



*In Search Of
Reality*

by Cecil A. Poole

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by CECIL A. POOLE

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To
Ralph M. Lewis
Associate and Friend

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE EXCELLENT book entitled *Doing Philosophy*, by Thomas Ellis Katen, the introduction is written by Mr. Steve Allen. This will, no doubt, surprise many readers who know of Mr. Allen only as an entertainer. Mr. Allen says in part, "It has been said that war is far too important a matter to be left to the generals. Just so, philosophy is too important to be left to the philosophers, or even to those few students who are by nature inclined to a strong interest in such matters. For in the difficult world that now presses in upon all of us we greatly handicap ourselves if we face dangerous and puzzling questions unarmed by some degree of familiarity with thousands of years of philosophical speculation and debate."

Many individuals have asked the question regarding whether or not it really is of value to study the concepts of philosophy and its various subdivisions. Of these, metaphysics probably stands out as being considered by these individuals as the most impractical of all attempts of man to arrive at a system of thought or a discipline of study. As stated in the above quotation, human beings today are actually handicapped and face more problems than they already have if they do not equip themselves by becoming familiar with the speculation and debate which have constituted the realm of philosophy and metaphysics through all of man's intelligible history.

It is not a question in metaphysics of arriving at a final and perfect solution to all human problems. We cannot, for example, compare metaphysics to mathematics. Two plus two make four. There is no question as to the process of arriving at four, nor is there any doubt that four is an accurate answer to the proposition. But in metaphysics there are many answers. These answers have been developed over the period of man's history of thought concerning the problems of reality

and being—problems which are raised in the discussion of man's place in the universe and the nature of his being.

It may be that we have not found the final solution nor that even two individuals agree completely as to what the solution to these years of speculation and debate is at the present time. Nevertheless, they are part of man's heritage, and the contemplating of man's thinking through his own history is a wedge that will assist the human race to fit itself into the world. Without man's previous thought, today's man would be very poor indeed. He needs the composite of prior speculation in order that he, too, may speculate and, as a result, arrive a little nearer the truth and full meaning of all that exists in the universe, of which each of us is a part.

Some years ago, I was thinking of the possibility of writing a short textbook on philosophy that would be an elementary and simple first introduction to the subject. My hope was that such a book would serve as a basis for the individual who had not studied academic philosophy, or who wished to review what he might have studied at some time in the past. Within the Rosicrucian teachings there are references to philosophy, but a history of philosophy did not seem to me to be sufficient to act as a supplement. As a result, a few years ago I wrote *The Eternal Fruits of Knowledge*, which attempts to treat some of the basic problems of philosophy. I hope that it has served its purpose as a summary of the foundations of philosophy.

Recently, the idea occurred to me that a similar book could be written on metaphysics. It seems to me that there is no discipline or basic subject more misunderstood than metaphysics. It has been referred to by cults and groups in ways that make the word almost meaningless, even repulsive to a serious student of metaphysics. Functions and theories are described in ways that have little or no bearing upon the true meaning of metaphysics.

Metaphysics is an involved and complicated subject. There is no simple manner in which its vast scope can be contained in a short, elementary book which sets forth some of its principles. Therefore, in this book I have eliminated most of the history of metaphysical thought and have regrettably passed up the contribution of many great

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thinkers who, throughout all times, have contributed to the meaning and scope of metaphysics. However, I have tried to set forth some of the principles that constitute metaphysics today, in the hope that it may reach readers who are interested in having a background in this subject.

To those who wish to go further, I have listed in a bibliography a few books that are considered, at least by me, to be authoritative and to provide information regarding various schools of metaphysical thought. I particularly recommend to the serious student Henri Bergson's *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. In the following pages you will find from time to time reflections of the thoughts that occur in Bergson's philosophy and metaphysics, indicating my own interest in his point of view and the fact that I have been greatly influenced by his views in presenting these ideas regarding the scope of metaphysics. In Bergson and in the Rosicrucian philosophy we find stressed the importance of intuition, mind, and memory in the development of a concept of metaphysics as well as a philosophy of life.

I actually owe to many sources the ideas which I have tried to put together here. I do not claim originality for these concepts, because they constitute a summary of many fields of metaphysics in the form that they are studied today. Within the space that is allotted to the subject of metaphysics in what follows, it would be impossible to treat the subject in a complete and comprehensive manner, but I do hope that those who are interested in the subject will find in this presentation a stimulus to further study in this most interesting area of human thought.

I wish to express to Prentice Hall, Inc., my thanks for their permission to quote from Dr. Katen's book *Doing Philosophy*. Also, I again acknowledge the help in transcribing and editing this book by Mrs. Louise Vernon, who has assisted me with much of my writing over a period of a good many years.

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February 25, 1980

Chapter 1

THE LANGUAGE OF METAPHYSICS

EVERY SYSTEM OF thought and every science has necessarily developed its own vocabulary. This has been particularly noticeable in comparatively recent times. Because of the highly technical age in which we live, there is a great deal of terminology that is more or less generally known even by the layman today than there was even twenty-five or fifty years ago. In order to express thoughts of any kind, it is necessary to agree upon the symbols by which these thoughts will be expressed. Words make up a language and constitute the vocabulary of any system of thinking. They are symbols, because they stand for certain facts or ideas that have to do with the system of thought with which we are concerned.

Language is probably one of the most useful tools of human development. As far as we know, the human being is the only entity that has developed a useful and comprehensive language. The animal world can be thought to have means of communication in a limited sense, but it is very much limited because of their inability to express their thoughts and ideas in language. Words have become such a useful tool that they are to a certain extent overdone. There are many words in all languages today, but in spite of this increase, an individual's vocabulary is necessarily limited in his day-to-day speech to those words that can convey the ordinary conditions of living which that individual faces. We live in an age of specialization, both in achievement and language.

Each individual has a vocabulary which takes care of his ordinary circumstances, such as his social life, his private life, and his business

life, but in addition he has a specialized vocabulary that takes care of his particular interests or means of livelihood. This vocabulary is necessary in order to deal with the facts and the concepts that are essential to the work and interests in which the individual is engaged.

Metaphysics is no exception to any other system of thought that has a vocabulary more or less of its own. The problem with the language of metaphysics is that almost all of it is also used in other systems of thought and in our day-to-day vocabulary. It is therefore necessary for us to have a general agreement in regard to the language of metaphysics that will be used in the following discussions and commentaries upon this subject. If we do not have some general idea of the meaning of those words used in connection with metaphysics, we will find it, while already being an involved science or system of thought, even more involved by the use of words to which each individual might assign a different meaning. In fact, that is one of the fundamental problems of philosophy, and has been throughout the history of man's thought. One philosopher has given a certain meaning to a word, while another has used the same word to convey another idea or concept.

A word which we will use frequently in any consideration of the subject matter of metaphysics is the word *real*. After all, as we shall see later, metaphysics concerns the understanding of the real, or the meaning of reality. In a naive consideration of this word, it would seem that what is real would be obvious. The average individual would state that what he perceives with his physical senses is that which is real. Anything that we can perceive as being in existence would seem to be a reality. Actually, we know by experience that our sense faculties can play tricks upon us. A typical optical illusion is a proof in itself that what we might consider as real is not always what it seems to be.

Reality, insofar as metaphysics is concerned, is a term that refers to a fundamental concept, that is, to what underlies the expression of all other things. That which is real, metaphysically speaking, is that which exists independently of all other things.

Closely associated with the real is *being*, another word which will frequently be referred to in any metaphysical discussion. In fact, many philosophers use the word *being* as synonymous with reality. It is generally

understood as referring to the area of that which is permanent, that is, necessary and eternal. *Being* and *reality* in the meaning assigned to them in the realm of metaphysics, then, refer to that which exists regardless of what might happen insofar as the physical world or the individuals who compose its population might become or do.

Closely associated with the words *real* and *being* is *realization*. Realization is a process within the individual. What I perceive is interpreted within my mind, and I arrive at a conclusion. This conclusion is a realization. As we shall see later, there will be offered various schools of thought as to whether realization that occurs in consciousness actually corresponds to what is real. What we realize may be, as in the case of an optical illusion, something different from the real that we believe we perceive.

Another word closely associated with those which we have discussed is *realism*. Realism, insofar as metaphysics is concerned, applies to the general concept that abstract ideas are just as real as anything that we perceive in the physical world. Therefore, realism constitutes an analysis of whether or not the universal concepts that make up philosophy, religion, and other systems of thought are more real than particular objects that seem to exist in space about us.

No approach to metaphysics can be made without frequent reference to the word *idea*. Idea has been associated with basic philosophy throughout its history. Plato was probably responsible for introducing the word as a fundamental concept in philosophical speculation. He used it again almost synonymously with reality, except that he considered an idea to be a form or pattern by which all reality is to be comprehended.

Plato believed that the idea superseded anything else. We will analyze somewhat later his general theory establishing his concept that the idea lies behind the manifestation of all things. He also taught that the ultimate idea is necessary and eternal in its nature. The development of the metaphysical theory of idealism was influenced by Plato's concept of ideas.

While it is impossible to examine in detail all the language of metaphysics and all the individual words that are and have been used by various philosophers to present their metaphysical theories, there are three other words with which we should be familiar and have a general agreement as to their meaning.

The first of these is *absolute*. That which is considered absolute is complete in itself and an example of perfection—in other words, a condition that is not dependent upon anything else for its own expression. It is unchanging. It is the ultimate reality, so to speak, and the basis of all existence and being. Absolutism would refer to those who believe in the existence of an ultimate entity or idea that is fundamental to all other manifestation, whether in the physical world or in the mind.

