumentative background to his copious footnotes, which avoid only one subject: parallels of European folk-lore and fables which, while interesting, would have expanded the bulk of a book whose avowed specialties are anthropology and ethnology. Burton offers his notes as an opportunity to catch many details of the text which would otherwise escape the reader's observation, all of which he felt would form a "repertory of Eastern knowledge in its esoteric phase. The student who adds the notes of Lane . . . . . to mine will know as much of the Moslem East and more than many Europeans who have spent half their lives in Orient lands."

"While the name of this wondrous treasury of Moslem folk-lore is familiar to almost every English child, no general reader is aware of the valuables it contains, nor indeed will the door open to any but Arabists." He intended that his translation would read as "the Arab would have written in English". "My work claims to be a faithful copy of the great Eastern Saga-book, by preserving intact, not only the spirit, but even the *mecanique,* the manner and the matter."

Burton felt that the transliteration of Arabic words would be of interest only to the expert. There is considerable difference in the spelling of terms in the various translations. "As regards the transliteration of Arabic words I deliberately reject the artful and complicated system, ugly and clumsy withal, affected by scientific modern Orientalists." Burton says that he has followed "Johnson on Richardson," a standard and familiar work.

"With respect to proper names and untranslated Arabic words I have rejected all system in favour of common sense." Any modern form has been adopted when more familiar, although earlier mistakes have been corrected.

It is unfortunate that after grubbing through many pages of commentary, we are unable to present any positive informative statements as to the original authors or scribes, approximate dates of writing, or where the ideas originated.

The earliest manuscript known is the one that Galland used when he published the first translation out of the Arabic (1704-1717). In his dedication, he stated that he had succeeded in getting only a portion of the MS., 282 Nights, which he obtained from Syria. Hermann Zotenberg, Keeper of Eastern MSS. in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, in his *Histoire d'Ala Al-Din ou la Lampe Merveilleuse* 1888, discusses in detail the manuscript used by Galland. "Judging from the character of the writing, etc., he considers it to have been transcribed about the second half of the 14th century (Sir R. F. Burton suggests about A.D. 1384)." He notes that there is a 15th-century manuscript in the Library of the Vatican which appears to be almost a counterpart of Galland's and likewise contains only 282 Nights. All other known manuscripts are of later date.

W. F. Kirby in "Additional Notes on the Bibliography of The Thousand and One Nights", Appendix IV, Volume VII of Burton's *Supplemental Nights,* reproduces Zotenberg's three lists of manuscripts, which he grouped into three classes, showing the libraries where they may be found.

I. MSS. proceeding from Muslim parts of Asia . . . . They are all more or less incomplete, and stop short in the middle of the text. They are not quite uniform, especially in their readings, but generally contain the same tales arranged in the same order.

II. Recent MSS. of Egyptian origin, characterised by a special style, and a more condensed narrative.

III. MSS. mostly of Egyptian origin, differing as much among themselves in the arrangement of the tales as do those of the other groups.

"It rarely happens that any two copies of the *Alif Lila va Lilin* resemble each other. This title is bestowed upon any collection of Eastern tales divided into the same number of parts. The compilation depends upon the taste, the caprice, and the opportunities of the scribe, or the commands of his employer. Certain popular stories are common to almost all copies of the *Arabian Nights,* but almost every collection contains some tales which are not found in every other. Much depends upon the locality of the scribe." Kirby.

Von Hammer is an advocate of the Pehlevi or old Iranian origin of the *Nights.* His contention was that the Book is an Arabisation of the Persian *Hazar Afsanah* or Thousand Tales. Von Hammer quotes from Al-Masudi's *Meads of Gold and Mines of Gems* published at Bassorah in 944. "Such is the book entitled *Hazar Afsanah* or The Thousand Tales, which word in Arabic signifies *Khurafah* (*Facetiae*): It is known to the public under the name of The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night, (*Kitab alf Laylah wa Laylah*). This is an history of a king and his wazir, the minister's daughter and a slave girl who are named *Shirzad* (lion-born) and *Dinarzad* (ducat-born)." He notes also that about a century after Al-Masudi had mentioned the *Hazar Afsanah,* it was versified and probably remodelled by one Rasti, the *nom de plume* of a bard

at the Court of Mahmud, the Ghaznevite Sultan who, after a reign of thirty-three years, died in 1030. Von Hammer supported the foregoing with finding a mention of the work in an Index List of Arabic works compiled in 987 by Mohammed bin Ishak al-Nadim, which further described the parallel story line.

The almost undisputed early origin of the tales is further confused by internal evidence where historical references have been inserted by later scribes when copying earlier manuscripts. The most commonly noted anachronism is the mention of tobacco and coffee which are described in the later *Nights* but were unknown when the stories originated.

But in spite of the mysterious origin of the *Thousand Nights and a Night,* the quality and variety of content, the literary perfection of form, and the strong human appeal, insure that the will of Allah, who knows all things and whose purpose is evident in them, will be worked. The mystery but intensifies the urge to know more about them.

The Voice of Gratitude

It was reported in an old Dutch newspaper that Oliver Cromwell, a very factual man, said the following grace before his meals: "Some people have food, but no appetite; others have appetite, but no food. I have both. The Lord be praised."

Editorial Revision

A Welsh curate, being asked how he managed to preach sermons so far above his own powers of composition, replied, "I have a volume of sermons by one Archbishop of Tillotson, which I translate into Welsh, and afterwards retranslate into English, after which the Archbishop himself would not know his own compositions."

The Inside Story

At the time of Charles IX, at the French court, there was a bass viol so large that several boys could be placed within it, who sang the air, while the man who played upon it sang the tenor. It was thus often used at the concerts which were given to amuse Queen Margaret.

Neglected History

An old issue of the Journal of *Notes and Queries* mentions the tombs of George Washington's ancestors in an old English cemetery. The oldest dated tomb was erected in 1597 to Dominus Jacobus Washington Armiger, and on the breast of the image decorating the tomb, is a shield decorated with stars and stripes.

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