

**HUMAN BONDAGE AND
LIBERATION**

BY
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TRANSACTIONS

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HUMAN BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

The human being is not physically in chains -- so the bondage generally referred to must obviously be bondage created by the mind; and anything created by the mind must obviously be an illusion.

I have a friend in the States -- Gary -- who told me of an incident in his life. Some years ago, his wife suddenly left him with a three year old daughter -- Salome -- to look after. One evening, after having given the child her bath and supper, he put her to bed, and quietly sat beside her. The child, keenly sensitive to the mood of her parent, asked him if he were sad. When he said "Yes," she asked if it was because he was thinking of her mother. When Gary again said "Yes," the child told the father, "Daddy, if you don't think of mummy, you won't feel sad!"

Man's greatest misfortune is that he does not seem to have any kind of organ, any kind of eyelid or brake to mask or block a particular thought -- of all thinking - when he needs to! Reason and intellect are obviously important tools not only for survival, but for creating flying machines on the one hand, and beautiful figures of speech on the other. However, even the greatest scientists would admit that it is not the rational mind that comes up with the greatest discoveries, but something else: "something somewhere doing we know not what!" Albert Einstein was humble enough to confess that the equation came to him "from outside."

The fact of the matter is that we humans do not know how to think -- in any case we think too much, the wrong way. Our so-called rational mind is deeply conditioned -- psychologically and culturally - and what is labelled as reasoning is often just the mind making excuses for its reactive behaviour and emotional needs. As a proverb says: "Many complain of their looks, but none about their brains." Reason may be humanity's greatest boon but it is also our bitterest curse, perhaps even our fatal flaw: What reason has gained for us by giving us some degree of mastery over the world, it has taken away by separating us from the world -- a separation that is the prime cause of the bondage and misery of the human being.

Having separated ourselves from the world, we simply cannot accept that the meaning of life is simply that it stops; that life is nothing more than the moments between birth and death -- that would clearly be absurd! Our whole existence, our suffering, must surely have greater significance. And if the universe will not tell us what it is, well then, we must make something up; enter the multitude of gods and religions - "isms" or nation-states, or even life-styles. If we cannot discover one supreme reason for existing, we create relatively satisfying earthbound purposes; a utopian future or "freedom" or "progress." Perhaps Joseph Campbell has the answer when he says, "I don't believe life has a purpose. Life is a lot of protoplasm with an urge to reproduce and continue in being." Maybe, that's all we are here to do, "Go forth and multiply." May be, all our questions will be answered, maybe they won't I like Gertrude Stein's comment, "There ain't no answer. There ain't going to be an answer; There never has. been an answer; That's the answer!"

There's a Yiddish saying that God made man because he loves stories! — shades of *maya* and *leela*. Again, only a few hundred years ago, most Westerners believed that humans lived on a planet that was located at the very centre of the Universe. Then, a great scientist named Galileo figured out that the earth circles the sun, and therefore it must be the sun that is the centre. The Catholic Church, believing that humans had been specially created, and that therefore the earth had to be the centre of the universe, forced Galileo to recant. This took place back in 1630, but the church did not forgive Galileo till 1979. By then, astronomers and physicists had discovered that the sun itself is a relatively small star located on the edge of a

relatively small galaxy in a cosmos that includes billions of galaxies filled with uncountable billions of stars. The Vatican absolved Galileo, but made no further announcements concerning the centre of the universe.

So where is the centre of the universe? And where are we in relation to it ? Have we been pushed into the wings? Is the earth just a backdrop for a truly meaningful drama happening thousands of miles away, and humanity merely a crowd of extras spinning around the lead characters who play their part on the centre stage, light years from earth?

This crazy story has yet another twist, astronomers have recently found that the big bang sent everything in the universe moving away from everything else, uniformly in all directions, so that, in fact, every single point in the universe can be considered the centre. So, just as you always believed, and hoped, you are still the centre of the universe ! To add to this melodrama, comes the final twist in this story, since Albert Einstein's discovery of space-time, it is impossible to locate ourselves in space - *where* we are - unless we simultaneously locate ourselves in time - *when* we are. This may mean, as many of us have suspected, that maps and clocks are not reliable!