A second word frequently referred to is *substance*. In the popular sense, we refer to substance as that which composes matter. It is derived from a word which meant to stand under, to be underneath all other things. It is another word which refers to the nature or essence of reality, to the ultimate principle of all existent things.

More complicated is the third term, *attribute*. At tribute is generally used in the study of metaphysics as referring to the essential characteristic of substance. We might say that an attribute is an indispensable quality of a substance; however, it is not the same as substance. It cannot be the same as substance, because substance is that which exists independently by itself. It is therefore not dependent upon anything outside of itself, whereas an attribute cannot exist by itself but is simply a phase of substance or of something other than itself.

In this somewhat brief study of words used in connection with the subject of metaphysics, we have, as I have already pointed out, referred in every case to words that are more or less common in our day-to-day vocabulary and yet carry certain meanings that have to do with the basis of philosophical analysis. We will find that while the general explanations that I have given here of these words are those usually accepted, they are frequently contradictory. While technically having the meaning which has been assigned to them in a general way,

these words are very often referred to by meanings that are different from those which I have pointed out here. In what follows, there may be times when it may be questioned whether or not the actual meaning of each of these words is followed specifically and exactly.

In arriving at his own interpretation of the meaning of life, each individual will arrive at his understanding through the use of words which he has selected to carry out the realization of his own mind, insofar as he has reflected upon what he has perceived in the world about him, and what his realization in consciousness of his perception has been.

Chapter 2

THE MEANING OF METAPHYSICS

WE LIVE IN a world in which there is more accumulated knowledge than there has even been before in man's history. Furthermore, a great deal of this knowledge has been accumulated in the past century. We have grown faster in knowledge and application of that knowledge in the past recent years than we have at any other period of history. If a condition arises when we will have attained more knowledge than being, then we will not be able to grasp, understand, and use the knowledge that we have. While information and knowledge are essential, nevertheless we must also enlarge the scope of the utilization of our knowledge and the realization of what we are. What we actually are may at some times be more important than that which we have learned.

The term *metaphysics* was given by an editor to the collected works of Aristotle by referring to certain of his writings as the books after the physics. This meaning carries very little significance today. The prefix *meta* has come to carry the meaning of beyond and above. In this sense, metaphysics would mean the science or the discipline that transcends physics, that goes beyond the natural world in which we live. A formal definition of metaphysics which is adequate and covers the nature of the subject could be "an inquiry into the ultimate and fundamental reality, or the nature of being." There are, of course, other definitions. One definition simply is, "What is real." However, that is a statement of the purpose of metaphysics, rather than a defining of its nature.

Metaphysics can also be defined as “the theory of the nature of the cosmos.” In this sense, a means of grasping the meaning of the entire cosmic structure that constitutes the beginning and the end as well as the universe itself.

Philosophers have disagreed on exactly what the limits are to the scope of metaphysics. Most will agree that it deals with the problem of the structure, meaning, and nature of reality. Some include, and some do not include, epistemology and axiology. If we accept these disciplines as a part of a philosophical system, then such a system would consist of three parts: epistemology, metaphysics and axiology. To express this same principle in another form, a philosophic system consists of the place of truth and knowledge, goodness and reality, beauty and value in the universe. Such a system is worthwhile in that it attempts to not only inform the individual of his place in the cosmic scheme but tries to teach how to adjust to that scheme and to attain these worthy ends.

Metaphysics includes all the problems related to these principles and is, therefore, a part of a vast philosophical system that is attempting to carry out the true meaning of philosophy, that is, a love of wisdom. In approaching a full meaning of metaphysics, we should realize that it is impossible to formulate a theory of truth or knowledge without at the same time formulating some theory concerning the nature of reality and being. It is equally impossible to consider the place of values in relation to reality without raising the entire problem of the nature and place of personality, because personality must in the final end be a factor in understanding any means of defining or explaining the principles included in metaphysics. Every fundamental problem of philosophy is interlocked with every other problem, and therefore it is consistent to recognize that metaphysics and a philosophical system are to a great extent identical in scope and content.

Metaphysics is in itself what we might consider a clearing house for all fundamental philosophical problems. While many scientists, including the physical scientists, examine issues from a dogmatic point of view, they usually do not coordinate their ideas or conclusions. Each science has a tendency to arrive at its own ends and to serve its own

purposes, rather than to cooperate with the findings of other sciences as well. Metaphysics can become a coordinating factor in interpreting all activities in terms of human experience and use. Without an interpretation of the knowledge that man has attained, in terms of how man can experience and use it, we have not accomplished a great deal in attempting to adjust man to his environment.

Metaphysics, in the full sense of the word, should be a reflective inquiry. It should seek by the method of reflection to see things steadily and to see them as a whole. The true meaning of metaphysics in arriving at an interpretation of what is real should also be able to stress that man is a unit in the whole of creation, and all that he attains and understands should also be unitary in that it be used by the individual, who, in turn, becomes a part of a total society where all knowledge, all experience can be put together, as it were, in order to fulfill man's place in the cosmos.

Metaphysics seeks a consistent and total interpretation of experience. It cannot and will not be content with the partial or abstract view of life and reality. It must be at all times aimed at an understanding of the whole individual and the whole of creation. Metaphysics tends toward a union of a world view and a life view in one harmonious, complete, and integral concept.

Insofar as man strives to attain by rational inquiry and intuitive knowledge a consistent and comprehensive view of life and reality, he is practicing a practical form of metaphysics. This is again stressing that the ultimate significance man finds in living is to understand life as a whole and reality as an underlying factor. It is necessary to add that in view of the fragmentary and disconnected nature of our experience and the imperfection of our interpretation of our experience metaphysics must remain in this life incomplete. It can never be a fully integrated science. It can only function as a process by which man can attempt to put together the parts that make up his life and his experience.

Only a complete and perfect experience of life in the universe would bring man to a perfect understanding of the principle of metaphysics. On the other hand, a perfect and complete experience in the universe would abolish the need for metaphysics, because if man

attains perfection, he no longer needs to seek that which underlies the manifestation of life. He no longer needs to search because he has actually attained reality. It is therefore definitely the fragmentary nature of our knowledge and the inconsistency with which we interpret experience that directs us to the study of metaphysics.

In turning to metaphysics we acknowledge that human knowledge is limited, or, rather, that it still has an opportunity to grow. There is much that man does not know and that he still has the opportunity to learn. Regardless of how well he believes he has adapted himself to his environment and learned about the factors that constitute environment and himself, it is found that he is still lacking in knowledge and can proceed to evolve.

Metaphysics can help because, as it is defined, the ultimate purpose of metaphysics is to become familiar with reality and being. This world in which we live has become somewhat artificial. In attempting to conquer his environment and in the development of science and technology, man has changed his environment. He has so changed his environment that the ultimate reality which he had hoped to seek seems to be hidden by additions and contributions of knowledge that man himself has made.

If man is to adjust fully to the environment and to a realization of his own purpose, he has to find a way of getting in touch with the real. Some would have us believe that man has strayed from his realization of reality, that at one time he was more conscious of ultimate reality than he is today. This is debatable. That man was at one time wiser than he is now is a subject that cannot be fully settled.

We know it is true that man has permitted himself to be dominated by the development of physical achievements. He lives a life dependent upon the material world, and he would not want to sacrifice those material achievements which have made life easier, less dull, and more productive, in terms of material things. On the other hand, in his mental and psychic abilities man has not achieved as much as he has in the field of material invention and accomplishment.

To move toward a better understanding of what underlies the material world, which he uses, metaphysics can prove to be the light that will guide him. Although metaphysics is very technical when we deal with it in its most fundamental forms, despite its technicalities, it still contains an end that man himself can also attain, that is, of making man conscious of reality, putting him into an intimate relationship with it that will guide him and make it possible for him to increase his knowledge and to apply at a higher level the achievements that he has attained.

For this reason, the study of metaphysics is more than idle speculation. It is not something that philosophers sit around and discuss or write about in a speculative and theoretical form. It should be a dynamic, practical consideration of the state of man and his relationship to all that exists about him. This means that the issues constituting metaphysics and the philosophies are fundamental. They are the means of man's relating himself to forces that lie beyond and above his present accomplishment.

Man has advanced more in the present century in physical sciences and technology than he has in the understanding of his own mind and body. We live today in a state of imbalance. It is time that man devotes a part of his efforts toward the understanding of himself and of that which is reality and being so that he can better harness his own abilities and the material world within which he has to live. In this manner, man will be able to accomplish the purposes for which he was placed in this physical universe in the first place. Metaphysics leads man not only to reality but to a full realization of himself and what it is that made him be what his *self* constitutes in the first place.

Chapter 3

METAPHYSICS AND PERSONAL EVOLVEMENT

IF METAPHYSICS IS going to contribute to personal evolvment, the individual must learn to live. “Man must learn that just as no one can die for him, so no one can live for him.” (From *Doing Philosophy*, by Thomas Ellis Katen) Each individual must learn to live for himself, in other words. Life is our individual expression, and every entity that has been created to live has the obligation of learning to use that life to the best of his ability.

We do not know all the facts concerning the nature of life. Even less do we know all the reasons for living. Nevertheless, the fact is that we are alive, and in being alive we develop a personality. It is logical to believe that the personality with which we must live and eventually must face a transition to another life should be somewhat different from that with which we were born. This means that during life we should evolve. Man’s evolvment is a part of his living. It is, in fact, the challenge of life.

