

**SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN**  
(1888-1975)

***AN IDEALIST VIEW OF LIFE***<sup>1</sup>

**Matter, Life[,] and Mind**

**1. Belief and certainty**

Intuition is one of the ways in which beliefs arise. We believe because of the immediate certainty which the belief inspires. Often we rely on the testimony of others and such testimony is ultimately traceable to individual belief. We believe when a particular view is shown to be consistent with what we know in other realms or when the results accruing from the assumption of the belief justify our confidence. "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" [John 7:17]. If the belief works in the realm of mind or knowledge, of life or conduct, it is true; otherwise it is spurious. We reach absolute logical certainty, if what we find to be true is supported by others, if it is coherent with knowledge[,] and [if it] works in life . . . .

**2. Science and philosophy**

There is, however, a difference between science and philosophy. Their motives and methods vary. While science studies the different facts of experience, philosophy develops the meaning and implications of experience as a whole. It has two sides to it, an explanatory and a descriptive, a metaphysical and an empirical. Science is purely descriptive. It is perfectly satisfied if it relates a fact to its class, a plant to its species, or if it assigns a place to it in an evolutionary scale, or if it traces a phenomenon to certain mediating conditions, as when sound is traced to waves, or if it brings certain events under well-known laws, as when Newton brought Kepler's discoveries under the law of gravitation.<sup>2</sup> Science gives us a general history of what happens without raising the further question why things are what they are. Again, matter, life, consciousness[,] and value are facts of experience studied in their abstract isolation by science, while for philosophy they are all interconnected as in human personality. We are one, and therefore the world is one. The experience which philosophy studies is concrete and whole, while the subject-matter of science is abstract and partial. Philosophy does not reveal anything wholly beyond experience, but presents to us the order and being of experience itself.

**3. Limitations of scientific knowledge**

It is necessary to know the limitations of scientific knowledge. It gives us quantitative measurements of events in the world we live in. It is controlled by the maxim, "nothing can be known completely except quantities or by quantities." Science is at home in . . . processes that can be repeated, in systems that can be reproduced. "Everything is itself and not something else" is the principle of nature; everything is an example of a class is the principle of science.

Again, the objects studied by science are selected from experience. The data of perceived experience are studied as if they were independent of the world of perception. Physical science, for example, believes that the special aspects which events assume in relation to human observers are irrelevant to their intrinsic constitution as physically determined. We select

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<sup>1</sup>Selections from pages 176-247, Chapters VI and VII, in *An Idealist View of Life* by Radhakrishnan (London: Unwin Paperbacks, A Mandala Book, 1988). Copyright © 1980 by Unwin Hyman Ltd. Spelling Americanized; footnotes omitted or embodied in text.

<sup>2</sup>Isaac Newton (1642-1727) and Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) were major figures in the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century.

phases of events for study in science. We can look upon man as either a physico-chemical being with certain weight and measurement, or a biological unit of the human species, or as a psychological, ethical[,] or religious being. The subject-matter of science is abstractions from the real, plane diagrams from the solid object. It is a true enough representation of certain aspects of experience, and useful for certain specific purposes. The useful is not necessarily the true. It is now agreed that science gives us only readings, notations, a system of symbols. The laws of science express average and probable results. Given such and such conditions, such and such events happen. These laws express no opinion about the activity by which they happen. The ultimate structure of the universe is not known to science. It may be very different from the scientific model of it. Newton's mechanical conception as much as Einstein's<sup>1</sup> is only an ideal picture, a conceptual model. The practical success of these is no guarantee that they are faithful representations of the actual structure [of the world]. We can use the wireless, even though we do not understand its mechanism . . . .

#### 4. Samsara

Hindu thought is generally associated with the theory that the world is Samsara, a perpetual procession of events, an incessant flow of occurrences. Expressions like "the wheel of time," "the cycle of birth and death," "the ever-rolling stream," "*samsara*," "*pravaha*," "*jagat*" are employed to indicate the non-substantial or unstable character of the universe. Everything that exists suffers change. Every actuality is a becoming, has in it the principle of unrest. Nothing empirical is eternally conserved. All life is a constant birth or becoming, and all birth entails a constant death, a dissolution of that which becomes in order that it may change into a new becoming. The world is movement (*jagat*), and it would be dissolved by the cessation of movement. The illusion is not in the movement, but in the stationariness. Buddhism took over this conception of Samsara from Hindu thought and put it at the center of its scheme. For it, being is only process, a continuous alternation of birth and death, a perpetual transition from one thing to another. The doctrine of *pratityasamutpada* (dependent origination, interdependent causation) refers to the dependent or caused character of the universe. It is always dependent on causes . . . . Incessant change is [as] true of the infinitely small as of the infinitely great. With both the Hindus and the Buddhists, the notion of world-becoming is more a speculative category than a scientific truth, at any rate in regard to the physical world.

If the world is a process, it cannot be divided into parts but only phases. We do not have realms or spheres of being, but only modes or phases of activity. The process of nature is one, supple[,] and continuous, and not a consecutive series of static entities with fixed attributes. There are no sharp divisions of reality.

#### 5. Matter

The most obvious way of treating experience is to regard it as a world of events. Of these events the physical ones seem to exist in their own right without any relation to a perceiving mind. In the early stages of cosmic evolution there were no minds to perceive the physical world or reflect on its nature. If the world is Samsara, movement, we must find in physical nature also transition and gradation.

While the mental world was admitted to be one of continuous movement, perpetually superseding itself, and not much suspicion was felt with regard to the mobile character of the world of life, matter at least was held to be immutable. The familiar conception of matter was that of an enduring substance moving through a static space in a uniformly flowing time. According to the old atomic theory, matter consists of atoms or tiny particles that cannot be divided. Material things are due to the varying combinations of the atoms or the indivisible particles. The changes visible in material things are traced to changes in the arrangements of the atoms, and not in their internal constitution, for the atoms were regarded as unchanging in character.

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Einstein (1879-1955).

The solid atom has melted away in the recent developments of physics . . . .<sup>1</sup> Matter is a form of energy or action. Physical objects are events, happenings, occurrences. They are not self-contained, changeless, eternal entities, but only moving points in a continuous passage. Nature is a complex of events, a structure of processes. Events are the stuff of concrete existence. They exist not in space separated by time, but in space-time, in which the relations between space and time are altering so constantly that the universe as it changes is characterized by an infinitely varying space-time system. Space is not a box in which solid bits of matter move about, nor is matter something extended in space and persistent through time. There is no such thing as a cosmic space or a cosmic time any more than persistent matter. Space, time[,] and . . . [matter] are abstractions from the concrete fact[,] which is a set of events . . . .

The displacement of hard indivisible matter by electric influences is of the greatest importance from the philosophical point of view. Matter is not a thing, but a system of interrelated events. The old view of matter as a permanent substance having certain qualities and standing in various relations and performing definite functions is displaced by the conception of matter as a cluster of unstable events. The contrast between matter as inert and life as active, matter as reversible and life as irreversible, disappears. The difference between life and matter is not one of activity and passivity, but between two different kinds of activity. The inertia of matter which Newton exalted in his first law is itself the result of its internal activity. Radioactivity in matter is analogous to organic descent in life, though the former is regressive and the latter progressive activity. We can apply the concepts of families, genera[,] and species to both the periodic table of Chemistry and [to] the systems of Botany and Zoology. There is no impassable gulf between matter and life. Atom, molecule, colloid, protoplasm, cell seem to be more or less continuous phases of a single process. Matter is concentrated structural energy which makes possible the creation of fresh forms, structures[,] and types. It is as truly creative as living organism or mind. When atoms combine into a molecule they acquire a new status. In virtue of the whole to which they belong, they acquire new qualities, which could not be deduced from their nature before combination.

## 6. Substance<sup>2</sup>

The whole history of philosophy may in a sense be regarded as the criticism of the category of substance. Though Greek philosophy started with the conception of a permanent being, which is present identically in all transformations, it soon gave place to a different view in Pythagoras [582-507 BC] and Heraclitus [535-475 BC]. The real consists not in an unchangeable substance, but in certain constant properties which persist in all becoming. The essence of things is number according to Pythagoras. For Heraclitus substance is not something which lies outside becoming, but is the immanent law or the logos which pervades all becoming and gives it its form. For [Immanuel] Kant [1724-1804] substance is a concept of the understanding, and [David] Hume [1711-1776] traces it to empirical habit and association. It is imagination which combines what occur together frequently in a regular order, into one idea. [Richard] Avenarius [1843-1896] and [Ernst] Mach [1838-1916] look upon substance as a conceptual device for simplifying thought. The unity of substance is a nominal one. The identity of a thing is a fiction. The constancy of certain relations is all that is meant by it. Our minds are so made that they regard a number of conditions linked together as a unity, and treat the conditions themselves as properties belonging to it. We distinguish things by their properties. We speak of a thing as the same only so long as it has the same properties.

The most satisfactory view of substance is what is expressed in a memorable phrase by [Rudolf] Lotze [1817-1881], that a thing is what it does. Its nature is the way it behaves. In his *Metaphysics*, Lotze exposes the futility of the conception of a substantial reality, "communicating to the properties gathered about it the fixedness and consistency of a thing." What the inner essence of a thing is we do not know. We call a thing real, substantive[,] or identical when it behaves in a certain specific way, when it changes in a certain regular order. The substantiality of a thing is the law according to which the changing events are connected with one another, the formula which sums up its history, the pattern which expresses its behavior. Lotze compares the essence of a thing to a melody where the successive sounds obey a law of consecutiveness.

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<sup>1</sup>At this point, Radhakrishnan presents a lengthy and detailed review of numerous developments in modern physics, mathematics, and philosophy — including Quantum Theory and Einstein's Theory of Relativity — all of which portray the physical universe as a set of processes or events. From this point of view, atoms (and material objects in general) are not fixed "things," "substances," or "entities," but rather on-going events and processes.

<sup>2</sup>The three paragraphs in this section on substance are, in the original, a single, long paragraph. Here and subsequently, I have divided many of Radhakrishnan's very long paragraphs into shorter ones. — GC

We speak of a substance when its qualities are coherent, when its successive changes follow a historic route. The being of a thing is constituted by its becoming . . . . The things of the physical world are "substances" only in this sense . . . . A string of events is what we mean by a substance . . . .