So, perhaps the only way to locate ourselves is - HERE and NOW.

FREE WILL AND DETERMINATION

Recent brain research has revealed that humans have actually three distinct brains : a reptilian brain, a mammalian brain and the new cerebral cortex of "human" brain. We make maximum use of our reptilian and mammalian brains, and experiments show that we use our new human brain only at about 15% capacity, and that even this 15% is used mainly in order to rationalise and justify the reactive behaviour of our other two brains. Humans certainly have the unique ability to make up excuses.

Most people feel that they act independently from moment to moment, but human freedom of action would seem to be severely circumscribed by our fundamental biochemical makeup. Science writer Jon Franklin, in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Molecules of the Mind*, asserts that our belief in free will is itself determined : "And so, multi-leveled Mother Nature, wry and cruel but at times strangely benevolent, has inserted a mechanism - in the mechanism - to prevent that mechanism from fully comprehending its mechanistic nature."

Also, *Biochemists* are reporting that moods and emotions are closely associated with certain chemicals. Amazingly, what we call "love," for example, may be understood as the presence of an "excitantamine" known as phenylethylamine or PEA - in our system. Mice injected with PEA jump up and down, and vocalize; while rhesus monkeys exhibit "lip-smacking behaviour." Meanwhile, the latest evidence from *Biologists* indicates that each of us is shackled from birth to a genetically determined future, bound by the chains of the DNA double-helix. We are imprisoned in our cells.

Then again, Biogenetics tell us that the DNA molecule is programmed with information that determines how tall we will grow and how strong our teeth will be, what illnesses we are likely to contract, and, to some extent, how long we will live. It is as if we are born into a spy novel: as the past unveils, our identity is gradually revealed. As if this is not enough, our genes provide each of us with a face we must wear from birth, whether or not we like it (unless drastic measures are taken!) A thick head of hair, or a near-sighted squint, or lop-sided ears - these are features that affect how the world looks at us, and therefore, how we look at the world. Now, on top of all this, there is speculation that the DNA molecule programming may include our sexual proclivities and even "perversions;" and also the likelihood of our addictions to alcohol or drugs! Thus, at the physical level at least, we are not

free to be ourselves -- we are forced to be ourselves.

From another angle, says Wes Nisker, *Psychologists* tells us that individual freedom of choice and action is almost totally circumscribed by our early upbringing. As infants we ingest our parents and then spend the rest of our lives trying to digest them : we eat them whole, from their genes to their judgements; we eat their values, their moods, their fears, their world-views - even if we rebel against them, they shape that rebellion : their voices continually echo inside of us — we never leave home.

So many strings tie us to the past, to people, to politics. Volumes have been written about how we are programmed to conform to the values and fashions of the society into which we are born. Even the strong identification some people have with "individuality" and freedom" could well be a product of a particular set of cultural values. Adding another dimension, *geological anthropologists* talk about "geographic determinism" -- the hypothesis being that our perception of reality is shaped, at least partially, by the mountains of the flatlands that surround us. As a Sufi suggests: if you wish to know about reality, go into the desert at night, and look at the stars.

Cosmic, geological, biological, psychological, cultural, political -- so many forces shape us, without even considering the real possibility of past lives influencing the present one ! "Freedom" would thus seem to be just another word. The perpetual blind spot that gives us the impression that we are separate from the rest of the creation, also may have fostered the belief that we are in control, not only of our environment but also ourselves. Debate regarding this belief used to be primarily a religious matter known as the "free will/determinism" argument. Disagreement centered on the amount of freedom the creator had given us to act - more specifically, to sin or not to sin. Back when most of civilization believed that God was in control over our lives, it was often assumed that he could be bribed with a few good deeds or contrite supplications, which left us some degree of choice over our destiny. However, in the 20th century, science has investigated the free will/determinism issue by taking a close view at the biological and psychological makeup of the individual. And, as the ancient saying goes, self- knowledge is usually bad news! What science is discovering - which mystics have known for centuries - comes down to this: we are not in charge of the cosmos or the planets, we are barely in charge of ourselves! The truth we are terrified of learning is that we are chaff in the wind.

As the poet Rumi has put it:

Do you think I know what I am doing ?

That for one breath or half-breath, I belong to myself ?