Every special science interprets the fact of life’s experiences from some limited or even abstract point of view. Such views are insufficient for man’s personality evolvment. Metaphysics aims to correct these limited points of view. It wants to transfer the abstract concepts into concrete concepts so that man can truly live. For example, the physicist and the chemist assume the reality of matter, energy, space, motion, time, and many other things considered to be the essential components of the physical universe. The scientists acknowledge these things as units of being, but they do not inquire critically into how far these

assumptions may be warranted, or how the mind can know that these so-called conditions exist independently of the mind.

Possibly some of these individuals, if they are strict materialists, will not even acknowledge the existence of mind. Therefore their conclusions in regard to the realities which they assume are insubstantial insofar as the individual is concerned who believes that the concepts concerning these ideas develop within the mind.

Even the life scientists, that is, the biologists and the zoologists, assume the uniqueness of the life process and analyze its operation from an objective standpoint. However, on the basis of materialism, they do not necessarily raise the question of why life exists, or how its uniqueness fits into a mechanistic concept of the universe. In the mind of the idealist, it is questionable that the uniqueness does fit into a mechanistic concept of the universe. Only in the realm of idealism can it be found that the possible meaning of life fits into the unique factors that constitute life and the interrelationships that exist between its various forms.

One of the greatest idealists of all times was the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. He advanced a system of metaphysics based upon idealism, a system that has been copied, modified, and reexamined since the days of his lifetime. Even today there are many thinkers who subscribe to the basic concepts of Plato. His idealism postulates the concept that behind everything we perceive exists a perfect idea. Nothing in the physical world is perfect. It is only a partial reproduction of the idea of perfection. For example, the idea of a triangle is only an idea until it is expressed by drawing a triangle, but if I draw a triangle, it will lack perfection. It will not be perfect, regardless of the instruments that I use and the ability that I have to draw it. It will not be a duplication of the idea of a triangle. The ideal transcends the physical world. The idea "perfect man" would exist even if there was never a human being in any time or at any place in the universe.

Plato believed that anything material could not be understood by man through the process of perception. The greatest ideas, the fundamental thoughts of reality as being had to be grasped by man's mind through the process of thinking. Plato believed that the human

being can learn by both physical and psychic instruction, and that any device or particular system or procedure for teaching was restricted by its very nature. As Dr. Katen has written, “By reasoning together and experiencing loving companionship two souls here and now may be led to a vision of eternal truth.” This is the basis of the idealism of Plato.

Therefore, idealism in metaphysics is that concept that the material world is secondary. We can look around us. We can perceive the world that exists and that constitutes our environment. We have considerable trouble if we attempt to believe that the physical universe that we perceive is only an imaginary condition. On the other hand, we never directly perceive the physical world. It is only a reflection that takes place within the mind. The physical world is something that we perceive through the process of the physical senses, but we know it only as it is registered upon our consciousness in the form of ideas.

I look about the room in which I am sitting and I perceive many objects. I can give those objects a name in various languages, but that does not define their nature, describe their source, or have anything to do with their purpose. As a result of my perception, my mind can form ideas that are related to these perceptions. These ideas are actually all that I know about what I perceive. If you walked into this room, you might gain an entirely different concept than I do. Your ideas might be different. You might assign different terminology to that which I perceive and to the ideas that I form. These ideas exist in our mind as a reflection of the material that composes the physical world.

Idealism, therefore, is that phase of metaphysics which accepts as a premise that the true reality is ideas. There is no fundamental reality beyond the ideas, if we agree with the philosophy of Plato. He taught that somewhere in the universe there exists an ultimate idea. We might call it an idea in the mind of the absolute, the perfect idea that finds representation in the material universe and is therefore conceived and developed in our own interpretation as it reaches our mind.

When any individual stops to become reflective and at the same time gives consideration to the nature of the universe as a whole, of himself as a whole, and of his place in that universe, he cannot

be satisfied until he considers important assumptions that are based upon ideas. Certainly, intelligent individuals throughout time, when they have paused and given their thought to themselves and to the life that they live have asked themselves these questions: Am I only an unusual, accurate mechanism that has just chanced to occur as one of the possible combinations of matter? Is my belief that I am a self-determined, rational agent an *illusion*, and if so, how could such an illusion come about?

Possibly most of all, the individual after considering these two questions which originate in a materialistic concept of metaphysics would still ask in the final end, and in considering the deepest functions and facts of life which, in the seeking and achievement of them, seem to be satisfying the deepest instincts of my being, are the values of knowing and contemplating the spectacle of things, or creating and enjoying beauty, the values of adding to the sum of knowledge, of the communion of souls in friendship and love, of loyalty to noble causes, of the communion with nature and the Maker of the universe—are all these values merely illusion or transitory by-products of a mechanism in the form of man?

The materialist may answer *yes*; the idealist will answer *no*, and in those two answers may be found the fundamental difference between the two major schools of metaphysics—materialism and idealism.

Any individual may be a good workman in his field, in a factory, or a profession. He may be a reputable citizen. An individual may be a decent husband and father, or wife and mother, a scientist, or a writer, without ever having raised these questions. Many human beings have never given them serious consideration, but if any man or woman looks up from the daily task to ask what is good? *What is the meaning of things about me? Wherein consist the value and dignity of human life?* such an individual has started speculation. He is philosophizing. That is, he is entering the true realm and area of metaphysics.

This is why there has been, through the history of man's thought, a consistent interest and justification for metaphysics, whether man realizes it or not, because if one wishes to apprehend the meaning of human life and its place in the world, he must venture onto the

pathway of metaphysical inquiry. Some may believe that naive thoughts are sufficient. However, such individuals fail to ask themselves the question of the place of their personality in the universe.

When we reason, this rational impulse produced by reason directs us toward a world view, which will at the same time help produce a complete life view. In seeking for a comprehensive and harmonious view of things, we find that there are serious gaps. We may be able to discover only glimpses of a universal order, but since the ultimate consistence and coherence of reality and its harmony with the general structure of human thought are a fundamental assumption or postulation upon which to base our views of life, we find that the metaphysical effort is justified in directing us to seek to fill in the gaps of knowledge which we have not gained either in materialism, in idealism, or in an individual life experience.

Since the realm of experience is the more attractive process to us than that of reason, we cannot gain a world view very easily. An outline knowledge of reality which metaphysics may afford, may seem to many as dull, somewhat colorless, and lifeless by contrast to the vivid hues of concrete experience. At least one may hope to attain the satisfaction of knowing more clearly where one stands both in regard to the trustworthiness, the limitations, and the implications of human experience and activity when he stops to think. He must work, he must think, he must give effort toward evolving his mental equipment to be more inclusive than that with which he is born.

Mechanistic viewpoints point to evolution as a chance in mechanistic process, as something that occurred almost as if by accident. Actually, a valid belief may be in a process we might call theistic evolution. That is, change is brought about first by the process of cosmic laws, and second, by the individual's own direction of his effort toward the fulfillment of life's purpose as he understands it. In this sense, we might consider that personality evolvment is one of the ultimate aims of metaphysical thought and its development should be a process that will relate us to the absolute.

Regardless of whether the individual adopts the metaphysical concept of materialism or idealism, neither can deny that man, as

long as he is a physical entity existing in the material universe, must deal with his existence in terms of space and time. Both of these conditions are a constant pressure upon him. They exert their influence in every activity in which man can participate. Man lives in space, and he measures his existence in space in terms of time, yet we cannot on a physically scientific basis define exactly the nature of space and time. They consist of factors that do not permit isolation as would the examination of any physical thing, such as water, for example, being two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen.

We cannot break space and time down into the concept of an atomic structure. These are concepts that exist beyond the physical world and yet are very much a part of the physical world. Insofar as our physical perception is concerned, all things exist in space. Space is not an empty state. It is an area that holds all that is the material world. What we perceive is perceived as existing in space, occupying space. It is inconceivable to consider any physical or material object existing without space, yet space is not as universal as it might sound. It is merely a gap or interval in consciousness. It is perceived within us. Although it seems logical to accept the premise that space is an existent physical fact, it is only in our own perception that we are aware that physical objects are separated by what we call space.

The concept of space is something that we do not produce by reason. Man cannot make space, but he has the concept of space that comes within his own consciousness. He intuitively knows that it exists. As far as time is concerned, time is a part of our experience. It does not come in any physical form. We can measure it by the clock, but the clock is only a physical entity, while time consists factually in the duration of consciousness. The extent that my consciousness is applied to any factor, whether physical or nonphysical, is time as far as I am concerned, or rather the duration of consciousness that is directed toward any single thing.

Chapter 4

SOME APPLICATIONS OF METAPHYSICS

FROM ANY POINT of view, metaphysics can be considered a foundation for other disciplines or even sciences. Its purpose is to investigate and arrive at conclusions regarding the foundation, basis, or standards of all reality. Although some individuals will question whether metaphysics could be considered as a science, it is referred to as a science in many textbooks on philosophy.

While the general purpose of metaphysics is to investigate ultimate reality, or being, it is also a discipline that investigates the relationship between entities. In its nature, metaphysics is universal. It studies what is found in all things, what is common to all existence, to all being, and to the nature of reality itself. For this reason we can consider metaphysics to be universal and basic, because it attempts to arrive at the ultimate unity or basis for all that exists, that is, absolute being.