What we regard as substance depends on our interests. For some purposes the human individual is a substance; for others any part of his body may be a substance; for philosophical purposes nature as a whole may be the substance. If independence of existence is the mark of substantiality, no finite particular is a substance, though we can mark off any set of events as an individual for conventional purposes. Matter is the name for a cluster of events, possessing certain relatively persistent habits and potencies.

## 7. Cause

The conception of cause also requires revision. That there is a real connection between events which present themselves to us and not a mere subjective association is the condition of the possibility of any science. Kant gives us a simple illustration. My perceptions, he said, in apprehending a house may begin anywhere and end anywhere, may begin at the top and end at the bottom, or vice versa, but when we apprehend a ship going down a stream the sequence of perceptions is determined . . . .

It is sometimes argued that the idea [of causality] arises in the immediate experience of effort which we use as an interpretative principle in objective science. If . . . [efficacious effort] is the basis of the causal concept, inanimate objects cannot be regarded as efficient. Besides, . . . [efficacious effort], however familiar, is not easily explicable. It implies rigid contact, which is absent even in densely packed situations.

Again, the causal concept seems to imply that the world is a collection of distinct things which it is not. Simply because the concepts are hard and precise, it does not follow that the situations to which they apply are equally hard and precise . . . .

Events happen according to certain rules. There is no necessity why they should happen that way, but they do happen. Why water should be formed when oxygen and hydrogen combine, and not any other element, we do not know. It seems to be quite arbitrary. Things do not exist in nature by necessity. Nothing *must* be, nor is there any sufficient reason why anything *should* be. The fact is that things *are*.

Hume long ago showed that there is no more reason for belief in cause and effect than that we constantly see one thing happen after another. No matter how often we may see events occur in a regular order, we are no wiser. The laws of succession are observed facts, and there is no logical necessity about them. When we say that A is necessarily followed by B, all that we mean is that this rule of connection between A and B is found in a large number of instances, and we know of no case to the contrary . . . .

## 8. Order and progress

A scientific treatment of the universe is possible because nature is a network of interconnected events. Every event has both an individual and a social character. It has an irreducible specificity, a unique itselfness, as also a connection with other events. Each event is just what it is, but it cannot be what it is without the influence and assistance of the other events. The events are by no means windowless, lonely[,] and cut off. The environment is not separate from or external to the individual.

The old conception of atoms made them entirely independent as to their character[,] and their relations were external and contingent. An atom would remain the same whether there was an environment or not. The conception of the electron brings out the "social" character [of the sub-microscopic world]. We cannot understand it, if we take it as an abstract individual . . . . [E]lectrons form groups or wholes, and their relations can be understood only if they are viewed as members of wholes . . . . [A]toms and molecules[,] which are wholes[,] have individual patterns of their own. The relations of the protons and electrons in their wholes are not external and accidental, but are due to the general structure of the atom itself . . . .

[Thus] [e]ven at the physical level, reality is not a collection of independent things, but a whole, and as such it has a structure which prescribes the relations as well as the properties of the parts. Control by the whole is the striking fact. We can infer from one part to another since events form a world of intercourse and association. At any one stage the whole universe represents a cosmic situation, and any part of it represents the whole background.

There is not only order, but what one might call progress. The two striking features of the physical world are continuity and change, connection with the past and creative advance into the future. Time is connection, not mere succession. The past never dies, but lives in the present, and the present flows into the future. Every event has not only a retrospective but a prospective reference . . . .

Something new is perpetually happening in the course of nature. Every event seems to actualize a fresh possibility not contained in the past. Matter effects in its onward march new structural groupings and combinations which are not only valuable to us, but valuable in the order of the universe. Lloyd Morgan [1852-1936] tells us that there are "emergents" in nature . . . whose character cannot be foretold from the nature of their several constituents as they are in themselves. The nature of the new structures or the emergents can be discerned only by observation and experiment after they have come into being. In mere "resultants" the nature of the product resembles the nature of the assembled parts; in "emergents," on the other hand, we have a new and unforeseen structure and character. If evolution means an unfolding of what is already in being, emergence can only be the emerging or the coming into view of what is already contained in it, though hidden. But evolution now is interpreted as the coming into existence of something new, which is unpredictable before its occurrence . . . .

The difference between resultant advance and emergent evolution is methodological and not metaphysical. There is always creative advance in time, small or great. Matter is essentially creative in character, and its processes are irreversible. That is why it is regarded as the mother of the universe. Creativeness is not confined to the vital and psychological aspects [of reality], but matter also is creative change . . . . The physical world itself prepares for an unfulfilled future. At a certain time there came to be on the surface of the earth abundant supplies of carbon, hydrogen[,] and oxygen, which provided suitable conditions for the rise of life. The processes of the physical environment cannot be accounted for without a reference to the end of life, for which they were a preparation . . . .

### **[9. The physical world: a summary]<sup>1</sup>**

We [now] may sum up the general characteristics of the physical world: (1) What was regarded as a passive immutable particle is now known to be a complex system of seething energy. An atom is an organism whose members are protons and electrons. Molecules and human society are more complex organisms. (2) Physical nature is an ordered whole and operates as such, and its members are interdependent. There is thus an interactive union between every organism and its environment. (3) Every event has both caused and creative aspects. Its changes are thus trans-mechanical. (4) Scientific explanation finds its limits when we reach the creative side. Science cannot explain why matter should exist, nor why there should be two species of electrons and protons.

### **10. Life**

It is in the context of matter that life is found fumbling for light. [The] [b]iological sciences deal with the distinctive phenomena presented by living organisms from microbes to mammals and their activities. Though something lifelike might be found in other parts of the universe, biologists study life in the region of the earth's surface, seas[,] and atmosphere. Though the higher organisms exhibit the feature of consciousness, [the] biological sciences do not concern themselves with it.

There is something specific in the behavior of living organisms which is not traceable in the non-living. The processes of assimilation, respiration, reproduction, growth[,] and development are different from physico-chemical reactions. A living organism maintains its specific structure and activities throughout all changes . . . .

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<sup>1</sup>Most of section 9, "Physical science and subjectivism," is omitted.

Life is a dynamic equilibrium which tends to maintain itself. The parts of a living organism are less independent than those of a physical one. The removal of any part from a physical body does not involve any essential change of properties, but in living organisms, form, structure[,] and composition are interdependent. The living organ[ism] is a whole, doing things that no atomic system . . . could ever do . . . .

An atom can neither mend itself nor reproduce itself. A living organism adapts itself to its environment. It does not simply react to the changes of the environment, but replies to them. As soon as a living organism is injured, the healing process sets in. A plant develops a new sprout in the place of one cut off. The changes which occur in the process of development are of a specific kind. The process of reproduction starts in a part of the organism itself. There is the hereditary transmission of enormously complicated physico-chemical structures.

In a sense the environment is not foreign to the organism, but enters into its very life. The organism nourishes itself by assimilating materials from its environment. The two are so well adapted to each other that they may be regarded as expressions of a larger whole. The two are inextricably intertwined. There is a specific inner direction in living organisms which grow, repair, reproduce themselves, and mold . . . outer circumstances into their own patterns. What we know of matter does not help us to understand the coordinated maintenance of life. Life is a different order of fact.

### **11. Vitalism<sup>1</sup>**

The striking difference between the living and the non-living suggested to some physiologists the hypothesis that a new principle called an "entelechy" or an unconscious "soul" takes control of the physical processes. There are [from this point of view] souls or entelechies hidden in living things . . . .

As a protest against the view which treats living organisms as mere machines or as complexes of physico-chemical processes, the vitalist hypothesis is useful. The strikingly specific behavior of living beings cannot be confused with atomic activity. Vitalism stresses the fact of coordinated activity in the phenomena of life by which the individual parts are adapted to the maintenance and functioning of the whole. The cause of the particular mode of existence of each part lies in the whole. Life experiences are the expressions of a persistent and indivisible unity . . . .

From a strictly scientific point of view, vitalism is unsatisfactory, since it attempts to explain everything which occurs in a living organism, and we are unable to test its truth. As observers of experience we must be content with a statement of facts, a description of nature as it appears in the phenomena of life. In living organisms there is a new organization of structure and a specific co-ordination of activity, a design in them, an inward determination of all the parts by the function and purpose of the whole, which cannot be interpreted physically. The only point relevant to science is that the kind of correlation needed for . . . biological facts is different from that needed for physical phenomena.

The science of biology does not account for life, but assumes it as beyond all explanation. Life is a part of nature, differing in kind from matter, though there is scope in living organisms for the application of both . . . physical and biological explanations.

### **12. Evolution**

Answering to the qualities of continuity and change, or conservation and advance in the physical world, we have in the world of life heredity and variation. Living organisms inherit a plan of organization, and also vary it. New structures and organs, new functions and powers appear. Living creatures have arisen, apparently by gradual change, from simpler ancestors. The hypothesis of evolution is suggested as an explanation for the origin of . . . new species.

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<sup>1</sup>Vitalism is the doctrine that there is a vital force residing within all living things and that this vital force cannot be understood in terms of the laws of physics and chemistry.

If we leave aside the ancient philosophies of India and Greece, the modern theory of evolution is mainly the work of [Carolus] Linnaeus (1707-1778), [Georges Louis Leclerc de] Buffon (1707-1788), Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), [Jean Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet, Chevalier de] Lamarck (1744-1829), Charles Darwin [1809-1882] and his followers. While Linnaeus believed in the separate creation of each species of plant and animal, he admitted in his later work that in certain cases new forms might have come into being through crosses between the original species. He was, however, of [the] opinion that the change was a degeneration since it tended to obscure the perfection of the original type. Buffon started with a belief in the fixity of species, though he questioned the perfection of the plan on which the species were originally built. From his knowledge of comparative anatomy he argued that the original plan was not to be viewed as perfect since it had parts which were of little or no use to the animal, and which seemed to be taken from other animals. This led to the conception that the members of a group of species showed striking family resemblance, and might have been derived from a common ancestor either by progressive change or degeneration. He made valuable suggestions about the changes in the plant and animal induced by the environment. Both Erasmus Darwin and Lamarck argued that changed circumstances in an animal's life led to alterations in its habits. These changes of habits resulted in the increased use of some organs and decreased use of others, eventually producing a change of form. They thought that such "acquired characters" were inherited.