As much as a pen knows what it is writing,

Or the ball can *guess* where it's going next.

WE DO NOT KNOW :

We simply do not know who (or what) we are, why we are here, where we are, or what this life — or universe - is all about. Most perennial questions remain unanswered. We may be able to describe the world, and even tentatively understand how some processes work, but we do not have a clue as to why things are as they are, or why they are at all. What is fire ? You can tell me about oxidation, but that doesn't tell me a thing!

We can explain how the respiratory system works, but who can speak of the mystery that is breath? Even if we think we understand the evolution of the human species, we still do

not know where it is going next, or why it developed in the first place, although many spiritual schools claim to lead to Self, we cannot possibly know ourselves completely -* it is impossible to know the exact nature of the box when you are inside of it.

THE ABSTRACT NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE:

a) Our Earth and Galaxy

Although the Earth appears stationary from the airplane, she is actually moving in many ways - swiftly, subtly, and abstractly. Not only is her blue-speckled surface spinning around its axis at a quarter mile a second, but as a whole, she is orbiting around the sun at 18 1/2 miles a second, and the sun's entire system or planets is drifting through curved space toward the star Vega at 12 miles a second, while virtually all the stars we see are swinging at ISO miles a second, around the milky way. And even the Milky Way, a wheel of stars - an unimaginable 100,000 light years in diameter - is speeding away from other galaxies at thousands of miles a second, depending on which one you compare it to, in what has been described as the exploding universe!

All these relative motions of the earth, of course, convey man along with them in an abstract way: without his feeling the effects in any way.

As Guy Murchie explains, this is the world where objects, without much plausible reason, shrink with distance, where thrushes pull up worms to turn them into songs, where an acorn becomes a giant oak in a century because it was forgotten by a squirrel! This really means that, although it is scarcely noticed by us as we go about our daily business, there is something rather other-worldly about our existence, something fundamentally and profoundly abstract -- unreal, visionary, intangible, and abstruse - despite its being the vital spark that makes our world alive.

The evidence is seemingly everywhere — in the sky, in the sea, in the incredible numbers of our fellow creatures living unseen, unknown around us. Did you know that a shovelful of ordinary soil contains a microbe population greater than that of mankind? And that if the Milky Way were reduced to the size of the earth, our planet would vanish into a mote of dust too small to see? Is there any realness to anything Is there any reason or evidence to show that relativity does not pervade all dimensions, even transcending finitude, so that ultimately, space and time - and self - unravel into some sort of infinitude -- for ever ?

b) The Abstract Human Body

When it comes to the nature of the physical body, it appears the very opposite of abstract, but one would change one's mind if one pondered the deeper significance of the common elements that exist: water, fat, carbon, phosphorous, magnesium, lime, sulphur... common enough ingredients. But the stuff is not really the body but what passes through it, as complex and flowing.

What then is the body made of? At any given moment, it is made of the world, for there is no fixed borderline between us and our surroundings. Yet, reflecting on it at length, the body progressively becomes as abstract as a melody - the melody of life! Life, as a whole, breathes the common sky and drinks the mutual rain, and we are all embodied in the sea, the clouds, and in fire and forest and earth alike. While the sky breezes through our bodies in a few minutes and the rain filters through us in a day or two, our solid parts, such as bones, change more slowly, taking a couple of months to renew themselves. Nerve cells are slower to metabolize. Yet almost all of the material selves is replaced within a year: the stomach's lining replaces itself every five days, skin wear and tear is completely retreaded in about a

month, and you get a new liver every six weeks. Prof Andrews of Johns Hopkins University put the time limit to about 5 years, after which one can presumably consider one's physical body completely new, down to the very last atom.

If this is so, then, of what does the body really consist?

Where resides the continuity of consciousness and memory which may last a hundred years ? The answer is:

"Essentially, no single atom or molecule or combination of them can be indispensable to the body, for they are all dispensed by it. U is only the pattern with its message that proves vital life; the specific pattern in which the vital energy flows."

Thus our very bodies that we thought were so material - because they were formed with atoms - fade away into immaterial abstraction, turning out to be only essential waves of energy- graphs of probability, nodes of melody being mysteriously played during our span.