The object of metaphysics is not limited to a particular individual object in the same sense that we would consider perception of a physical object through sense experience. In order to know any object from a metaphysical viewpoint, it is necessary that we enter in to the experience which will transcend human, objective thought and objective experience. The aim of metaphysics is toward the ultimate and the absolute in its attempt to arrive at the nature of being.

The foundation of metaphysics is not possible to achieve or understand unless we include in the realm of human knowledge the vast existence of an absolute force or cause of the universe. A system

of metaphysics which is complete and adequate must presume that it is at all times referring to an absolute, to something that can stand alone after all the human concepts and physical phenomena are stripped from it. There would still be beyond the realm of human perception a being that would have completeness and depth of meaning.

In the history of philosophy we find that metaphysics has been described in its own nature as a dual science or discipline; that is, it is a science of beings, and at the same time it is a science of the basic foundation of reality and being. The question that is most critical is how can metaphysics be considered as a science, developed, and made useful when we consider it in relationship to our modern technical age and to the problems, human relations, and scientific methods that exist today.

It can be frankly acknowledged that at least up to the present time metaphysics has not had many applications of a sensational nature, insofar as the development of modern science and the technological age is concerned. Nevertheless, this possibility exists in the future. We must not lose sight of the fact that it was only a comparatively few centuries ago at the height of Greek and Roman civilization that the only discipline that existed was philosophy. From philosophy sprang the individual subjects constituting the basis of many sciences that are of a highly practical nature today.

This leaves us with the possibility that sciences may grow out of the various concepts that have developed within the subject matter of metaphysics. Certainly, of all the theories that have been advanced in connection with metaphysics, there is room for growth of many possibilities, most of which cannot even be conceived today.

One reason why metaphysics is looked upon as being unscientific and impractical may be due to using the term in ways which are not acceptable even to those who are the most profound students of metaphysics. The word *metaphysics* had been applied to so many things that really have nothing to do with the subject that it is not possible to enumerate all of them. Almost everyone has heard such terms as *metaphysical healing*, *metaphysical organizations*, and even *metaphysical sciences*. These misuses, as it were, of the term *metaphysics* have not contributed

to a consideration of the subject which is healthy and which subjects it to the respect that many other subjects and sciences have attained.

On the other hand, the serious student of metaphysics should quite easily grasp the fact that underlying all manifestation and all subject matter is the necessity to consider what constitutes ultimate reality. Until man can begin to grasp the nature of an ultimate reality that is more important than any other condition, thing, or substance existing in the universe, he will not be able to reconcile the fact that metaphysics can offer a background that will be useful in any science and in any human activity.

Metaphysics can easily prove an aid to problem solving. That is, to move toward an ultimate reality or to gain a degree of understanding of the nature of being is to place ourselves in a position of being able to see through the complexities of problems that exist in all circumstances of human life. These problems affect, and we might also say afflict, the human being. In order to bring any kind of solution to them, we must understand the basis upon which all substance is formed, that is, the ultimate reality, so that we can have a foundation upon which to build a solution to a problem of utmost importance to the individual at the moment.

Examples of such problems have to do with health, social adjustment, and peace. In the realm of health, we have to a degree attained in comparatively recent years an application of metaphysics in the field of psychosomatic medicine. In the development and use of psychosomatic therapy there is a reality that must be acknowledged, because it is the fundamental, underlying factor in a behavior pattern or in a physical breakdown and has to do with the basic nature of the problem existing in the physical condition of the individual.

There have been cases closely related to reality, that is, conditions that have healed in spite of what the best medical care has been able to prophesy. There have been healings that did not seem to take place because of any physical change or condition. These were once classified in the area of miracles. The so-called faith healing or mental healing that still occurs from time to time must lie within a grasp of a reality which is not generally known and applied, but which leaves

open a vast field of investigation and research that may in the end prove that the ultimate reality sought by metaphysics may be the key to the healthy life of an individual.

The same principles can apply to social adjustment. Unsocial behavior is due to a failure to understand the individual's position in life and relationship to environment. A complete understanding of a basic reality would change this situation radically. Of even more importance for the benefit of all humanity is the attainment of peace, of the realization that men and women can live together and tolerate each other's differences without resort to strife. Strife is based to a degree upon misunderstanding. Peace can be obtained only through the understanding of the meaning of the relationship that exists between individuals.

These relationships, if based upon false premises or upon incomplete information, will continue to exist as they have in the past. Only an understanding of a reality that supersedes and is the foundation of all relationships can possibly be a means of a solution to peace. Furthermore, there are, as stated, many things under the sun which man does not understand. While we have advanced tremendously in so many fields in the present century, there are more fields and unknown factors than those that have been explained or discovered. These factors will continue to be hidden. They will not be understood until reality is revealed. It is the task of metaphysics to bring us to the understanding of this ultimate reality.

Within this area lie such conditions as telepathy, mental transference of thought without symbols or other physical phenomena. Also, there have been phenomena that have been unexplainable, conditions that have existed but appear to be without cause and sometimes without effect. Some will claim that such conditions are only imaginary and do not exist, yet there are reliable witnesses to mental telepathy, to foreseeing the future, or to contacting the personality of those who have passed on through death.

These phenomena cannot be simply put aside as unintelligible ramblings of incompetence, because there have been too many examples of such conditions actually existing. So far, they have not been

completely explained, at least to the satisfaction of most individuals. Their explanation is closely tied up or associated with the basic reality which man must attain in order to be able to grasp the possibilities of these phenomena.

Many of the attainments that may come through metaphysics in these fields depend of course upon the basic metaphysical theory adopted by the individual. The materialist will see the world as it appears to be and will put aside all consideration of such factors as those to which I have just referred. The materialist will not accept the fact that there could be psychic conditions of importance in the development of individual adjustments to help association and peace.

The idealist will acknowledge that these possibilities do exist, that there is a more important area of investigation than the material. As stated in the old manuscript *Unto Thee I Grant*, "The body was created to be subservient to the soul; while thou afflictest the soul for the body's pain, behold thou settest the body above it." So it is that if we place the body or the material of which the body is made as being of more importance, or, as stated in this quotation, being above that which is immaterial and infinite, then we are exaggerating the material function of the universe. We are living only in the physical, and we miss the implications that if metaphysics will be given consideration equal to that of a science, we can attain some understanding of an underlying reality which will be the key to the solution of the many problems that face us from day to day.

If we do not classify metaphysics as a science, it is a conclusion based upon the accepted thinking of science as a process that can be physically defined and proven by the manipulation of physical objects and the dealing with physical facts. The scientist looks at the world in order to see what it is that makes it function. He wants to deal with the actual physical structure that is a part of the universe in which he is participating. He is more concerned generally with the nature of material than he is with the nature of man or the nature of man's relationship to the material of which he is a part.

The scientist examines the universe, or rather, the material of which it is composed. As a result of his examination, he reports what he finds,

how it functions, and what might be done with it. The metaphysician, on the other hand, is not so concerned with the external world. His study involves looking within himself. As he examines his own thought processes, his own inner self, as it were, he attempts to find the reasons for what must be, rather than what physically is.

In this search for reality, the metaphysician is trying to understand what survives independent of the physical world. He is more concerned about himself than about his environment. He does not limit himself to the individual physical body, but rather to what is known generally as the soul. This entity of existence constitutes mind and life, which are not definable in terms of the physical, nor are they available for examination under the microscope, through the telescope, or any other instrument used to examine and find uses for that which composes the physical world.

Chapter 5

METAPHYSICS AND RELIGION

METAPHYSICS AND RELIGION would seem on the surface to have much in common. They both deal with reality and being. Each seeks to find a meaning for all that exists, insofar as the relationship between human nature and the universe is concerned. One influences the other, but religion is better known and is probably more easily grasped by the individual. It is easy to believe and hard to reason.

Religion requires only belief in order to accept its premises, its ideas, its purposes, and even its interpretation of an ultimate reality or the nature of being. Metaphysics, on the other hand, requires reason. It requires a volitional effort on the part of the individual to study the nature of the universe and the relationship between that universe and the human entities that compose it. Metaphysics, in that sense, is to a degree analytical. In fact, many schools of metaphysics are based upon analysis and therefore require an effort and a reasoning process to grasp its purpose.

If we move to a broader concept, we might say that the philosophy of religion has two fundamental purposes. Of these, the first could be said to be phenomenal logic. That is, one of the purposes of religion is the analysis or the interpretation of the important kinds of religious experiences and activities in both groups and individuals. Furthermore, it is an evaluation of the relative value of this human phenomenon, which begins in primitive and animistic magic and demonology and finally reaches the highest ethical and aesthetic advancement in mysticism.

The second task or purpose of religion takes us into the realm of metaphysics, that is, a systematic inquiry into the justification for a religious interpretation of the universe. Metaphysics is primarily an inquiry into aesthetic, ethical, and impersonal values that make up the phases or functions of reality.

Religion, contrary to metaphysics, is not a theoretical explanation or interpretation. It is belief in the existence of a supreme good or total assembly of values in which are united and preserved loyalty, goodness, beauty, and truth. Therefore, from such a viewpoint, religion would have a most important value in the life of many individuals. Many believe that religion is a concept of ideas which is in harmony with the highest reality.

Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that religion is based on feeling. Therefore, in the religious attitude, thought and reason are secondary, because religious experience involves recognition of a great mystery of life in the universe. This mystery is that of man manifesting life to its fullest extent, as far as we know, at an isolated point in the universe, and making the idea of the holy or the cosmic scheme an awe inspiring mystery, an ultimate object of devotion.