[Thomas] Malthus's [1766-1834] *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) suggested to [Charles] Darwin the importance of the principle of natural selection as a factor by which progressive changes are brought about. In his *Origin of Species* (1859) he gave details and demonstrations of his view of evolution, that life on this planet evolved by a gradual and yet continuous process from the earliest forms of living organs to the latest product, man. Natural selection, variation[,] and heredity are said to be the factors through the operation of which new species arise out of existing ones. Natural selection by itself cannot account for the new changes. It is a sifting process, and assumes the two other factors of variation and heredity. According to the former, no two animals or plants are quite alike. Even the offspring of the same parent or parents tend to vary in greater or less degree both from their parents and from one another. The novelties or the new departures are called the variations. If a new variation is not inherited by the progeny, it is of little direct value in evolutionary change. The principle of heredity tells us that the peculiarities exhibited by the parents tend to be transmitted to the offspring in greater or less degree. When the new characters are produced by the variability of organisms, natural selection decides their survival or death. If the characters are not adapted to the environment, they are eliminated in the competition. If, on the other hand, they equip their possessors better for the struggle, they tend to survive. The offspring of the successful tend to resemble the parents in exhibiting the favored variation to a greater degree than the parents, and a new type becomes established by a continuous piling up of small useful accretions through many generations.

After Darwin and [Herbert] Spencer [1820-1903], it was realized that the stages of development were not gradual, but abrupt. [William] Bateson [1861-1926] showed that variations, in many cases, were of a discontinuous nature. According to Hugo de Vries [1848-1935], variations may arise either suddenly or gradually. The former are called mutations, the latter fluctuations. De Vries attributed all specific advance to large well-marked variations or mutations. Mutations are independently heritable and illustrate the principles of Mendelian inheritance . . . .<sup>1</sup>

Evolution is no explanation. It does not say why the process should have ever occurred, why life should occur at all. Survival of the fittest does not carry us far. Life has little survival value as compared with matter from which it is supposed to have sprung. A rock survives for hundreds of millions of years, while even the oldest tree is only a few thousand years old. If survival was the aim of nature, life would never have appeared. A strict science of biology merely notes the facts that in life we have a different set of phenomena and novelties occur right through, that plants and animals are not fixed, and have evolved or developed from other forms, and that in fact the whole organic kingdom has suffered a gradual evolution, molded by inner urge and pressure of outer circumstances.

What we find to be the characteristic features of the physical world are found true of living organisms in a higher degree. They represent a different order of fact than atomic systems, and seem to be nearer to reality than the latter. They

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<sup>1</sup>The word "Mendelian" refers to Gregor Johann Mendel (1822-1884), an Austrian botanist and founder of the science of genetics. Through experiments with plants, Mendel discovered the principle of the inheritance of characteristics through the combination of genes from parent cells.

are individual wholes, and act as such. They maintain a constancy in the external and internal environment. There is no division between the organism and the environment. They are expressions of a larger whole, which includes them both. While they tend to preserve the pattern and continue the form, there is also creative change in them. Neither physics . . . [nor] biology can account for these specific features.

### 13. Mind

Mental phenomena are different from vital activities. Though the living organism maintains its activity and reproduces its structure as an organized whole, its responses manifest only the organic wholeness and persistence. Each step in its activity is an immediate response to the conditions existing at the moment. What we have is unconscious organic activity. Though the organisms seem to have a "mind" of their own, it is only seeming. The growth of an embryo realizes a plan, but its stages of development are only immediate responses to the conditions of the environment.

The relation between the organism and the environment which we discovered in the physical and biological worlds becomes more intimate in the mental world through the organs of sense and of action. Through the organs of vision and hearing an animal is able to keep in touch with [a] distant environment. Animals learn from experience. They modify behavior in the light of previous results. So long as the end is not secured, the activity does not cease. It ceases the moment the end is achieved . . . .

The presence of consciousness makes a real distinction to the behavior. Self-preservation becomes consciously directed through the feelings of pleasure and pain, of benefit and injury to the organism. The activities [of the organism] possess a unity and a co-ordination. The animal acts as a whole and not simply in its various parts. However primitive consciousness may be, it means a sense of direction. Conscious behavior, adaptive and selective, is different from physical reactions or life adjustments. It is something *sui generis*, new and distinctive, unique and creative. Its appearance marks a new departure of a far-reaching character. It cannot be reduced to neurological happenings in the brain. It is a function of a later evolved and special integration of life.

Though the connection between nervous and physical events is intimate, one cannot be reduced to the other. Professor [J.B.] Watson [1878-1958] attempts to reduce conscious behavior to a derivative of reflex action. A few native reflexes common to all the individuals of the species form the basis on which all types of behavior are built. Physiological traits are inherited and complicated behavior results through habit-formation by way of conditioning. Professor [Ivan] Pavlov's [1849-1936] experimental work on "conditioned reflexes" is utilized in support of this view. If we bring food near a dog, his mouth waters. The stimulus of food causes the response of salivation, which is an unconditioned or absolute reflex. If just before or simultaneously with the presentation of food a bell is rung and if this is repeated often there is established a conditioned reflex, so that a dog will salivate when the bell is rung, even when food is not presented. The response of salivation is now produced by a new stimulus which has come to be associated with the original stimulus. The activities of the mind, like the movements of the body, are traced to the complex conditioning of primitive responses. Consciousness is an accidental accompaniment of physiological activity.

But a conditioned reflex is not an intelligent adaptation. The latter is not a random process, nor a result built up by many repetitions, but it is hit upon in a more direct way. It is not a mechanized habit, but a creative power. Behavior is not what we observe, but only movements. To treat them as behavior is to assume a unity of direction and activity on the part of the organism as a whole. A conscious organism expresses a meaning with which it is identified. Animals whose cerebrum is destroyed, and other centers are intact, are capable of complex reflex activity, but not conditioned reflexes. Conditioned reflexes seem to be purposive. Though mind is a continuation on a higher plane of the organic regulation and co-ordination which characterize the mindless organisms, its presence is the primary fact. It is a new level of reality with its own peculiarities and laws. Though there are aspects in conscious organisms which are physico-chemical or biological, their behavior is different from that of unconscious organisms.

. . . [In the history of human thought,] [t]he belief grew up that the difference between conscious and unconscious activity is due to the presence in the body of something which is different from body, that is, "soul." It is given a local habitation in the body, the pineal gland or the brain. [However,] [t]he observed phenomena are not consistent with the existence of a soul independent of the body. The mind of an animal is not an "anima" in control of its body, but is the organization of its acts which are mental. Conscious phenomena are determined by physiological influences. When the heart ceases to beat, consciousness lapses. Three or four deep inhalations of nitrogen mean loss of consciousness; restore



oxygen in the lungs, consciousness reappears. We discern the activity of the mind in relation to physical change in complex parts of the body, though we have no direct knowledge of the nature of this relation. But the soul is not independent of the body and its environment. It must either include the body, or become a function of the body.

The truth of animism is that conscious behavior is different in kind from the behavior of physical bodies. Even the greatest extension of physiological knowledge will not help us to infer mental activity from brain structure. Just as a living organism is a whole with a far higher degree of internal relatedness than any non-living system, the mental represents a higher degree of self-regulation and control than the body. It cannot be understood by a study of the living organism. Aristotle says that the soul is to the body as vision is to the eye, or [as] axeness is to the axe. The most detailed examination of the physical and physiological constitution of the eye will not explain the phenomenon of sight, even as the examination of the form and material of the axe will not explain the act of cutting. The soul is the actuality of the organic body in man, even as vision is the actuality of the eye. We cannot reduce psychology to physics or physiology. While the conscious arises from or emerges out of the vital or the biological, it is as real as the biological, from which it emerges, and represents a kind of interaction with things different from [that of] the [merely] vital . . . .

## Human Personality and its Destiny

### 1. Self-consciousness

In self-conscious beings, we meet with a set of phenomena quite distinct from the physical or the vital or the merely conscious. Reflective mind is different from the unreflective mind of the infant or the animal. When the plain man protests that men are not to be confused with apes, he declares that however primitive man may be, he is still distinctly human . . . .

The reflective capacity of the human mind and its power of free invention are not mere complications of lower instincts. It is the essence of self-conscious intelligence to look before and after and [to] vary action according to circumstances. Instinct does neither. When we pass from animal to man, we find not a gradual development but a sudden break, a leap into a new form of experience. Man is able to dominate nature. If he is the master of the world today it is not because his physical frame is more powerful or his movements quicker or his instincts sharper than those of other animals. It is because of his intelligence which enables him to adapt himself to new and varying situations. [Blaise] Pascal [1623-1662] urged that the minute human being who *knows* he is crushed is infinitely higher than the unknowing mass, however vast, which crushes him. Knowledge is the distinguishing feature of human consciousness and it is an ultimate fact incapable of derivation from anything else. We can describe and analyze the contents of knowledge but we cannot explain why there is knowledge . . . .

Attempts are sometimes made to reduce man to the level of an animal. Behaviorist psychology assumes that human behavior can be observed like the phenomena studied by [the] natural sciences. Psychology as a science should restrict itself to direct experimental observation. It has little to do with personal experiences, values[,] and purposes.

The inadequacy of behaviorism becomes more pointed at the human level. To reduce human behavior to reflex action is a travesty of the facts. The material provided by introspection is relevant to the science of psychology. The body as perceived from the inside is different from the body externally observed. The observation of the external manifestations of behavior does not tell us of the individual who is living through his experiences. The latter are immediate data and can be conveyed to others only mediately. Again, while every organism strives to preserve its health and wholeness of being and struggles to achieve a harmony of its essential parts in their full development[,] man alone has to do it with effort and will. What other objects of nature possess as a natural quality, man has to achieve through effort and endeavor. The theory of conditioned reflexes cannot account for intelligent behavior. If the behaviorist account were true, then man is a slave to his environment without any dignity or freedom. He will be automatically responding to the varying situations with reflexes conditioned and unconditioned. Deliberate attempts to lift himself by struggle and suffering, by self-discipline and self-development[,] are futile. If a fount of type is shaken up in a bag, the text of Watson's *Behaviorism* would result if only the time allowed is indefinite. Such a view robs mentality of its meaning and stultifies its own truth. If a man thinks even as a stone runs downhill, his thought is absolutely determined and cannot be judged as either true or false.