Thus, matter, although it is commonly regarded as concrete, because, at any given moment; it is composed of a particular system of atoms, inevitably becomes abstract with the passage of time : metabolism, erosion, and other forces - second by second, year by year, millennium by millennium - replace its atoms and molecules, leaving only an abstract pattern to persist indefinitely. The universe, as far as we can see, is just as abstract as the atom or its nucleus.

c) The Music of the Spheres

Mathematics is probably the most obvious abstraction of all, comprising everything from the Pythagorean theorem to Einstein's $E = MC^2$.

Music is mathematical in structure and brings abstraction to the earth as a gong, to the atom as a harp, to life as a melody, while the Pythagorean Theorem's inspiration, that celestial bodies have musical relations, is virtually a key to the universe.

W. Ruff, an assistant professor of music, and John Rodgers, a professor of Geology, in an astonishing experiment, applied the laws and musical notations of Johannes Kepler, the 17th century astronomer, who worked out the laws of planetary motion. They came out with startling results. Kepler believed that each of the planets, far from being dead matter, was very much alive, that each has its own music. He worked out each planet's "song" in terms of its orbit around the sun. What Ruff and Rodgers did was to apply Kepler's laws and musical notations to the motion of the planets as projected over 100 years from 31st December 1976. This information was fed into a computer connected with a music synthesizer. What emerged was the music of 100 years of planetary motion - Music of the Spheres - on a 30 minute tape. It was described as under:

"... a spectacular, if somewhat dizzying, piece of music with Mercury, the fastest moving planet, singing the shrill ascending and descending slide of, a piccolo, and Jupiter the slowest, sounding a deep, powerful rumble. Venus changes from a major to a minor sixth, and earth makes a marvellous minor second. Indeed, the heavens themselves would seem to have been ordered by rhythm, resonance and, above all, harmony."

A PRIME CAUSE OF THE FEELING OF BONDAGE.

The human being has the continuous feeling of being trapped because we humans seem to have some control over our daily lives, and yet cannot avoid the persistent feeling that we are helpless victims to another will, another incredibly superior order - what Schopenhauer called "a metaphysical entity, a kind of universal consciousness, compared to which

individual consciousness is a dream compared to reality."

Freedom from this feeling of bondage can arise only if we truly realise the unbreakable wholeness of the universe, and unconditionally accept the fact that there is a mysterious, miraculous order being brought about, out of what appears to us as disorder.

One of the best kept secrets of the universe -- which confounds the human mind -- relates to the question of the paradoxical nature of probability, which has puzzled philosophers ever since Pascal initiated that branch of mathematics, which Von Neumann (perhaps the greatest mathematician of our century) called "Black Magic." The paradox consists of the fact that the theory of probability is able to predict with uncanny precision the overall result of a large number of individual events, each of which is in itself unpredictable. We are faced with a large number of uncertainties producing a certainty - a large number of random events creating a lawful outcome!

Let us take some bizarre examples. The statistics of the New York Department of Health, show that in the average numbers of dogs biting people, reported per day, was:

753 in 1955 4.5 in 1958 and 73.6 in 1956 2.4 in 1959 73.5 in 1957

A similar statistical reliability was shown by cavalry horses administering fatal kicks to soldiers in the German Army of the last century.

Then again, murders in England and Wales, however different in character and motive, displayed the same respect for the law of statistics. Since the end of World War I the average number of murders was:

In the 1920's:	3.84	per million of population
1930's:	3.27	“ “ “
1940's:	3.92	“ “ “
1950's:	3.30	“ “ “
1960's:	3.50	“ “ “

How did the dogs know when to stop biting and when to resume? And the horses to kick and the murderers to commit murder?

The modern scientists' answer is that this miracle can only be seen in the light of the "Theory of Probability" (or the "Law of large numbers") – a "law" that cannot be explained by physical forces. But, paradoxically or not, the law works. It has indeed become an indispensable tool of physics and gaities, of economic planners, insurance companies, gambling casinos and opinion polls – so much so that the black magic of Neumann has been taken for granted ! The order from disorder principle seems to be an irreducible ; inexplicably "just there." To ask "why" is akin to asking "why is the universe there ?"