These concepts emphasize one of the fundamental differences between metaphysics and religion. Both have their niche in terms of human experience. One is not necessarily a substitute for the other. Nevertheless, religion needs both metaphysics and philosophy. Metaphysics can be a clarifying, purifying, and humanizing function for religion. It can free religion from fears, magic, superstition, worn-out cosmologies and anthropologies, and make it a reasonable and intelligent agent for man's spiritual and social progress.

In many cases today, these functions on the part of religion are sadly missing. Metaphysics, therefore, can interpret religion in relation to man's complete interest in his life and in his environment. We might say that the purpose of metaphysics in relation to religion is to determine what religion really means, what its purposes are or should be, and what its functioning can be in the individual's experience and also in the social order.

Being both social and individual, metaphysics should also have the privilege, and we might say the right, to evaluate the history of religion and to interpret the religious movements that exist. Furthermore, metaphysics should study the function and meaning of the idea of God, salvation, regeneration, redemption, atonement, and the freedom of man. These subjects are of universal interest and should not be confined to religion, to any particular science, or to any particular system of thought. Metaphysics is related to the values that can be applied to the constructive interpretation of religious experience, and therefore define, as it were, the basic function of religion and its value to the human being.

Nothing that I have said in regard to religion is meant to belittle or depreciate religious convictions, religious beliefs, or religion itself. There is good in all things, and religion has through the ages upheld many ideals that have supported men in times of stress, and religion will continue to do this.

We realize in philosophy our debts to the ancient Greeks. In literature we are indebted to Homer and Shakespeare, and in science to Newton and Bacon. It is therefore quite reasonable to believe that the highly ethical and spiritual teachings of such individuals as Isaiah, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, and many others will permanently minister to the spiritual needs of men.

Therefore, religion has a definite place in the world, but it also has much to learn in order to free itself from restrictions that may prevent it from helping the individual and also prevent its being a uniting force in society.

We think of metaphysics as the discipline which seeks the ultimate reality and the nature of being. It is still seeking. Its inquiry into the nature of ultimate reality may never end, at least insofar as a material universe is concerned. One function of man's intellect is to search and to continue that search even when it arrives at what seems to be logical conclusions.

Religion, on the other hand, takes the point of view that it has reached ultimate reality, that what it believes and accepts and what it sets forth in its dogmas and creeds are the final end and purpose of all human life. Religion often closes its doors and closes the minds of its adherents to the fact that inquiry can continue, that merely subscribing to a set of doctrines or ideas established possibly many centuries ago is in many cases a step backward rather than a step forward. Many times religion is tied to concepts that it has set forth as being the final nature of all things. Religion in many cases has no margin for continued inquiry and for questioning the conclusion that it has reached.

In this sense of the word, metaphysics is the more tolerant of the two subjects. Metaphysics admits that it has many theories. None of them has been proven to be absolute. Religion states simply that what it believes, what it accepts, is absolute, and that there is no room for question. Metaphysics can therefore contribute to the concept of religion by reaching deeper into man's thoughts, by causing man to be able to stop and ask the question, "Have we arrived at the ultimate, insofar as the meaning of life and of the universe is concerned?"

Ultimate reality is a condition to be sought forever and not to be wrapped up in a convenient code upon which a group of individuals have agreed. Furthermore, religion has the tendency to capitalize upon emotional appeal. Many individuals have subscribed to religious dogmas and principles as a result of being in a high state of emotional experience. The old-fashioned type of revival meeting is an example where individuals have turned to religion because of the emotional pressure that has been brought upon them, rather than because they have reasoned the basis for their decision.

This does not mean that reason can be final in all cases, either. Human reason is fallible. It is subject to correction. It can be in error, regardless of whether its source is in philosophy, metaphysics, science, religion, or in any other human endeavor. We can use emotions and we can benefit by them, but they should never be used as a lever by which man is led to accept a philosophy of life.

IN SEARCH OF REALITY

Harmony and balance are possible between metaphysics and religion. Religion can continue to be an adoration and worship of a supreme being, and a realization that there is an ultimate reality, but it should open its doors to metaphysics to permit the consideration that the search for ultimate reality, for the nature of being, and for the purpose of life and for the formation of a philosophy of life still lies within the bounds of human attainment, now or in the future.

Chapter 6

METAPHYSICS AND THE PSYCHIC

TO UNDERSTAND THE relationship between metaphysics and the psychic, we must clarify the concept of psychic. In the first place, we must eliminate from our minds any idea that anything of a psychic nature is either mysterious, unusual, or magical. A psychic phenomenon is normal. It has always existed as one of man's attributes, and it will always exist. Furthermore, man can learn to utilize the psychic nature of his being. The *Rosicrucian Manual* gives a good explanation of the concept of psychic. It points out particularly that in all our physical experiences there are sometimes events or phenomena whose physical causes are not obvious. As a result, they are unexplainable in terms of our experience and the physical world in which we live.

Throughout the time man has thought about these things, he has had the tendency to divide his experiences and even his thoughts into two classifications, those which he declared were of physical origin—that is, the perception of his physical senses—and those that he believed to be of divine origin. The unexplainable experiences, events, or occurrences within his mind were referred to as being psychic, from a Greek word *psyche*, meaning soul.

For this reason, early man in particular believed that there was a direct relationship between the soul and the psychic. In fact, the soul became a sort of repository for all the qualities and events of life's experiences. The relationship of psychic and soul is still as valid as it was in the thinking of the ancients who first arrived at this conclusion.

I personally like to think of the brain as the function or attribute of the physical system of man and the psychic as the attribute of the psychic system. If we accept this premise as true, mind is to the psychic as the physical body is to the soul.

We cannot always determine what is physical and what is psychic, because in an individual's mind there may occur events whose source is forgotten, or he may have been influenced by some outside factor which he has forgotten or of which he was unaware. He may assign a physical event or experience as being of a psychic nature.

Actually, the individual who has a mystical inclination, who puts his confidence in an idealistic metaphysics and believes in the existence of an absolute, does not draw a distinct line between the physical and the material, on the one hand, and the divine and psychic on the other hand, insofar as essence and source are concerned. When we come down to the ultimate consideration of reality, everything that exists originates in the Cosmic. Therefore, technically speaking, all things are of divine origin. The universe, with all that composes it, is a direct result of a God-mind, if we can coin such a phrase. As already stated, it is a manifestation of cosmic law and order.

The divine or psychic, then, usually is no more than that which simply lies beyond the realm of explanation in terms of the physical sciences. One of the obligations of each individual is to translate, as it were, as much as possible of that which is psychic into the realm of the physical in which he lives, that is, into the world of everyday living. We should make every effort to discover the psychic and the potentialities of our total being, so that we can convert them into objective experience and therefore be able to use them while we are inhabitants of a physical body.

There is no harm, in fact it is right that we should translate as much as possible the psychic into the physical. It is man's obligation to learn. As he learns from psychic impressions, he should also learn how to use these impressions in his daily life as long as he is a physical entity.

It may seem unclear to some who have followed these ideas just how metaphysics is related to the psychic. In terms of some of my previous

comments and of the definition of *psychic* as contained in the *Rosicrucian Manual*, the psychic impressions that come from the soul are real. They are not objective functions. They are subjective, in that they transpire within the soul and are gradually transferred to our physical concepts and to our objective consciousness. There they can be applied to the physical demands which are put upon us as individuals in our day-to-day living.

A most interesting possibility for showing the relationship between the physical and the psychic came to me recently in one of the monthly letters issued by the Royal Bank of Canada. This letter stated, "It has been said, though with no such definitive proof as the subject himself would demand, that Sherlock Holmes is the best-known character in all of English literature." The letter goes on to say that Sherlock Holmes became so popular that he is looked upon as an actual, historical individual. In fact, many of us who have read the stories of Sherlock Holmes would consider him a living person at one time in history.

When we consider the stories about Sherlock Holmes and the impression he has made upon English literature and upon the large public following who read mystery novels, or, to use the popular term, who-done its, what difference does it make whether Sherlock Holmes was a figment of imagination of Arthur Conan Doyle, who wrote the stories, or whether he was an actual detective who lived on Baker Street a little over a hundred years ago? Which, we might ask, constitutes a reality? Speaking from a metaphysical standpoint,

Sherlock Holmes is a reality, because his ideas, his personality, and his exploits have become so fixed in the minds of many readers that he exists there whether or not he ever existed in the flesh. In fact, his reality makes no difference whether or not he ever lived. We of course know that he is a fictional character, but as such he still is real.

From the standpoint of metaphysics, it is more important to deal with realization than with objective materialism. The fact that there was no man named Sherlock Holmes who did all the things described in the novels written about him has nothing to do with this concept of reality. He is real to those who today form the group that perpetuate

his memory and praise the accomplishments which he carried out in the practice of his profession.

So it is that all psychic conditions are real. The ultimate aim of metaphysics, as the search for reality or an inquiry into the nature of reality, concerns itself with the psychic more than it does with the physical. When we consider our own personal experiences, we might ask which are the most vivid, the memories that result from our physical contacts or the impressions that are registered in our minds through the psychic elements that have brought themselves up to a level of consciousness? If we consider the brain as an attribute or a function of the physical body and our psychic nature as an attribute or a function of our soul or inner self, we become aware that the source of our impressions is unimportant. However, if we accept the psychic functioning of our being as being real, then we are entering into the area of psychical metaphysics, if such a term can be logically considered.