In psychoanalysis, we seem to have an opposite story where mental phenomena are causal factors and physical behavior can be explained in terms of personal history. An objective treatment is not of much use and we have to cross-examine the individual about his dreams and associations. The greater part of our mind is hidden from us. It is buried or

repressed and yet affects our waking consciousness. It is not possible to equate the "unconscious" of the psychologist with the "biological" of the behaviorist. It suggests that the unconscious and the conscious are parts of one whole.

While the behaviorist and the psychoanalyst treat of body and mind as distinct, the supporters of the *Gestalttheorie* look upon mind-body as a whole. They lay stress on the importance of patterns or configurations in the psychophysical realm. Strictly speaking, there is only one whole, the totality of being. For practical convenience, we isolate wholes of varying degrees of completeness. If we take the process of walking, we can account for it only if we consider the nature of the organism and the nature of the world with which it is interacting. We cannot walk on water. Yet for practical purposes we distinguish the self as a system functioning in a larger whole. The psychological whole is distinguished into two elements of the self and the environment. Psychology studies the nature of the self which is also a whole in a relative sense . . . .

. . . [A]tomistic psychology, which analyses the stream of consciousness into separate units and accounts for the course of the stream by the interplay of these units, is now obsolete. The physiological evidence is against such a theory. [B]rain functions cannot be broken up into elementary units, occurring in distinct areas. The specific character of any brain process involved in any particular activity of the organism is a quality of the total process, a peculiarity of the total field and not a putting together of specific processes occurring in special areas . . . *Gestalt* psychology holds that the stream of consciousness is not a sum of elements but a configuration in which every distinguishable part determines and is determined by the nature of the whole. Thoughts and their relations are unified wholes of subordinate parts and not mechanically added sums of independent units. The self is a unity which is more than a sum of its subordinate parts. It is an active living whole, a body-mind . . . .

## 2. The self [as] an organized whole

The human self is an emergent aspect of the world process and not a substance different in kind from the process itself. Persistence of pattern constitutes unity of a thing or a self. Though every one of the constituents of the body is changing, the bodily system as an organized totality endures. It is the same with regard to the human self which is a unity of diverse parts with an enduring structure. Transient as many of its elements are, the plan of organization, however, is preserved.

In the history of thought the individual self has often been conceived on the analogy of a physical thing. It is said to possess an ultimate core of reality which remains unchanged throughout the changes of its qualities or states. It is viewed as a simple self-identical somewhat distinct from its experiences which are attached to it. Western philosophy owes to Plato the idea of an indiscernible soul substance inherently immortal. Since the soul is not composite it cannot be disintegrated. Scholastics argue from the unity and simplicity of the soul to its indestructibility and immortality. Descartes revived the classic formula of the soul as a thinking substance. Those who adopt this view argue that it can explain the possibility of personal identity and immortality.

Reality is everywhere complex. It is so even in the atom. The self as real need not be simple. [John] Locke [1632-1704] confesses that a simple substance distinct from its manifestations could be "a hidden something, I know not what . . . ." Hume's arguments against the theory of self as a being or a substance which in some inexplicable way transcends the totality of its content still hold good. Such a substance is not observable and there is no evidence that it exists. Kant urges that the notion is self-contradictory, for all we know is an object of the self and never the self itself. If the soul were of the indestructible, atomic character, its existence would be of no value at all, much less its continuance. The self has no element which is self-identical throughout. The body is continuously changing. It is a scene of unending waste made good by repair. Thoughts and emotions are constantly changing. There is nothing concrete in the individual which is not produced and which will not pass away . . . . The distinctiveness of selfhood does not lie in its simplicity but in the specific organization of its contents.

Often, the self is confused with a series of mental states. Buddha opposed the two extreme views that the self is an unchanging essence and that it is absolutely different each moment. He held to the middle position that the self arises through the past as its cause. It is a system of responses to environmental situations. It is a connected whole, whose parts work together. Even the most primitive individual faces the world as a unity. The self is not a collection of mental states but is characterized by organization. It is an organization which is active as a whole . . . [,] constantly interacting with the environment.

The organization of the self, however, is a matter of degree. The lower animals which are tied to immediate situations do not have the unity and organization characteristic of the human self, though they also have an instinctive unity. By the ability to use symbols and reflect on experience, a higher synthesis is rendered possible at the human level, where the organization is not simply external. The instinctive control of animal behavior yields to the rational determination of the self. The human self is able to save the past, bind it with the present, and face the future.

Plato tells us that in the self of man are found three types of function, [1] appetites and desires, [2] emotional reactions[,] and [3] intellectual ideals. It is the last which organize experience into more or less permanent unities. Each of us tries to control his life by a main life-purpose to which all others are subordinated. This choice limits the direction and scope of the development of the self. The self is a teleological unity, which is the only thing constant in the concrete, busy, active, dynamic self. Each soul has its life's star, its main purpose . . . . As the unity of a single melody is realized in the passage of time, the unity of self is realized in . . . [a] series of stages, towards the attainment of ends . . . .

In a true sense, therefore, personality is a mask. It is the part we play in the drama of life, an imperfect expression of the groundswell of our nature. Each looks at the world from a characteristic point of view. The mental data can be systematized in different ways and so long as they are fused into a single whole, we have a single self. The phenomena of multiple personality point out that for the same period or different periods we may have different conceptions of our self due to loss of consciousness or discontinuity. If the experiences are not sufficiently integrated, selfhood becomes loose and is often broken up into a series of relatively unconnected systems of behavior[,] and we [then] have cases of many selves.

### 3. The self as subject

The self as an organized whole is to be distinguished from the self as subject. The former is the problem for psychology, the latter for metaphysics. In all experience we have the duality between the subject experiencing and the object experienced. The subject of experience is said to be distinct from every moment of the experience. It is the persistent substratum which makes all knowledge, recognition[,] and retention possible. However much such a substratum may be essential as a principle of explanation, psychology does not tell us of it.

It is sometimes argued that the series of experiences is aware of itself as a series. The whole series is involved in the knowledge of each item, which is difficult to understand. Hume reduces the subject to the object and makes the self a bundle of conscious happenings, for he could not find the "I" among his mental states. But the impressions cannot be made into a whole without the activity of the self. There is no explanation as to why the rapidly passing experiences hang together as the experiences of one and the same individual. The laws of association cannot account for this fact. Kant rightly contends that the laws of association mean a self which is more than a mere haphazard bundle of experiences . . . .

The subject and object of consciousness are elements which are distinguishable but not separable in experience, which is one. The distinction between the two comes before us as a distinction within a whole. If the two were independent of each other, knowledge would become a mystery. They are ideal factors in the whole of experience and not opposite divisions or separate parts of it. We cannot build knowledge from out of them, for it is the ultimate fact behind which we cannot go. The true subject or the self is not an object which we can find in knowledge for it is the very condition of knowledge. It is different from all objects, the body, the senses, the empirical self itself. We cannot make the subject the property of any substance or the effect of any cause, for it is the basis of all such relations. It is not the empirical self but the reality without which there could be no such thing as an empirical self . . . .

[I]ndividuals are able to have common experience, know a real world as identical for all[,] because there is an ideal self operative in all. The individual who is aware of himself as limited has the direct consciousness of something which limits him and his purposes. The consciousness of limit involves the action of the greater unlimited self in us. In order to assign a limit to our thought, we must in some sense be beyond that limit. To confuse the subject with the mind immersed in bodily experience prevents us from attaining complete comprehension of the object that appears to confront us.

The true subject is the simple, self-subsistent, universal spirit which cannot be directly presented as the object. When Plato says that the mind in man is the offspring of the eternal world-mind, when Aristotle speaks of an "active reason" at the apex of the soul, which is divine and creative, when Kant distinguishes the . . . [transcendental self] from the merely empirical self, they are referring to the self as subject . . . . It is not an abstract form of selfhood, for it is that which manifests itself in the organization of the empirical self. It is within this universal spirit that the distinction of subject and object arises.

While the empirical self is always correlated with a not-self, the universal self includes all and has nothing outside to limit it. The Hindu thinkers call it the *atman* as distinguished from the empirical self or the *jivatman* . . . .

#### 4. The self and the environment

The integral relationship between the organism and its environment which we found to be true of the subhuman grades of reality is also true of the human world. Human individuals are not unchanging substrata of change with accidental qualities and related to one another externally but are elements in an interrelated system. They are centers of experience or processes of becoming through a creative synthesis of their relations. They possess a certain relative independence though the general nature of the system conditions them all. Instead of being a self-contained individual, each empirical self is the expression or focusing of something beyond itself. The real whole or individual is that which includes persons and their environment[,] and these [are taken to] exist in themselves [only] by a process of abstraction. However self-conscious or self-determining, the human being is not absolutely individual. From the first his world is equally real with himself[,] and his interactions with it influence the growth of his individuality. The individual and the world co-exist and subsist together.

At the biological level, there is no such thing as an individual center of life. The cells in an organism are unintelligible apart from the whole. Their life is centered in the life of the whole. While plants and animals lead "whole" lives harmoniously, human beings set up discords between themselves and their environment. The unity between the organism and the environment which is a striking point in the subhuman world becomes sundered in the human. While the human being belongs to a larger world which penetrates him at every pore and lives through his interactions with it, his self-consciousness sets up a dualism which is untrue to fact and opposed to his whole nature. He forgets that his interests are not private to himself and believes himself to be distinct with his own form of individualism. While this strong sense of individuality is necessary for action, it is confused with individualism. He is in a state of unstable equilibrium. His conscience is the sign of a divided life. He is a flame of unrest full of uncertain seeking and disorder. So long as the individual suffers from separateness he is restive and homesick. He is always striving to get beyond his separateness.