The essential feature of modern physics is its increasingly holistic trend, based on the insight that the whole is as necessary for the understanding of the parts, as parts are necessary for the understanding of the whole. As Prof. David Bohm has put it: "Thus one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness, which denies the classical idea of the analysability of the world into separately and independently existing parts." (

The description of what we envisage of God's order appears to us as the Principle of Uncertainty. There appears to be paradox and yet there is explicit order – utter confusion for

limited human intellect. We feel inadequate and helpless only because we attempt to observe and discern a pattern.

What the human mind wants is security and certainty in this uncertain world. But it is not realized that uncertainty is the very basis of the existence of this world : the world cannot exist in the absence of uncertainty. In a certain, definite world, the physicist tells us with great authority, particles would follow well-determined patterns- with exact locations at each and every part. But this alternative of a certain world is scientifically known to be unworkable : the tiny electron inside of every atom would have to radiate continuously each said every instant, and it would, in consequence lose all of its energy and quickly fall into the nucleus. All the atoms would disappear, all electromagnetic energy would vanish, all nervous systems would cease to function. All life, in fact, would stop because life – as we know it – can only exist through the blessing of uncertainty ! Security – personal or collective – is a myth.

CONVERGENT AND DIVERGENT PROBLEMS

We may ruefully admit we cannot know the ultimate meaning of life, yet we implicitly assume that we can understand the laws of nature, and how the universe works. We do not realise that the supposed basic facts and truths have changed radically with every century, every civilization ; that what we think we know, has always been perceived through a dense series of veils – culture, language, historical moment, and biological development. In other words, it has not been adequately understood that a problem that is concerned with an opinion or interpretation is necessarily a divergent problem, as opposed to a convergent problem like a technical matter.

A convergent problem is definitely capable of a solution – even if not solved now, there is no reason, in principle, why it should not be solved some day in the future. For instance, a design problem : how to make a two-wheeled man-powered means of transportation. Various solutions are offered which gradually and increasingly “converge,” until finally a design emerges which is clearly the answer : a bicycle, an answer that turns out to be amazingly stable, simply because it complies with the laws of nature at the level of inanimate nature.

On the other hand, there is an important problem like the education of our children. We consult a number of equally intelligent people. Some of them tell us that education is basically the process by which existing Culture is (Kissed on to the next generation – and therefore there must be discipline for the students and the establishment of authority for the teachers. Now another group of advisors, having gone into the problem with the utmost care, have come out with the answer that education, in the ultimate analysis, is merely the provision of a facility ; and that the educator, like a good gardener, is mainly concerned to make available good, healthy, fertile soil in which a young plant can grow strong roots – and then develop in accordance with its own laws of being, which are far more subtle than any human can fathom, and will develop best when it has the greatest possible freedom to choose exactly the nutrients that it specifically needs. Education, in other words for this group of advisors, calls for the establishment not of discipline and obedience but for much freedom.

This is a divergent problem. If our first group of advisors is right, discipline and obedience is a “good thing.” Therefore, logically, more of it would be better and perfect discipline and obedience would be a perfect thing . . . and then, the school would become a prison ! Our second group of advisors, on the other hand, argues that freedom is a good thing. If so, more freedom will be an even better thing and perfect freedom would produce perfect education... and that the school would become a wilderness, even a kind of lunatic asylum.

Thus, freedom, and discipline/obedience, make a perfect pair of opposites, and a perfect

example of a divergent problem : the more the answers are classified and logically developed, the more they “diverge,” until some of them appear to be the exact opposites of others. No compromise is possible. In politics, freedom and equality present another frequently encountered pair of opposites, posing a typical divergent problem: if matters are left free, that is, left to themselves (*laissez-faire*), the strong will prosper and the weak will suffer; on the other hand, the enforcement of equality –requires the curtailment of freedom – unless something intervenes from a higher level, some level higher than logic and reason. This higher level is a human quality, beyond the level of manipulation. And this can happen only when individual persons become "better" persons. To ask how to make people better is to miss the point altogether.