I consider psychical metaphysics as the inquiry into the function and nature of the impressions that come in to consciousness but seem to have no origin within our individual experience. To put this another way, the psychic is what comes to us mentally that is not learned through physical experience or through having been told certain facts or principles.

Psychic has nothing to do with the objective origins of memory. Memory is part of the function of mind, while psychic comes already formed into consciousness and therefore passes into memory directly from the soul. Man can learn to utilize his own life to develop the acuteness and availability of psychic impressions. The big problem that exists for the average individual today is due to the pressures of the physical world. Because of the demands of our environment, we have little time to give to the contemplation of the psychic.

Through the processes known as concentration and meditation, man can come to know the psychic. He has to permit the inner self to dominate his thinking if he is going to be able to take from these impressions what is useful and practical, and to convert into

realizations what will be useful to him in his earthly life and form a part of his objective consciousness, realizing that their source is in the inner consciousness.

Therefore, let us say that psychical metaphysics is the realization that what is real is not necessarily confined to the experiences of the physical entity and to the perceptions and memories which make up our total consciousness. The psychic should never be considered as an unusual or little-used function of our being. Our being is a psychic being. Our real self is psychic. If we are to understand the ultimate purpose of life and the true meaning of reality, we must acknowledge the real concepts which come to man's consciousness from the Soul. Furthermore, we are obligated to learn the steps necessary to make it possible for us to develop our psychic abilities so that we can draw upon them efficiently and apply them effectively.

Chapter 7

METAPHYSICS AND PRACTICAL LIVING

TO MANY INDIVIDUALS, metaphysics is such an abstruse science or inquiry, so involved in technicalities seemingly beyond the grasp of practical individuals that it has very little connection with practical, day-to-day living. The conclusion exists generally that it is a purely speculative discipline or inquiry. It is considered a mental exercise, as was once believed of certain subjects—that learning a foreign language or studying higher mathematics disciplined the mind, for example, or made one more acute in other subjects. Modern psychology has eliminated these premises, and they are no longer considered related to each other.

Metaphysics, on the other hand, does apply to practical living. Its function is to enable the individual to unravel a long thread of complications and inquire into the true nature of reality. By leading us to a better understanding of our selves, our world, our environment, and our destiny, metaphysics provides a better means of acquiring a practical application of all the experiences and impressions that constitute our lives and makes it possible for us to live a fuller, better, and even happier life. We will not necessarily attain perfection in this area, but we will obtain a degree of knowledge and understanding that will directly benefit the individual who seriously applies himself toward the realization of what may be unknown, particularly to the realization of that which is not material.

We live in a world so dominated today by the advances of physical science that we seldom have time to devote ourselves to those conditions

which are actually more lasting, more important, and more infinite than the actual experiences of our daily life. Religion, of course, has tried to teach us that the ultimate values lie outside or beyond a physical world, but we need not turn to religion for a practical realization of this fact.

We need only to realize that the physical world is no more or less than our realization of it. We cannot perceive the physical world itself. We perceive only what the mind interprets as the result of our perceptive process.

When I look about me, certain impressions register upon the retina of my eye. In my mind I make my interpretation. Many times these interpretations are in error. All that is necessary to prove this is to refer to an elementary text on psychology and see illustrated the optical illusions that take place as a result of our perception. A well-known simple one is to look down a railroad track and receive the impression that the rails eventually come together in the distance, while we actually know that they remain parallel.

In other words, mental impressions and the physical world differ. What is important to us is the realization that all we know develops in our mind. Furthermore, whether we study metaphysics or arrive at our own understanding of an ultimate reality, what is important is our realization that the physical world which we live in and which we perceive is the one that is developed within our own mind and consciousness. Each of us sees every situation differently. We arrive at our own conclusions, based upon our own perception as compared with our abilities, our background, our training, or our early experiences in life, in other words, our memories. All these factors contribute to our realization, and to us, that realization is important.

This realization may seemingly be in error when compared with the realization of some other individuals. No two persons have identical realizations. I may hear a sound that I interpret in one way, and you another. In fact, I have a neighbor who has a hi-fi stereo system upon which he continually plays at a loud volume modern, so-called *rock* music, if I am up-to date in my terminology. It is very disturbing to me. I do not grasp it. I do not realize it. If I played the type of music

that interests me, he would probably be as annoyed as I am, if I played it loud enough for him to hear it.

The fact is that my neighbor and I have a different realization of sound. My realization is one that I like, the one I prefer, and if I am selfish and bigoted, it is the one I claim is right, and therefore, in opposition, I claim that his is wrong, discordant, annoying, and of no value whatsoever. If our characters were analyzed further, we would probably find even more divergence and further differences, and the same would apply to any other two human beings. No two individuals have identical realizations.

There are, nevertheless, certain advantages to a metaphysical consideration of life in general, a consideration that makes us realize that to inquire concerning the nature of the ultimate reality leads us to form realizations that make up the background of our existence and our life. Regardless of what our realizations may be, they reflect themselves in our judgments. We judge in accordance to the manner in which we realize and comprehend our realizations.

The comparison with music, which I pointed out, is a good example of realization. Our adjustments to life and to our fellow men are also closely related to our realization of our place in life and to our understanding of values. Whether or not an individual worries about his circumstances or has fears that lead to worry about his future depends upon how he realizes himself in relationship to all that exists.

A complete realization that is to our own satisfaction will aid in reducing tension and lead to a life better adjusted to the circumstances in which we live. We are all under pressure of one kind or another. To agree within ourselves upon an ultimate reality which has value, which survives, or which transcends everything that exists in our environment, that goes to the heart of things, as it were, is to realize the psychic nature existing within our inner selves. This realization will help us to live calmly even in the face of pressure which would normally produce tension, and which in turn produces disorientation and even physical disease.

An understanding of reality in our own terms gives us a basis upon which to build an understanding of life and its ultimate purposes. We may not be right. We may not be one hundred percent correct. We may not understand why and how the Cosmic was established in the first place, or how its laws function and affect the progress of the human race, but we will gain a glimpse that will assist us if we have a realization of a reality that brings us a degree of satisfaction.

Above everything else, the understanding, in our own terms, of a reality is the basis for the establishment of a philosophy of life. We can all envy the individual who can live apparently without tension, who can face the problems of his existence calmly and with assurance. This individual has developed a philosophy of life and an understanding of his place in the scheme of things. Metaphysics is one of the important keys that lead toward such a development. It contributes to practical living by giving us a realization of what it is that constitutes *being*.

We know we exist, that we are human beings, and that we live in a world that is filled with many other beings. What is important for us to know is that we will grow in direct proportion to understanding our realizations. By grasping reality and understanding metaphysics, we can be led to the contemplation of our selves as worthwhile beings. This is the contribution of a practical nature that metaphysics can make to the human entity.

To illustrate, I wish to quote to some extent again from the works of Dr. Katen, to whom I have referred previously. "Thinking of being in terms of a being, or some definite thing, makes it possible to be very objective about reality. It is quite different with the being *of* things, for that is not amenable to objective description. The being *of* things cannot be observed, measured, and described with precision, but being *as* things can be. Things can be classified and organized; indeed this is precisely the job science performs. Thus when the Greek philosophers abstracted being *as* things from being *of* things they set the stage for the development of science. This is at least in part why there was a glorious flowering of science in the western world, whereas in the Orient, where being is not conceived of on the analogy *of* things, there was no such development of science. The western world has a long tradition of emphasis on objectivity and organization. This orientation

has vigorously seeped into our lives today so that everything has to be planned and organized.”

Dr. Katen goes on to give various illustrations of how we live today under so many influences that cause us to organize and plan every step we take. He uses as one illustration a tour that an individual may plan that is prepared by a tour expert. Everything is on schedule, everything planned, a full life, no time to rest, no time to really take in what is of great importance in touring. An individual ends up tired of watching the clock and following instructions. He then proceeds to say that the fetish of organizing one's life, planning it around things, searching for things to do, reaches its point of diminishing returns. People get tired of things, of doing things. Thus a general boredom sets in.

People can handle things, but when they become tired of them they are unable to open themselves to being. Not having roots in being, people become lonely, even in a crowd. In this sense, our crisis is at its roots philosophical, and merely political, psychological, sociological, or economic solutions will never get to the heart of it.

There is a general tendency to consider practical living as organized living. A life that is objective and organized is made possible by the reduction of being to things and involves a desire to control things. Much that is done today results from a need to get things under control. This sometimes produces a vicious circle. As a result of trying to control the things that constitute the outside world, one loses the control of the most desirable function of his being, that is, his inner self.

We imagine that we need to have power over things in order to compensate for the lack of power over our selves, but we do not necessarily need that power. What we need is understanding. Practical living is living in accordance with cosmic decree and cosmic guidance, not on the basis of organization, which has evolved out of our technological civilization, but living to gain a knowledge of reality. This realization puts us in touch with ultimate rather than transitory conditions, makes us a part of the infinite as well as of the finite, and leads us toward the realization that the soul, from which psychic impressions reach our minds, is a part of the absolute and partakes of the nature of God and the Cosmic.

Chapter 8

CAN WE KNOW THE ABSOLUTE?

THE CONCEPT OF the absolute means completeness or perfection. This meaning is the very opposite of relative. Something that is relative is objective and changeable, while that which is absolute is complete in itself and represents a perfect state. Absolute is sometimes used as synonymous with God, or Divine Mind. In the definition of metaphysics, there is always the conclusion that metaphysics tends toward the understanding of the ultimate reality, or ultimate being. In this sense, metaphysics is directly concerned with the absolute.