Human progress lies in an increasing awareness of the universal working in man. Through the exploring of nature, the striving after wisdom[,] and the seeking of God, the individual struggles to achieve a harmony between himself and his environment. He finds his goodness in what is more than himself. He realizes that his fragmentariness will be cured only if he is devoted to the whole. Fullness of life means service to the whole. So he strives after values, frames ideals[,] and struggles to build up a world of unity and harmony. He forms associations, develops common interests by organizing families, tribes, churches[,] and countries. Knowledge, art, morality[,] and religion are the devices employed by man to realize his destiny as a member of a spiritual fellowship, a kingdom in which each is in the whole and the whole is in some measure in each . . . .

The peculiar privilege of the human self is that he can consciously join and work for the whole and embody in his own life the purpose of the whole. This embodiment differs vastly in degree from individual to individual. It is the source of the difference between superior and inferior souls. The two elements of selfhood, uniqueness (each-ness) and universality (all-ness) grow together until at last the most unique becomes the most universal. While every individual fulfills his real function in the whole and obtains value and dignity, no one individual is as wide as the whole itself. It is limited because it is only one individual element in what is much greater than itself . . . . Interaction . . . [between] individuals, knowledge of one another[,] and social relations with one another are possible because we all form parts of one system.

#### 5. Karma and freedom

The two pervasive features of all nature, connection with the past and creation of the future, are present in the human level. The connection with the past at the human stage is denoted by the word *Karma* in the Hindu systems. The human individual is a self-conscious, efficient portion of universal nature with his own uniqueness. His history stretching back to an indefinite period of time binds him with the physical and vital conditions of the world. Human life is an organic whole where each successive phase grows out of what has gone before. We are what we are on account of our affinity with the past. Human growth is an ordered one[,] and its orderedness is indicated by saying that it is governed by the law of Karma.

Karma literally means action, deed. All acts produce their effects which are recorded both in the organism and the environment. Their physical effects may be short-lived but their moral effects (*samskara*) are worked into the character of the self. Every single thought, word[,] and deed enters into the living chain of causes which makes us what we are. Our life is not at the mercy of blind chance or capricious fate . . . . [This] conception is not peculiar to the Oriental creeds. The Christian

Scriptures refer to it. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" [Galatians 6:7]. Jesus is reported to have said on the Mount, "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" [Matthew 7:1-2].

Karma is not so much a principle of retribution as one of continuity. Good produces good, evil evil. Love increases our power of love, hatred our power of hatred. It emphasizes the great importance of right action. Man is continuously shaping his own self. The law of Karma is not to be confused with either a hedonistic or a juridical theory of rewards and punishments. The reward for virtue is not a life of pleasure nor is the punishment for sin pain. Pleasure and pain may govern the animal nature of man but not his human [nature]. Love which is a joy in itself suffers; hatred too often means a perverse kind of satisfaction. Good and evil are not to be confused with material well-being and physical suffering.

All things in the world are at once causes and effects. They embody the energy of the past and exert energy on the future. Karma or connection with the past is not inconsistent with creative freedom. On the other hand it is implied by it. The law that links us with the past also asserts that it can be subjugated by our free action. Though the past may present obstacles, they must all yield to the creative power in man in proportion to its sincerity and insistence. The law of Karma says that each individual will get the return according to the energy he puts forth. The universe will respond to and implement the demands of the self. Nature will reply to the insistent call of spirit. "As is his desire, such is his purpose; as is his purpose, such is the action he performs; what action he performs, that he procures for himself" [*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, IV, 4, 5] . . . There is nothing we cannot achieve if we want it enough. Subjection to spirit is the law of universal nature. The principle of Karma has thus two aspects, a retrospective and a prospective, continuity with the past and creative freedom of the self.

The urge in nature which seeks not only to maintain itself at a particular level but advance to a higher becomes conscious in man who deliberately seeks after rules of life and principles of progress . . . Human beings are the first among nature's children who can say "I" and consciously collaborate with the "father"[,] the power that controls and directs nature, in the fashioning of the world. They can substitute rational direction for the slow, dark, blundering growth of the subhuman world. We cannot deny the free action of human beings however much their origin may be veiled in darkness. The self has conative [striving] tendencies, impulses to change by its efforts . . . given conditions, inner and outer, and shape them to its own purpose.

The problem of human freedom is confused somewhat by the distinction between the self and the will. The will is only the self in its active side[,] and freedom of the will really means the freedom of the self. It is determination by the self.

It is argued that self-determination is not really freedom. It makes little difference whether the self is moved from without or from within. A spinning top moved from within by a spring is as mechanical a top as one whipped into motion from without. The self may well be an animated automaton. A drunkard who takes to his glass habitually does so in obedience to an element in his nature. The habit has become a part of his self. If we analyze the contents of the self, many of them are traceable to the influence of the environment and the inheritance from the past. If the individual's view and character are the product of a long evolution, his actions which are the outcome of these cannot be free. The feeling of freedom may be an illusion of the self, which lives in each moment of the present, ignoring the determining past.

In answer to these difficulties, it may be said that the self represents a form of relatedness or organization, closer and more intimate than that which is found in animal, plant[,] or atom. Self-determination means not determination by any fragment of the self's nature but by the whole of it. Unless the individual employs his whole nature, searches the different possibilities[,] and selects one which commends itself to his whole self, the act is not really free.

Sheer necessity is not to be found in any aspect of nature; complete freedom is divine and possible only when the self becomes co-extensive with the whole. Human freedom is a matter of degree. We are most free when our whole self is active and not merely a fragment of it. We generally act according to our conventional or habitual self[,] and sometimes we sink to the level of our subnormal self.

Freedom is not caprice, nor is Karma necessity. Human choice is not unmotivated or uncaused. If our acts were irrelevant to our past, then there would be no moral responsibility or scope for improvement. Undetermined beginnings, upstart events[,] are impossible either in the physical or the human world. Free acts cannot negate continuity. They arise within the order of nature. Freedom is not caprice since we carry our past with us. The character, at any given point, is the

condensation of our previous history. What we have been enters in[to] the "me" which is now active and choosing. The range of one's natural freedom of action is limited. No man has the universal field of possibilities for himself. The varied possibilities of our nature do not all get a chance and the cosmic has its influence in permitting the development of certain possibilities and closing down others.

Again, freedom is dogged by automatism. When we make up our mind to do a thing, our mind is different from what it was before. When a possibility becomes an actuality, it assumes the character of necessity. The past can never be cancelled, though it may be utilized. Mere defiance of the given may mean disaster, though we can make a new life spring up from the past. Only the possible is the sphere of freedom. We have a good deal of present constraint and previous necessity in human life. But necessity is not to be mistaken for destiny, which we can neither defy nor delude.

Though the self is not free from the bonds of determination, it can subjugate the past to a certain extent and turn it into a new course. Choice is the assertion of freedom over necessity by which it converts necessity to its own use and thus frees itself from it. "The human agent is free" [*Paniniya*, I, 4, 54]. He is not the plaything of fate or driftwood on the tide of uncontrolled events. He can actively mold the future instead of passively suffering the past. The past may become either an opportunity or an obstacle. Everything depends on what we make of it and not what it makes of us. Life is not bound to move in a specific direction. Life is a growth[,] and a growth is undetermined in a measure. Though the future is the sequel of the past, we cannot say what it will be. If there is no indetermination, then human consciousness is an unnecessary luxury.

Our demand for freedom must reckon with a universe that is marked by order and regularity. Life is like a game of bridge. The cards in the game are given to us. We do not select them. They are traced to past Karma[,] but we are free to make any call as we think fit and lead any suit. Only we are limited by the rules of the game. We are more free when we start the game than later on when the game has developed and our choices become restricted. But till the very end there is always a choice. A good player will see possibilities which a bad one does not. The more skilled a player the more alternatives does he perceive. A good hand may be cut to pieces by unskillful play and the bad play need not be attributed to the frowns of fortune. Even though we may not like the way in which the cards are shuffled, we like the game and we want to play. Sometimes wind and tide may prove too strong for us and even the most noble may come down. The great souls find profound peace in the consciousness that the stately order of the world, now lovely and luminous, now dark and terrible, in which man finds his duty and destiny, cannot be subdued to known aims. It seems to have a purpose of its own of which we are ignorant. Misfortune is not fate but providence.

The law of Karma does not support the doctrine of predestination. There are some who believe that only the predestination of certain souls to destruction is consistent with divine sovereignty. God has a perfect right to deal with his creatures even as a potter does with his clay. St Paul speaks of "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" [Romans 9:22]. Life eternal is a gracious gift of God. Such a view of divine sovereignty is unethical. God's love is manifested in and through law.

In our relations with human failures, belief in Karma inclines us to take a sympathetic attitude and develop reverence before the mystery of misfortune. The more understanding we are, the less do we pride ourselves on our superiority. Faith in Karma induces in us the mood of true justice or charity which is the essence of spirituality. We realize how infinitely helpless and frail human beings are. When we look at the warped lives of the poor, we see how much the law of Karma is true. If they are lazy and criminal, let us ask what chance they had of choosing to be different. They are more unfortunate than wicked.

Again, failures are due not so much to "sin" as to errors which lead us to our doom. In Greek tragedy man is held individually less responsible and circumstances or the decisions of Moira [Fate] more so. The tale of Oedipus Rex tells us how he could not avoid his fate to kill his father and marry his mother, in spite of his best efforts. The parting of Hector and Andromache in Homer is another illustration. In Shakespeare again, we see the artist leading on his characters to their destined ends by what seems a very natural development of their foibles, criminal folly in *Lear* or personal ambition in *Macbeth*. The artist shows us these souls in pain. Hamlet's reason is puzzled, his will confounded. He looks at life and at death and wonders which is worse. Goaded by personal ambition, *Macbeth* makes a mess of it all. *Othello* kills his wife and kills himself because a jealous villain shows him a handkerchief.