Divergent problems cannot be solved in the sense of establishing a "correct formula." They can only be dissolved or transcended, at the really human level, where the important element is self-awareness, when higher forces like love and compassion, understanding and empathy, become available not simply as occasional impulses (which happens at the lower level) but as a regular and reliable resource. The basis of this special wisdom is the clear understanding--the firmest conviction – that the many conflicting answers to the unanswerable questions are what get humanity into deepest troubles. Be it over God or Government, or the gross national product and the Public Department, all wars are holy wars ~ "for the cause" - "fought by people, who consider that they alone know the truth"!

THERE IS ANOTHER DISTINCTIVE WAY OF KNOWING

True Wisdom is about another way of knowing: some call it intuition or inner seeing ~ not the "inner voice" which can be misleading as it can be vocalizing of the ego-centric mind. Artists might say they are touched by the Muses, while some spiritual masters refer to "direct seeing" or "revelation" or the "wisdom that surpasseth understanding." Some modern seekers say such wisdom comes through a different part of the brain - perhaps the mysterious right hemisphere, or else through the heart. In any case, the basic need for such wisdom to dawn, would seem ' to be somehow to turn down - or even shut off -- the grinding noise of rational, analytical gears. Indeed, it requires that we get rid of a large bit out of our minds - through prayers, or meditation or through any other path.

Inner wisdom has always known that the world is/not what it appears to be, that what we perceive as reality may not be reality at all, that illusion — *Maya* - is the only reality. Now contemporary scientists are saying much the same thing in terms of physics, biology and astronomy. According to scientists, "reality" is even stranger than anyone imagined ! Says N. David Mermin : "We know that the moon is demonstrably not there when nobody looks." The latest scientific theory proposes that the world may not even exist if someone is not here to perceive it. Modern science has destroyed matter, unravelled reality, literally pulled the rug from under our feet: the world that we have always believed to be solid and predictable, turns out to be just a play of shadow and light -- all in the mind ! If scientists are to be believed, the fact of the matter is that matter is not a fact. Nobody seems to have a clue of what is going on : "Something somewhere is doing we know not what!"

The following is a recent report in *Time* magazine:

Yoshiko Igarashi in Tokyo was at a loss: she could not decide on a plan for her new kitchen. The more she looked at catalogues and store displays, the more confused she became. So, she looked into the future, and it worked. She visited the sleek showroom of MATSUSHITA Electric Works Ltd., in Tokyo. There she put on a exotic-looking headgear, and simply walked into a kitchen of her own design. The head-gear consists of a mask fitted

with a small pair of liquid-crystal display TV screens that create three-dimensional images, along with a set of headphones that provide stereo sound. To interact with objects represented in the Computer-generated kitchen, the client wears a glove equipped with optic-fibre sensors. When the system is turned on, a computer drawn image of a hand appears among the images of the kitchen. By turning and pointing the index finger, one can move the hand in the direction indicated. With other simple finger movements, one can explore the room, open a cabinet door, turn on a faucet, or put a cup in the cabinet. If one throws a dish, it will "break" with a smashing sound. (This is virtual-reality created by man.)

Says Shibano, a researcher at MATSUSHITA's Information System Centre; "In virtual reality, it's actually the mind that does the seeing and creates a sense of physical experience."

It is not only the external world which deceives us, but our internal world as well. For centuries, mystics have told us that we are not what we appear to be, that we have no separate "Self." Now psychologists and biologists tell us the same thing: the "Self that we think we are, is not the real "Self," that the so-called "selves" are determined almost completely by genes, chemicals and our early conditioning.

The conclusion scientists are approaching - but do not yet have the courage to state - is that there does not exist any independent "Self" at all: we simply do not own one. The "Self" that each of us think as an independent individual (with free will), is as much of an illusion as the world of matter! It is only a shift in levels towards a comprehensive consciousness -- the universal or cosmic consciousness - as the fundamental of interconnectedness of life, that might enable us to take those "selfless" steps that could begin to solve our collective problems.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS:

The fundamental question really is whether there can ever possibly be two objects or factors in the world that are not in some sense related. In fact, the question of universal interconnectedness has been curiously anticipated by philosophers for millennia. Anaximander of Miletus in ancient Greece is said to have taught that "the primary substance of the world is infinite, eternal, and all-encompassing." Two thousand years later, Giordano Bruno went further in writing that "all reality is one in substance, one in cause, one in origin... and every particle of reality is composed inseparably of the physical and the psychic. The object of philosophy is therefore to preserve unity in diversity, mind in matter and matter in mind ... to rise to that highest knowledge of the universal Unity which is the intellectual equivalent of the love of God."