To refer to the idealism of Plato, we remember his concept that ideas are more real than any part of the material universe. He believed that the ideas in the mind were reflections of the physical world and that the ultimate idea or absolute form existed above and superseded all individual ideas. On the basis of these conclusions, Plato eventually postulated that form is more real than any material thing can be. Form is the essence of reality and not matter, which is the basis by which different things in the physical universe are distinguished one from the other.

As an example, in order to understand further this Platonic point of view, we might use as an illustration the fact that the same matter exists in animals and in human beings. That is, there is no difference in matter between, let us say, an elephant and a person. Both of these living entities are made of the same material. To be more technical, they are of the same chemical composition. Both are made so that they

even function in a similar way. At the same time, there is considerable difference in the organization of the matter of which an elephant and a human being is constituted. They are different in their appearance. They are different in function. They are different in their habits. There are a few similarities. They both breathe. Blood circulates, and they possess what we know as life.

It is therefore the form that anything takes rather than the matter of which it is composed that makes the difference between material objects. For this reason the idealist claims that reality can only be understood when it is considered in terms of form and ideas, not because it is different as a result of our physical perception. The idealist clings to the concept that ideas are the ultimate reality, that we cannot go beyond the ideas that develop in our own mind and consciousness. This is not to say that everything else is an illusion but rather that ideas are fundamental or basic.

It might be well to point out here that in the metaphysical concept of idealism there are subdivisions, in other words, different schools of thought. There is no one metaphysics. There are many metaphysics, so to speak.

Subjective idealism believes that only ideas exist and nothing else. The English philosopher George Berkeley advanced this theory to its ultimate form. He upheld the theory that there was no external world which man perceived. Mankind had only ideas which he projected into his environment and which caused him to believe that the physical world existed. Berkeley's concepts were much more profound than this short reference to them, but nevertheless convey the general idea that subjective idealism deals only with ideas and nothing else.

Other thinkers support the metaphysical concept known as objective idealism; that is, there is a physical world that is made up of objects. The universe is composed of physical things. We perceive them, and as a result of our perception, form ideas concerning them, their nature, their appearance, and their function. For objective idealists, the material world in a sense acts as a trigger to set off the ideas that are within the mind of the perceiver. These ideas, in the final analysis, are real.

I look at a book. It seems to consist of paper bound in a certain form. As I look at it, unless I am already familiar with the book, its purpose, its contents, and the reason for its existence are not apparent, but if I study it, the idea is created within my consciousness of what it really is. As I gain the impression of its contents, I formulate my own conclusions and mentally become familiar with this idea of a book, which, according to Plato, would represent a more perfect idea than has ever been achieved in the physical world.

Objective idealism seems to be a logical process, one to which many who have studied metaphysics subscribe because it acknowledges what man finds to be the obvious. Since we can know only what we perceive, since we can actually experience and realize only the ideas that are in our minds, we cannot deny the logic that has come from the fact that every human being, and apparently every animal, from observations of its behavior, acknowledges the existence of an actual, external, material world. We cannot walk through a door. We know that it is solid material. Therefore, it is hard for us to accept the extreme idealism that it does not exist except in the mind. According to the objective idealist, it exists in the same form that the materialist considers it to exist. But I, as an objective idealist, accept it only in terms of the interpretation and the mental judgments that result from its perception within my mind.

Regardless of the technicality of some definitions, philosophers, particularly the idealists, generally agree in distinguishing two distinctly different ways of knowing a thing. The first way infers that we are external or moving about the object concerned. The second way of knowing is to enter into the object.

The first method depends on the point of view from which we perceive the object and on the symbols by which we express ourselves in attempting to tell what our perception produces in our mind. We must always be aware that language is a symbol. The words by which we express ourselves are symbols for what we understand or perceive. The second method of perceiving a thing depends neither upon our viewpoint nor the position of the object, nor does it rely on any symbol.

We gain the first kind of knowledge by perceiving the object from the outside as a part of our immediate environment. This form of perception can be described as relative. In the second form of knowledge, we perceive an object by entering into it. In doing so, we attain the absolute.

For example, when I perceive an object in space, my perception of motion will vary with my position and with my point of view. It may move or I may move. My understanding of it will depend upon my objective perception and the interpretation which I place on my perception in my mental processes. If we consider an object to have absolute movement, we would be attributing to that moving object an interior, or a state of mind. We would imply that we are in sympathy or in harmony with those states. We might say that we would be inserting ourselves within the object as a result of our sympathetic understanding or projection of or to the object. By this second method of obtaining knowledge, I am within the object. My experience will depend neither upon my position nor upon the symbols with which I interpret its motion, since I have rejected all translations in order to comprehend its being. I have entered into it, and I shall have obtained an absolute.

As another example, we might consider an actor taking part in a play, motion picture film, or television series. The author of the play has produced the character. The actor's words and actions are dependent upon what the author has decided. I therefore cannot identify myself with the actor through objective perception. If I identify with the character, its entire being would then be my being, and his actions would be my actions. When I am simply observing the play or motion picture, what I know about any performer would result from the viewpoint from which I observe such actions.

All the traits of actors performing in a play are therefore known to me only with comparison with other persons or things I already know and are signs by which the actions are expressed symbolically. Symbols and points of view place me outside any character I witness. They permit me to know only what that character has in common with others and not what the individual himself actually is. That which is peculiarly the self of the individual is the sum total of his essence.

That essence cannot be perceived from without or expressed by words or other symbols. What I witness has left me with a relative concept of the individual. To be in a state of oneness or coincidence with another individual whom I witness would give me the absolute, the perfect conception of what the witnessed individual actually is. In this illustration, the absolute would be synonymous with perfection.

As another example, we might consider a group of photographs of a town or city, taken from all the points of view that were possible, including those from an air plane. We could put them together, but they could never be equivalent to the town itself, in which we could move about and observe directly what the town was. The composite photographs would be only a relative representation of the town.

Again, this idea can be found if we had all the translations of a poem in all possible languages to add together the different patterns of meaning, correcting each other to give a more and more faithful translation, yet the translated poem would be relative. It would never succeed in rendering the complete inner meaning of the original, that is, the absolute. Everyone who has attempted to make translations from one language to another is aware of how difficult it is to express the absolute meaning contained in the original. The absolute is the original poem or object and not its representation. The original and not its translation is perfect by being perfectly what it is in the first place. It is the absolute and is not the relative.

The following illustration has been frequently used to bring out a similar idea. When you raise your arm, you accomplish a movement from within. It is a very simple perception on your part, requiring no particular thought or analysis. At the same time, for me, that movement or action observed from outside of you through my own perceptive apparatus would seem to be your arm passing through one point then through another point. Between these two points there exists the possibility of other points. If I should begin to count, the action could conceivably go on forever.

Viewed from the inside, the absolute is simple. Perceiving it from the outside in relation to the signs and symbols which express it, it becomes a complicated and never-ending process. In the final analysis,

we can conclude that the absolute can be comprehended only through intuition, while everything else we perceive falls within the limits of analysis.

This concept is well described in a statement by the French philosopher Henri Bergson. “An absolute could only be given in an intuition, while everything else falls within the province of analysis. By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is, to elements common both to it and other objects. To analyze, therefore, is to express a thing as a function of something other than itself.”

In the end, all analysis is therefore translation. Analysis is a development into symbols. A representation is taken from various points of view from which we note a resemblance. Intuition, in contrast to physical perception, is a process that takes place within the mind and has its roots within the soul or inner self. The Rosicrucian philosophy defines intuition as the ability to perceive through other channels than the physical senses. It is therefore an intellectual sympathy having certain emotional patterns by which one is able to attune himself with something outside himself and to coincide with what is unique in the other thing, and, as a result, gain absolute knowledge of it.

The intuitive process is more or less spontaneous. We have difficulty in attempting to analyze it objectively as it happens inside us. Thus it is difficult to put into words what has taken place in an intuitive experience. In experiencing intuition, we are approaching the absolute, which, as has been repeatedly stated, is not translatable into symbols of any kind.

The absolute, we have said, is simple, complete. In intuition, too, is a simple and complete process. That which originates through intuition is in all probability more disposed to lead us to a degree of comprehension of the absolute than is anything we perceive. Analysis, on the contrary, reduces an object to elements already known and expresses a function of something other than itself. As I have already

stated, it is a translation, a development into symbols, a representation taken from successive points of view. In its desire to learn of an outside object, analysis can multiply without end the number of its points of view in order to complete its always incomplete representation.

The process of analysis continues into infinity. It becomes more and more complicated, ever adding to the data collected, but the simple action of intuition is more specific. It is complete in itself, and through intuition we immediately grasp the absolute and not merely various points of analysis. The function of science is analysis. It works primarily with symbols. It seeks to describe the objective world as a result of the perception of the observer. Those who accept a mechanistic or materialistic concept of metaphysics believe that they may be dealing with ultimate reality.

The only way in which we can possess or grasp a reality absolutely instead of knowing it only relatively, of placing causes within it, instead of observing its actions from the outside, of experiencing and conceiving the results of intuition, instead of making an analysis, in short, by seizing it without expression, translation, or representation by symbols, may be considered one of the ultimate purposes for metaphysics.

According to Henri Bergson, metaphysics, in the last and final analysis is “the science which claims to dispense with symbols.” To dispense with symbols is to dispense with analysis. To dispense with analysis is to go to the heart of anything, to enter into the object, to learn through intuition rather than by objective perception. This is a true path toward the comprehension of an ultimate reality, which is the meaning of metaphysics.