When these noble souls crash battling with adverse forces we feel with them and for them; for it might happen to any of us. We are not free from the weaknesses that broke them, whatever we call them, stupidity, disorder, vacillation[,] or, if you please, insane ambition and self-seeking. Today the evil stars of the Greek tragedians are replaced by the almighty laws

of economics. Thousands of young men the world over are breaking their heads in vain against the iron walls of society like trapped birds in cages. We see in them the essence of all tragedy, something noble breaking down, something sublime falling with a crash. We can only bow our heads in the presence of those broken beneath the burden of their destiny.

The capacity of the human soul for suffering and isolation is immense. Take the poor creatures whom the world passes by as the lowly and the lost. If only we had known what they passed through, we would have been glad of their company. It is utterly wrong to think that misfortune comes only to those who deserve it. The world is a whole and we are members one of another, and we must suffer one for another. In Christianity, it needed a divine soul to reveal how much grace there is in suffering. To bear pain, to endure suffering, is the quality of the strong in spirit. It adds to the spiritual resources of humanity.

## 6. Future life

Though the most influential philosophies and religions have been vague if not reticent on the question of life after death, some of our modern cults make one believe that the future of the self is lit as by the footlights of a theatre. Everything seems to be clear. The depths are charted. Hell hath no secret terrors nor heaven any unpainted joys. The problem of life after death has no interest for those who believe that it is a fact divinely revealed to us as well as for those who affirm that there is nothing in us apart from the body. The crude theory of materialism which denies future life is inconsistent with the emergent view of self. If the self is not produced by the body, it need not be ended when the body is destroyed.

Difficulties arise when we try to define the nature of the future life . . . .<sup>1</sup> In the *Timaeus* Plato argues that since God cannot wish to destroy his own work and since nothing else can destroy it, the souls which are made by God in his own image cannot be destroyed, though the process by which man achieves his end of likeness to God may be an endless one.

Professor J. Estlin Carpenter writes: "The Buddhist scheme proclaims the ultimate salvation of all beings. Christianity in its most widespread historic forms still condemns an uncounted number to endless torment and unceasing sin." The teaching concerning ultimate damnation is continuous and widespread in the history of the Christian Church, though universalist emphasis is to be met with in Origen [c. 185-254] and the Christian Platonists. Origen held that indeed all will be saved, including the Arch-Enemy of God. The Roman Catholic Church is bound to the idea of Hell by the Council of Trent. We may cut out the harsher sayings of Jesus as unauthentic. The punishment of Dives [Luke 16:19-31] may be interpreted as remedial. The weeping and gnashing of teeth in the parable of the drag-net [Matthew 13:47] as well as the assertion that the sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven "neither in this world nor in that to come" [Matthew 12:30-32] may be dismissed as eschatological exaggerations. And yet there seems to be an inconvenient amount of undisputed teaching that became exaggerated in the hands of the Apocalyptists. If we are unwilling to cut off the offending hand or foot, Gehenna is the only place for us [see Matthew 5:29-30]. In the story of the Celestial Banquet [Luke 14:16-24] as well as that of the Sheep and the Goats [Matthew 25:31-46] utter rejection is set forth as a real possibility.

But the modern mind cannot accept the idea of endless punishment which leads to no improvement. Even the man of ill-will will eventually be enlightened and saved. We need not believe that such a doctrine dulls the fine edge of moral effort. Some authority for a universalist view may be found in the riper sayings of Jesus. The infinite value of every individual soul to God as Father is an assurance that he will not suffer the loss in death of any of his children. On the eve of the Crucifixion, Jesus is reported to have said: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life so that not one of the sheep might be lost" [see John 10:1-21]. God's patience is not likely to be exhausted in the short span of a single life. If every soul is precious to God, universal salvation is a certainty. If some souls are lost, God's omnipotence [and omnibenevolence?] becomes problematical . . . .

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<sup>1</sup>All of section 7 on "Personal immortality" and a portion of section 8 on "Conditional immortality" are omitted at this point.

## 9. Rebirth

The doctrine of rebirth has had a long and influential history . . . .<sup>1</sup> [Furthermore, the] emergent view of the self makes the hypothesis of rebirth a reasonable one. Throughout nature life is preserved and continued through incessant renewal. Life is a perpetual going on, never resting, always straining forward for something that has not been but should be. While at the zoological level the perpetuation of the species is the end, at the human level development of unique individuality seems to be the end in view. The self of man is not an abstract quality or essence which remains the same for all time. It is a living experience of which duration is an intrinsic characteristic. If everything else in nature arises from something continuous with it and passes into something also continuous with it, the self need not be an exception to the general scheme. "Like corn the mortal grows; like corn is born again" [*Katha Upanishad*, I, 1, 6]. The way of nature is continuity within a certain general pattern. If the general plan of consecutiveness is not to be violated . . . , human selves must continue after death: They carry on past threads, weave out something in the present[,] and prepare for the future.

Continuity here cannot be of the same type as in the subhuman stages; for the organization and control the self possesses are of a unique character. The unity in the subhuman world is looser than in the human. While a wall is broken up, its units of bricks may remain intact. But if a self is destroyed, its elements of thoughts, emotions[,] and volitions are also destroyed. The form and the matter, the pattern and the material[,] are so closely knit that if there is a drastic separation, the self is destroyed. The continuance of the self is not, therefore, of the same type as the continuance of . . . other organisms.

The self aims at fulfillment of function or development of individuality. It can grow indefinitely in depth, richness[,] and comprehensiveness. We cannot in one life exercise all the powers we possess or exhaust all the values we strain after. The capacity of the self for endless improvement . . . and the pervasive facts of continuance point to a future where the self's "withheld completions" obtain a chance . . . . [B]roken lives that require to be renewed are the forces that integrate creation . . . . [S]uccessive lives are a closely connected sequence where the acts of one life determine the basis and opportunities of the next. There are no blind rushes to the goal. The children of a God in whose eyes a thousand years are as a day need not be disheartened if the goal of perfection is not attained in one life. The individual has appeared and disappeared times without number . . . in the long past and will continue to be dissolved and reformed through unimaginable centuries to come . . . .

It is an admitted principle of science that if we see a certain stage of development in time, we may infer a past to it. It is not true that we "brought nothing into this world" [1 Timothy 6:7]. The self enters this life with a certain nature and inheritance. We commonly speak of talents that are inherited, an eye for beauty, a taste for music, which are not common qualities of the species but individual variations. So the self must have had a past history here and elsewhere. We cannot believe that the rise of self with a definite nature is simply fortuitous. [J.E.] McTaggart [1866-1925] refers to certain facts which are not explicable on any other hypothesis than that of pre-existence. "Two people who have seen but little of each other are often drawn together by a force equal to that which is generated in other cases by years of mutual trust and mutual assistance." The capriciousness of sex desire is not the whole explanation of love at first sight. Again, characteristics which we have to acquire through toil and effort others seem to possess as natural gifts. Infant prodigies are fairly familiar in the East. In the West also we meet with them now and then. When Yehudi Menuhin, as a twelve-year-old violinist, amazed music critics at the Albert Hall by the fully adult nature of his technique and, above all, of his interpretation, when the Belgian baby, André Lenoir, multiplied in a flash any five figure number with any other five figure number and performed prodigies of mathematics before the astounded professors of Brussels, may not these be traced to faculties acquired in earlier lives?

If we do not admit pre-existence, we must say that the soul is created at the birth of the body. Such a view makes all education and experience superfluous. If the soul is said to be created with a definite nature, it is difficult to understand why such varied natures should be imposed on . . . souls. Our fates seem to be due to caprice and cruelty. God, if not nature, places us in different circumstances and then judges us as if we were responsible for our lots. It must be a strangely

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<sup>1</sup>Radhakrishnan points out that the doctrine of rebirth was maintained in such ancient religions as Orphism, Sufism, Kabbala, Gnosticism, Manicheanism, and Druidism. The doctrine was also adopted by such thinkers as Pythagoras, Empedocles (490-430 BC), Plato, Philo Judaeus (30 BC-50 AD), Plotinus (205-270), Origen, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), G.E. Lessing (1729-1781), Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), and others.



whimsical deity who enjoys our adventures. He endows Jesus and Judas with different "complexes" and then complains that while Jesus succeeds in striving for heaven, Judas fails. Judgment seems to be utterly wrong when caprice is king . . . .

Death is not a unique event in our progress. It is part of a continually recurring rhythm of nature, marking a crisis in the history of the individual. It is the moment when the self assumes a new set of conditions.

The question is whether the death of the body does not mean an essential change in the nature of the self. Though the self-conscious mind may have developed out of simpler forms of biological process, it achieves gradually a degree of independence and is able to react on the body with an increased degree of freedom. The life of the human self does not center in the body, though it uses the latter for the promotion of its purpose. "It is the body which dies when left by the self; the self does not die" [*Chandogya Upanishad*, VI, 2, 3].

The death of the physical body does not mean dissipation of the self. If the self wakes up after [a] dreamless sleep and feels its continuity with the self that went to sleep, death need not mean discontinuity. If it is argued that the self has its materials through its connection with a body and when it ceases the contents of the self will disappear, we may say that the self is dependent on the body for its material only so long as it is connected with it. But an empirical conjunction is not a metaphysical necessity. If we require brains to think when we are embodied, it does not follow that we require brains to think even when we are disembodied.

The instrumental theory that the self is an entity distinct from the body which it uses as an instrument cannot account for the observed dependence of mental states on bodily disturbances. An injury to the body affects not only the manifestations of the self but the self itself. There are cases where men's characters are changed by bodily injuries. We cannot say that the character remains unchanged while only the behavior changes. The self is a complex of mind-body, however much the mind may be superior to the body. So, it is said, that the death of the gross body does not mean a complete destruction of all physical connection. The Hindus believe in the vehicle of self, a body which differs from the present gross one though not completely discontinuous with it.

In other words, there is an organic relationship between the self and its body. The ancient theory of a finer ethereal body seems to receive some support from . . . . psychological research. Even when due allowance is made for fraud, error[,] and chance coincidences, there is enough evidence to justify the belief that apparitions are due to the action of the dead persons whose bodies they represent.