As might be expected, the XVI Century Italian Philosopher got burnt at the stake for this and other heresies, but his thought lives on and, indeed, has been reinforced by modern science. No educated person need therefore be surprised that earth's minerals, vegetables and animals have been found to converse and interrelate in almost every conceivable way.

It is an established fact that the human body is nothing but emptiness - a dynamic pattern of concentrated energy, throbbing and vibrating at incredible speed; a veritable frenzied dance of Shiva in which creation and dissolution take place continuously and almost simultaneously. It would thus seem then that a separate "entity" should not exist, but the wonder of paradoxical nature is that it has so contrived that each emptiness, each body-mind organism, each personal identity has a set of personal characteristics that distinguishes it from all others. Personal identity is, in fact, the very basis of human relationship.

The botanist tells us that every leaf on a tree or a shrub is at least slightly different, in some way or other, from all others. The chance of two finger prints being identical has been

computed as being less than one in sixty billion! Brain wave patterns are observed as being distinctive. An effective voice print definitely identifies the speaker through the recorded voice frequencies, and a new born baby's breathing pattern is supposed to be as distinctive as a finger print

The all-in-one-ness of the Easton mystic has now been clearly accepted by the modern scientist, but he finds himself, along with laymen, facing seeming absurdities in the quantum theory conclusions which do not agree with what is generally considered as common sense. But accept them he must because the theory works. A formulation made by the physicist J. S. Bell -- Bell's theorem - particularly emphasises that "No theory of reality, compatible with quantum theory can require spatially separated events to be separate." Simply, this means that distant events are inter-connected. What is more startling is the implication that each electron must know what every electron in the entire universe is doing, in order to know what it itself has to do every moment. It further implies that such subatomic particle within is in touch with all - that - IS.

The mystic intuitively understands the situation which to the physicist is a problem: all there is, is the primal energy, an aspect of universal or cosmic consciousness, which has produced on or within itself the mind stuff of the universe (*Chittamatra* as an objective representation of itself (*Vijnaptimatra*). In other words, all there is, is Cosmic Consciousness which has objectified itself as the phenomenal universe and which, in its aspect as sentience, enables sentient beings to cognize one another.

A living body becomes inanimate on death because the "animus" within has disappeared. This animus - the sentience within the sentient being - regarded by the Eastern mystic in terms such as "Consciousness" or "Heart" or "Mind," is not the personal element as is generally misconceived ("my consciousness"), but the universal energy which pulsates in every particle in the entire universe.

Unity and Diversity - the one and the many - are dialectically embedded in each other. Unity is not more real or higher. Experiencing this unity in existence can certainly alto* one's relationships in day-to-day living, and profoundly change the way one accepts death and dying. It increases compassion and empathy, and the capacity to see oneself as only one of the players in an eternal drama. But to say we are all God is not to deny our humanity with all its seeming foibles.

The one and the many are opposites only when so framed in the "either or" thinking. A dialectical framework which is more true, sees them as intermeshing sides within the process of existence. A larger view of both spirituality and morality is needed, that take both into account. And this is what happens when there is true understanding and full realization. The mystical experience begins with oneness and spontaneously gets integrated into daily life.

Its only with a more balanced outlook that the human being could possibly understand that nothing is really random.

It all happened at once - in less than an instant, as in one's dream -- and time was invented because we cannot comprehend in one glance the enormous and detailed canvas that we have been given - so, we track it in linear fashion, bit by bit, piece by piece. Time, however, can easily be overcome if we do not chase the light but intuitively stand back far enough to see it all at once!

The fact of the matter is that the universe is still and complete: everything that ever was, is; everything that ever will be, is -- and so on in all possible combinations. Though, in perceiving it, we imagine that it is in motion, and unfinished, it is quite finished, and quite

astoundingly beautiful. In the end, as things really are, any event, no matter how small, is intimately and sensibly tied to all others: "You pull out a blade of grass, and you shake the universe." And when all is perceived in such a way as to obviate time, justice becomes apparent, not as something that will be, but as something that is.