If there is a close bond between the self and the body, then we cannot say that any self can inhabit any body. If the contents and conditions of . . . . self-existence must be similar to those which obtain here, rebirth in the form of animals or angels becomes an extravagance . . . . [L]ife after death cannot be completely different from the present one. Death cannot alter so profoundly the life of the self. No human being can take birth in a body foreign to its evolved characteristics. It is possible for man to degenerate into a savage being but he is still a man. If retrogression is referred to, then it is spread over long ages. While it is theoretically possible that the life process which has now reached the human level may so operate as to sink into the animal, from which it may again spring forward on a different line of evolution altogether or continue to sink below the animal world, we are not concerned with such speculative possibilities. While we need not dogmatically deny the possibility of reversion to animal births, we are now concerned with the normal changes which are within a type. It is possible that rebirth in animal form is a figure of speech for rebirth with animal qualities.

The juridical theory associated in the popular mind with the doctrine of Karma is responsible for this mistaken view of rebirth in the form of animals, as also for the notions of heaven and hell as places of resort where we receive our rewards or punishments. It is not, however, a fair representation of the Hindu view, though much popular support can be produced for it. The theory of Samsara is quite inconsistent with any permanent abodes of bliss or suffering.

The human instinct for justice naturally associates the thought of suffering and pain with vice and wickedness. Suffering is the shadow thrown by the power of evil . . . . We find in many systems ideas of the moral government of the world confused with those of retribution[,] and it is not surprising that belief in the systematic distribution of rewards and punishments after death for the deeds done in this life was current in India and assumed crude and questionable forms. The Hindu thinkers, however, who accept the view of Karma equate it with the will of God. God is in man and his law is organic to man's nature. God is the universal background providing scope and expression for the different possibilities[,] but the actualization of them depends on the will of man. Heaven and hell are states of the self and not places of resort. Even the

most ghastly inferno comes to an end one day. An eternity of torment is inconsistent with a God of love. Virtue is heaven, self-sufficiency and health of the soul, and vice hell, suffering and disease of the soul. Goodness is its own reward and evil-doing carries its own penalty with it. It is not a question of the expediency or profitableness of virtue.

How does the self find a new home after death? The mechanism of rebirth is difficult to know, if not impossible to conceive. But simply because we do not understand the process we cannot deny the facts. We know that mental qualities are transmitted from parents to offspring but we do not know how. While the parents may be regarded as producing new bodies, they do not produce new selves. Again, it is held that the self is not altogether discarnate. It is invested in a finer vehicle, the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*) when it leaves the gross one. The necessary physical basis is secured by the subtle body. The *linga-sarira* or subtle body which is said to accompany one throughout one's empirical existence is the form on which the physical body is molded. It is this which assumes the body necessary for its efficiency at its next birth by attracting physical elements to itself.

At physical death, only the gross, outer form perishes. The rest of the self is not disturbed. Rebirth is only the renewal of the instrument through which the self works. The self is not at each birth a new entity but a continuous process. A transition is conceived from one situation to another at physical death. "As a man might cross a ditch by swinging himself as he hangs to a rope from a tree on this bank, so does mind (*vijñāna*) at death proceed onward in causal relation to objects and so on" [*Visuddhimagga*]. There is such a thing as psychic gravitation by which souls find their level, that is, their proper environment. Birth is incarnation of the psyche and death disincarnation of it. When the machinery we use becomes useless, it is scrapped and another set up in its place . . . .

The theory of rebirth is said to be inconsistent with the principle of heredity. The child seems to be a product of the parents whom it resembles in body and mind. It is unnecessary to assume that it comes from another life. If parents really make the child, heredity will be the universal law. This difficulty will hold for every theory except that of materialism. If the soul is "created" by God, there is no reason why it should be like the parents. If God first fixes upon the character of the self and then selects the physical basis by choosing the parents, the theory seems to be far-fetched and is open to other criticisms. It is simpler to hold that the self seeking for rebirth obtains embodiment in the frame offering the necessary conditions. The physical body derived from the parents according to the laws of heredity is appropriated by the conscious self. If this theory is not acceptable, much less is the other view which holds that a sort of supernatural essence is thrust into the bodily context at the appropriate moment. The self selects the frame which fits it even as we pick the hat which suits the shape of our head. We are reborn in families where the qualities we possess and seek to embody are well developed. Even as the determining factor is the shape of the head and not the size of the hat, so also in rebirth the deciding factor is the nature of the self and not the parents of the body. The soul draws around it the forces necessary for its proper embodiment. It is therefore natural that the child should be like the parents.

As a matter of fact all children are not like their parents. They manifest qualities which are not possessed by a long line of ancestors[,] and it is no answer to say that some remote ancestor might have had them.

The view of the correlativity of self and body suggests the presumption that the life hereafter is akin to the life on earth and is subject to the law of change. Future life is not one deathless existence but a process marked by periodic mortality of the body. So long as the self is growing, periodic death is also a fact . . . .

Religious conceptions of heaven and hell suggest a deathless life after this. If heaven is a state where perfection prevails and improvement and progress are impossible, even the noblest of us are not in a fit condition to enter heaven. While the best of us are not quite prepared for the sudden splendor of bliss, the worst of us are not so bad as to be cast aside into eternal doom. Eternal states after death are improbable. The process of gradual improvement must go on after the death of our present bodies and it is reasonable to assume that this life is followed by others like it, each separate[d] from its predecessor and successor by death and rebirth . . . . At any rate when we come to the state of hell, it is absolutely necessary to assume that there is an end to it, unless God wants to play the devil. None of us is so completely dead to the divine in us as to deserve eternal hell. Whatever we may think about the compatibility of death with absolute perfection, it is certainly compatible with absolute imperfection. Life after death is continuous with our present existence . . . .

The theory of a soul without a past but with a future is not easy of acceptance. If the soul is created by the birth of the body, then the death of the body destroys it. Tertullian [c. 160-230], who holds that "soul is nothing if not body," believes that the soul dies with the body and the two are raised again by miracle. If we disallow miracles, then there is no necessity

why a created being should endure for all time. If the soul has a beginning, it must have an end. It is difficult to admit that a being which begins to exist at a certain definite point of time is immortal in the future like a string with only one end. It is contended that human souls, when once they are produced, happen to be of value not only in themselves but also to the universe. Their destruction will be inconsistent with the goodness of the universe. But "goodness" does not mean exclusion of all evil. In that case the meaningless misery and the pointless suffering which life so often brings with it are enough to damn it. If goodness is not inconsistent with the existence of certain evils, then the destruction of human souls need not be inconsistent with the goodness of the universe . . . .

A common objection to the hypothesis of rebirth is the lack of memory of the past. If I am not able to own the past and profit by it, future life seems to be meaningless. Rebirth of an individual without a memory of his previous life would mean the annihilation of the past person and the creation of a second with a similar character. An unbroken conscious experience in a durational sequence constitutes the meaning and value of future life.

A little examination tells us that this objection cannot be seriously pressed. If the theory of rebirth is well grounded otherwise, the question of lapse of memory does not touch it. Memory may be necessary for a retributive theory of the universe but not for moral continuity. Death may destroy memory of our deeds but not their effects on us. The metaphysical question of the continuity of the self is not in any way affected by the discontinuity of memory. The nature of each individual is molded by the experiences of the past. Every state is conditioned by the prior and leads on to another. Simply because we do not have a memory of the early phases of our life or of our existence in the mother's body, we do not deny them. Even in this life we forget a great deal.

The purpose of memory is to enable us to grow wiser by experience, and virtuous by effort. Wisdom and virtue are not acquired by the storing of facts in memory but only by the training of the mind and will. The facts we learn and the acts we do may be forgotten but the cultivated mind and the fashioned will remain. Culture is that which remains when we forget everything that we learn, even as character is what remains when we forget all the deeds we did. What matters is the experience, not what we do, but how we do it. The knowledge we acquire and the possessions we gain may not remain with us, but the patience and the care we develop in acquiring them will stick to us. The hours spent in idleness or suffering are more fruitful for the growth of the soul than the waste of time in ambitious self-seeking. The *Upanishad* says that when self leaves the body its "knowledge, work[,] and experience (*purvaprajñā*) accompany it" [*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, IV, 2, 1]. Hegel tells us that at death we have a "collapse into immediacy." All our experiences consolidate themselves in giving a twist to ourself, a bias to our mind, and it is this we carry across. It remains with us though we have no memory of how we acquired it.

If the present life is valuable without any memory of its past[,] a future life need not be less valuable simply because it has no memory of its past. Besides, if we did not lose memory, it might turn out a positive nuisance. Our relations with our fellow-men are sufficiently complex without adding to them reminiscences of past lives. Again, things may be in the self though not in consciousness. Our past experiences even in this life when they are forgotten leave their traces in the mind. Consciousness is confined to mental processes of which the subject becomes aware in normal introspection. The "unconscious" mind includes the relations with the world of which the subject is not normally conscious. Yet the individual lives not by his consciousness alone but by his whole mind, whose contents sometimes become accessible to introspection. Socrates is reported in the *Meno* as eliciting from a slave boy by a series of appropriate questions a geometrical theorem of which the boy had no previous conscious knowledge. There is an ancient tradition in India that one can remember one's past lives by means of "the constant study of the scriptures, by purification, by austerity, by the love of all creation" [*Manu Shastra*, IV, 148].

Future life depends on a great many other conditions; for the self at any stage expresses the cosmic situation also. It is obvious that rebirth is not an eternal recurrence leading nowhere but is a movement with a meaning. It is not a mere rediscovery of the status which we have and always had. It is a genuine growth into personality and character from the humblest beginnings in the subhuman world. It recognizes that the values won and character achieved are conserved as mind and purpose which accompany us even through death. The future depends on what we make of this plastic raw material which receives determination by our free choice. Our life is not a puppet show but a real growth.

The human soul represents an order of reality different from that of atoms, plants[,] and animals. It is a more complex organization with its own specific nature. It is more intimately bound up with its environment. It has the two features

of continuity with the past (karma) and creative advance into the future (freedom). It is as incomplete as any other organism and so perpetually moves on . . . .

## 10. Spirit

Besides consciousness in the animal world (perception and action), and self-consciousness in the human (intelligence and will), we have spiritual consciousness or super-consciousness, a level of experience at which new aspects of reality reveal themselves. While in the first case we have a psychological unity between the animal and the environment, in the second we have a logical unity[,] and in the third a spiritual unity. At the spiritual level, the individual becomes aware of the substance of spirit, not as an object of intellectual cognition but as an awareness in which the subject becomes its own object, in which the timeless and the spaceless is aware of itself as the basis and reality of all experience. The spirit which is inclusive of both self and object is self-subsistent and self-consistent. Nothing in our experience can be said to be real or individual without qualification except spirit. There is nothing within it to divide it, nothing outside to limit it. It alone satisfies our total desire and whole intelligence. It is all that there is, all being and all value.

Many of us may not be made the mystic way[,] and spiritual experience may not interest us. But it cannot be said that what our minds fail to grasp is unthinkable and what does not interest us is unreal. Supposing we shut our eyes to spiritual experience, it does not cease to be the truth. Though we may not understand, with all our efforts, Einstein's [theory of] relativity, conscious ignorance or inability should not become unbelief.

It is because the universal spirit, which is higher than the self-conscious individual, is present and operative in self-conscious mind that the latter is dissatisfied with any finite form it may assume. When self-consciousness knows itself to be finite and limited, it is a greater-than-self that judges that which is less than itself in its wholeness. The reality of universal spirit is not an uncriticized intuition or a postulate of philosophy but the obvious implication of our daily life. At the human level the secret tendency of man's nature to be a superman is found at work. The destiny of man is to manifest this secret aspiration. While for the self-conscious individual, religion is only faith in values, for the spiritual being it is vital contact with reality which is the source of all values. So long as . . . human consciousness is on the pathway to reality, the spirit is an other to it. It is remote, like Plato's "Idea" of another world[,] apparent to our eyes only as a shadow on a wall, but to one who has risen to the level of spirit, it is of the world, present here and now. The awakened man draws back from his mind, life[,] and body and all else that is not his true being and knows himself to be one with the eternal spirit which is the soul of all phenomena. Spirit is something essentially and purely inward to be known only from within, and yet when it is known it leaves nothing outside. In the language of religion, spirit is God, the ultimate reality which is one and all-comprehensive. The spiritualized man is a new genus of man exhibiting a new quality of life. His self becomes as wide as the world itself, as he feels that the one spirit is present in all minds, lives[,] and bodies. The supermen, the masters of life, enter into conscious possession of this truth and act from it. They represent the eternal norms of humanity. They are the saved souls.

## 11. What is Salvation?

Salvation is different from survival, liberation (*moksha*) from rebirth (Samsara), life eternal from durational continuance. It is the difference between two levels, the self-conscious and the spiritual. So long as the self occupies the human standpoint, it is bound to a task which is self-contradictory and cannot therefore be realized. It is only a question of indefinite progress in time and not of final attainment. For Kant the ethical plane is the highest and so he looks upon moral life as an infinite process of approximation to perfect virtue. The self can never attain the goal, though it is perpetually tending towards it. The self is always in a state of growth and self-enlargement. As soon as one goal is reached, others attract it[,] and the series seems to be limitless.

For those who do not look upon the plane of ethics, the individualism of morality, the passage in time as the highest, survival indicates only the proximate future of the self[,] and there is an ultimate goal which is beyond the conditions of progress and decline or mere passage in time. The Hindu thinkers affirm the reality of life eternal or release from rebirth. It is a supreme status of being in which the individual knows himself to be superior to time, to birth and death. It is not a life merely future or endless but a new mode of being, a transfigured life here and now. Rebirth is subject to time and it is inevitable so long as we stick to the individualistic position. If we transcend individualism, we rise superior to the phenomena of time and thus escape from rebirth. When the Hindu thinkers ask us to attain release from rebirth, they are asking us to transcend the standpoint of mere individualism and rise to an impersonal universalism. To seek for liberation from the wheel of births and deaths is nothing more than to rise to the spiritual level from the merely ethical. The spiritual is not the extension

of the ethical. It is a new dimension altogether, dealing with things eternal. The saints who worship God do not worship man enlarged. As a new creation in the order of the universe, the spiritual is not a mere unfolding of the human . . .

Cosmic history is working towards its highest moment when the universal tendency towards spiritual life becomes realized in one and all, when the ethical experience of non-attainment yields to participation by . . . creatures in life-eternal, when the powerful will of the individual yields in love to the spirit of the universe. As matter was delivered of life and life of mind, so is man to be delivered of the spirit. That is his destiny.

Our logical consciousness attempts to arrive at truth but succeeds only to a limited extent; our ethical will achieves only a partial realization of its aims; our heart's aspirations to seize and enjoy the delights of existence meet with limited success. If the deeper spirit in us sees the truth unveiled and enjoys freely the delight of being, then it and not self-conscious mind is the original and fundamental intention of nature which must emerge eventually. As matter was instinct with life which could emerge only when the necessary natural conditions were properly organized, as life was instinct with mind, waiting for its proper moment in vital organization to emerge, even so human consciousness is instinct with the stuff of spirit or supermind, though it could emerge only when the necessary effort and conditions are ready. Human life is being prepared for this end with the same advances and retardings, forward leaps and backslidings.

Hindu thinkers claim that the transition from . . . ethical individualism to . . . spiritual universalism is effected by means of *jñāna* or wisdom, intuitive understanding . . . . [M]oralistic individualism is based on an imperfect outlook which is the root of our finiteness. We see ourselves as we are not, when we regard ourselves as individuals cut off from the rest of the universe. Though the pluralistic outlook is not a fiction framed by the individual self, but a grade of the growing universe, it has to be transcended . . .

The state of freedom has been differently conceived. It is said to be atonement with God or continuous contemplation of the ideal world, an enjoyment of the redeemer's face[,] or an extinction of the individual. The central question is whether the self loses or retains its individuality. Admitting that there are limits to our thinking on this remote and difficult subject, we offer a few considerations general and tentative and perhaps not quite self-consistent.

Theistic thinkers, whether in the East or West, believe that . . . communion with God which was in the empirical condition transitory, intermittent[,] and somewhat obscure becomes in the state of perfection continuous, permanent[,] and unclouded. Struggle and progress yield to peace and joy, but there is no loss of individuality; the life of the individual is lifted into the light and largeness of spirit . . .

[Shankara] . . . is generally regarded as favoring the hypothesis of the absorption of the individual in[to] the eternal Brahman, when release is attained. It seems to be an inference from his repeated assertions that eternity means non-temporality. If temporality is the mark of . . . finite individuality, anything non-temporal is non-individual. But we find a large number of passages in . . . [Shankara] which indicate that while the released soul attains at the very moment of release a universality of spirit, it yet retains its individuality as a center of action as long as the cosmic process continues. The loss of individuality happens only when the world is redeemed, when the multiple values figured out in it are achieved. The world fulfills itself by self-destruction. The freed soul, so long as the cosmic process continues, participates in it and returns to embodied existence[,] not for its own sake[,] but for the sake of the whole. He has the feelings of kinship with all (*sarvatmabhava*). He identifies himself with the universal movement and follows its course . . .

Coherence within the individual and harmony with the environment are both essentials for salvation. If we establish harmony within ourselves, overcome the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, we fulfill the first requirement. But harmony with the environment is not possible so long as there are unredeemed elements in it. We are not truly saved until the warring elements of our nature and the rivalries of individuals are both subdued into unity of life and spiritual fellowship. Perfect freedom is impossible in an imperfect world, and so those who have secured a vision of spirit work in the world so long as there is wrong to be set right, error to be corrected[,] and ugliness to be banished from life. The individual who achieves unity within himself sets other men forward in desiring the same good. In a true sense the ideal individual and the perfect community arise together.

All individuals are destined to gain life eternal, for as a Hindu text says, we are the children of immortality . . . . When this condition is attained, we have a divine community (*brahmaloka*) where the individual is transformed by contemplation on the being of God into the likeness of that which he beholds. It is a life in which . . . individuals are united by

a perfect interpenetration of mind by mind. Salvation in Plato's phrase is "to be filled with reality." Such a state of perfection or spiritualized harmony is the end of the world.

While it is not possible for us to describe that mode of being in logical terms, it is obvious that it is a condition of fulfilled desire. Life as we know it is kept going by lack of perfect adjustment . . . . Where everything is being and nothing becomes, where everything is finally made and nothing is in the making, activity is inconceivable. When movement reaches its fulfillment, life is not a going concern. The historical process terminates and individuals cease to exist as historical beings. We cannot conceive how such a state of perfection is consistent with activity . . . .

To evade this difficulty, it is sometimes argued that the historical process will never terminate. It is possible for individuals here and there to get released but the world as a whole will never be redeemed. The world exists from everlasting to everlasting. It follows that no individual can attain a perfect harmony both within and without. Perfection is unthinkable. It is given to us to strive after perfection and actualize it at best in fragments. We have to rest in the idea of perpetual effort. But this view ignores the solidarity between man and nature, values and reality. It cannot be a question of perpetual traveling. We should also arrive. It cannot be interminable singing; there should also be such a thing as completion in a song. There must come a time when all individuals will become sons of God and be received into the glory of immortality. When the world is redeemed[,] the end of the plot is reached. Earth and heaven would be no more; the timeless and the transcendent alone remains . . . .

It may be argued that it is an utterly futile business for any one responsible for this world to have brought individual souls into existence, spent infinite pains in their education, only to disintegrate them ultimately. Is the spirit of man to be brought into fruition only to be broken for ever? Are the spiritual fires lit only to be reduced to ashes? We need not assume that this cosmic process is an end in itself. When its end is reached, when its drama is played, the curtain is drawn and possibly some other plot may commence.

We have now briefly considered the different possibilities. It cannot be that certain individuals will remain for all time unredeemed. If they are all redeemed, it cannot be that they sit down in heaven, praising God and doing nothing. So long as some individuals are unredeemed, the other freed souls have work to do and so retain their individualities. But when the world as such is saved, when all are freed and nothing remains to be done, the time process comes to an end . . . .

A scientific description of the nature of experience takes us gradually out of the world of matter, life, mind[,] and intelligence to a spirit utterly transcendent beyond the descriptions of the intellect, which manifests itself as the supreme self and the individual soul, the supreme reality and the universe. Here our quest ends. Human thought cannot go beyond it . . . .