It is interesting to know in this regard the physicist's concept of time today is totally different from what it was in the XIX Century. Sir Fred Hoyle has put this in his provocative way thus: "You are stuck with a grotesque and absurd illusion ... the idea of time as an every rolling stream. There is one thing quite certain in this business: the idea of time as a steady progression from past to future is wrong. I know very well we feel this way about it subjectively. But we are the victims of a confidence trick."

And yet, we must live our daily lives. Life is fired at us point-blank continually and we cannot say: wait a minute, I am not ready yet, let me sort things out. So what do we do? How do we live our lives ? And sanity demands that we must have an answer. The fact remains that decisions have to be made and choices exercised. The answer is quite simple: in our daily life, we are free to choose. We do have the freedom to believe that we can choose; but the whole point is that we have no control over the consequences of our decisions!

As the German philosopher, Hans Vaihinger has put it (philosophy of "As If"), man has no choice but to live by "fictions" - as if the illusory world of the senses did represent ultimate reality; as if man had a free will which made him responsible for his actions; as if there was a God to regard virtuous conduct and so on. Similarly, the individual today must live as if he is not under sentence of death, and humanity must plan for its future as if its days were not numbered. Also, there is the undeniable fact that we are dealing in probabilities and not in certainties ; there is always the hope and possibility of the unexpected and the unforeseen!

To repeat the question : what should we do in daily life, if we have no free will ? The answer is that it is impossible to live life without an implicit belief in personal responsibility. So, act as if you are responsible for your actions. Live in the present moment; forget the past; do not worry about the future, which is not in your control. So, stop worrying and do whatever you are immediately supposed to do, giving it your full attention. And then, is this not precisely the burden of Lord Krishna's advice to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*? Lord Krishna tells Arjuna:

You were born a warrior. You have been trained to fight. Whom you fight and whether you win or lose is a matter of destiny - it is not in your hands. So fight!

I will now recapitulate what has been said so far.

1. What reason has gained for us, by giving us some sort of mastery over the world, it has taken away by separating us from the world. The perpetual blind spot that gives us the feeling that we are separate from the rest of creation also may have fostered the belief that we are in control of our environment.

2. What science is discovering -- which mystics have known for centuries - comes down to this: we are not in charge of the cosmos or the planets; we are barely in charge of ourselves; we are chaff in the wind!

Rumi: Do you think I know what I am doing?

That for one breath or half breath, I belong to myself? As much as a pen knows what it is writing, or the ball can guess where it is going next

3. The human being has the continuous feeling of being trapped because we humans

seem to have some control over our daily lives, and yet cannot avoid the persistent feeling that we are helpless victims to another will, an incredibly superior order.

4. Freedom from this feeling of bondage cannot arise until and unless we truly realise the unbreakable oneness and wholeness of the universe, and unconditionally accept the fact that there is a mysterious miraculous order, being brought about, out of what appears to be disorder.

5. What the human mind wants is security and certainty in the uncertain world, but science is very clear that life as we know it cannot exist in any alternative world of certainty.

6. Inner wisdom has always known that the world is not what it appears to be. That what we perceive as reality is merely an illusion. Now, according to the scientist: "The moon is demonstrably not there when nobody looks," that the apparently solid world is just a play of shadow and light - all in the mind!

7. The conclusion scientists are arriving at is that there does not exist any individual "self"; any separate entity at all -- it is as much of an illusion as the world of matter.

8. What then is the final understanding? It is that, "All there is, is consciousness" -- more accurately, the primal energy, an aspect of the universal or cosmic consciousness, which has produced on or within itself the mind stuff of the universe as an objective representation of itself.

9. The immediate question now is: in the circumstances, how do we live our lives in the day to day world ? The answer is to live - and act -- as if you have individual freedom of choice and action: To live in the present moment, without worrying about the future, over which, in any case, you have no control.

10. As Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say: "Be totally convinced that you are only an instrument, operated upon by God - and then do whatever you wish to do!"

I cannot end this talk without acknowledging the fact that I have drawn very heavily on many books and I am therefore greatly indebted to these authors, especially Wes Nisker and Guy Murchie.

. Ramesh S. Balsekar