Chapter 9

REALIZATION OF REALITY

REGARDLESS OF HOW we define or examine metaphysics, the final consideration insofar as you and I are concerned is our realization of reality. We must realize the importance of being individuals in a vast universe, and learn, if we can, the purpose of personality.

Elton Trueblood wrote, “I came to believe that the single most important fact which we know about our universe is that, at one point at least, it is the home of persons.” If we are in accord with this statement, persons become very important in the scheme of things. Trueblood goes on to say in effect that the very existence of self-consciousness—something that we normally do not give a great deal of thought to but simply accept as it is—is best seen or understood if it is considered as it should be, something of unique significance, and truly as a revelation of the nature of reality.

In the search of metaphysics for ultimate reality, many schools of thought have developed, but we always return to the basic principle that metaphysics has two fundamental divisions, materialism and idealism. In the comments that I make in this chapter, there may seem to be a degree of prejudice on my part, because if I were to define myself in terms of the various schools of metaphysics that have developed, I would consider myself an objective idealist. Most of us, as I have, will probably arrive at an acceptance of one or the other of the two divisions of metaphysics.

This is neither the time nor the place to go into an analysis of the history of philosophy or the history of metaphysics, but briefly, the

early Greek philosophers were fundamentally materialists. They were looking for an ultimate reality within their environment. Although a number of early Greek thinkers tended toward idealism, it was really not until the time of Plato that idealism became a fundamental phase of metaphysics.

Plato's theory of ideas became a foundation upon which much idealism is based. The metaphysical concepts of the ancients can be described by a saying that has now become famous in philosophy and found among many writers on the subject, namely, that essence precedes existence. There is a fundamental cause, an essence, an ultimate reality. From the standpoint of the idealist, this essence is of a non-material nature, whereas from the standpoint of the materialist, it is material. For example, some philosophers thought fire, earth, air, and water, as well as other physical things, made up the foundation upon which all other things, including existence, was based.

Since the time of Descartes there have developed many diverging schools of idealism, until late in the last century there was a revolt against idealism, and forms of materialism became standard again. Out of this materialism has grown much of the technological advancement of the Twentieth Century, and to it we owe a great deal. Without the materialistic philosophy that has underlined the growth of modern science, man would be much less comfortable than he is today. Regardless of our fundamental beliefs in philosophy, religion, or metaphysics, none of us would wish to give up many of the inventions, developments, theories, and principles which have been the result of scientific progress.

One school of philosophy in comparatively modern times is known as existentialism. Instead of saying that essence precedes existence, its thesis is the exact reverse. The existentialist says that existence precedes essence. In other words, according to this metaphysical theory, the ultimate reality is existence. The fact that we exist is all that matters in the universe. Existence is being. It precedes essence and produces all that we can comprehend or can perceive. This concept, of course, applies to only one school of philosophy, and therefore is not accepted by all.

Materialism and idealism, as already stated, are the two basic branches of metaphysics. Materialism stands on the ground that it is a metaphysical explanation of all that it conceives to exist, but it conceives existence in terms of empirical explanations. An extreme type of materialistic psychology denies consciousness, but this concept has never won universal support. As we individually prove consciousness by experience, we must acknowledge there are things which cannot be explained on a materialistic concept of reality. This means that there exists in the universe conditions and circumstances that are not of a material nature.

An important objection to materialism is that in reducing everything, including minds, to atoms and motions governed by mechanical laws, we eliminate the object-subject relationship. For an object to be perceived, there must be a subject to perceive it. If materialism were correct, how could I conceive of an object, which is matter, without mind, which the materialist claims does not exist?

Mind, then, of which we find a degree of evidence in our own self-consciousness, cannot be explained by materialism, yet its existence is hard to deny. Memory, for example, is an attribute of mind. All of us by experience know of its existence, but it is intangible. It does not occupy space. It is not material, and for the materialist it would not exist, yet we use it every day.

These concepts lead us directly to a summary of idealism. Idealism furnishes a background for ethics. It widens the scope of our moral activities, because ethics and morals cannot easily be related to a simple material world. Furthermore, idealism demonstrates, as far as a metaphysical theory can do so, that we are essentially a part of whatever the underlying reality might be. It also urges us to assume our proper dignity in relationship to the rest of humanity and the universe, and to express moral action in a manner that may become universal.

Henri Bergson placed a great deal of emphasis upon the fact that the fundamental reality was to be found in relationship to a vital force which manifested itself within man. This vital force might be synonymous with the Cosmic or with God, if we choose. Bergson therefore believed that reality must be gained from inside ourselves,

and we must gain this reality by intuition rather than by analysis. Analysis contributes to the growth of science, but intuition is the source of knowledge that comes from the inner self, which, according to the idealist, is related to the force that constitutes the universe, the vital force to which Bergson refers.

There is a story told of a professor who was extremely frugal and who had a favorite pair of wool socks. When a hole appeared in one of this pair, he asked his housekeeper to darn the hole. At a future time another hole appeared and it was darned. This process was continued on both socks many times. In fact, it was continued for so long that eventually the time arrived when the original material that constituted the socks no longer existed. The socks were replaced entirely by the repairs that had been made on them over the period of time they had been darned.

Now, the metaphysical question involved in this story is, "Are the socks that the professor was wearing after all the original material had been replaced by the repairs the same socks that he originally purchased, or are they an entirely different pair of socks?" If we consider that the socks he originally purchased were real, that is, to him the real socks, then are the present ones that he wears also real? Since they are entirely different from the standpoint of the material composition, the conclusion might be that they are not the same socks. In other words, they are not the same reality. If this is so, then when did they cease to be the real ones? Was it at the time the first hole was darned or the last one, or at some point in between?

This is a fundamental question of metaphysics, involving an analysis of the true nature of reality. This story also illustrates an important theory advanced by Henri Bergson. His concept of duration explains in a degree the riddle of the reality of the socks. Without memory, according to Bergson, there would be no continuity in life, because every event in life is based to a degree upon a previous event. If something happens to me this instant, in the next instant whatever happens then is also related to what had happened before. If this were not true, man could not live a continuous existence. Life would consist of a consciousness without memory. It would have no continuity. It

would be practically a state of unconsciousness. The duration of life is made possible by the continuation of self-consciousness being built up by the memory preceding the present events.

According to Bergson, duration is the ultimate reality. We cannot stand still. Nothing can be forever in a static state. Even as we draw a line, as long as the pencil moves on the paper, the line is continuous, and duration is the reality of the line. Stop the movement and we have ended the line. A new one must begin. In consciousness, if there are no relationships between what has gone before and what follows, there would be no continuity of duration.

Theories in regard to metaphysics have been writ ten, discussed, lectured upon, and dealt with ever since the human being has been a thinking entity. There are as many metaphysical theories in existence today as there are individuals who have thought about it. As time goes on we find that no final solution or ultimate end to metaphysics has ever been satisfactorily reached. Many who have advanced their theories and their beliefs have been convinced that theirs was the final answer. Even if they believed that they had reached complete understanding of what constitutes ultimate reality, of what actually is the nature of being or the purpose of existence, that ultimate answer has not yet been attained.

It is interesting to contemplate that metaphysics deals with ultimates. It tries to link all of man's experience and all of his philosophy and thinking to the ultimate purposes of the universe, to the ultimate nature of all being, that is, to an explanation and realization of that which is real, which exists in a form and for a purpose more important than anything else in the universe.

Metaphysics would not exist unless man contemplated the basic fact that there must be something in the universe that underlies everything else, that there is some basic entity, idea, material, or concept from which all other things spring. The speculations and studies of all who have devoted themselves to metaphysics have been to try to reach an understanding of what this ultimate reality and the nature of being actually are. Metaphysical theories formulate our concept of a

philosophy of life. Without a philosophy of life we would not be free. We would not be able to adjust our selves to the use of intuition and to reaching the in near most parts of our being.

The critic of metaphysics would point out that success in the strictest sense of the word has not accompanied the efforts of those individuals interested in this subject. The fact that no agreement has been reached would be one proof to the skeptic that no purpose has been served by attempting to contemplate an ultimate reality when an understanding of ultimate reality has not been attained.

A materialistic physical scientist might not even consider the subject of metaphysics as worth a second thought, because his fundamental concern in science is to deal with the actual thing that constitutes the subject of his particular scientific thought or investigation. He can measure, weigh, study, analyze, dissect, built up, put together, or extend a physical or material thing, whatever it may be. He can deal with it in part or in whole. He can deal with it in different environments. He can put it in different circumstances and will probably arrive at some explanation of its behavior or its purpose.

The metaphysician can never do this because metaphysics is a study that takes place within the mind. It does not deal strictly with the physical world alone. It deals with the ultimate understanding on the part of the individual of what it is that is fundamental and basic among all the ideas that go through his mind. Whether the individual accepts a materialistic or an idealistic explanation of metaphysics, these facts hold true. The materialist cannot arrive at a final metaphysical theory any more than can the idealist, because when we come to the final analysis in the history of man's thought there is still much about the universe that we do not know. Although we have grown more in the past few centuries in our understanding of the mental and psychic world, we still have a long way to go and much to learn.

In the meantime, how do we answer the questions, "Why should we give attention to metaphysics?" Why should metaphysics be studied? Why should it even exist? If no two individuals, regardless of their ability and the effort they have placed upon seeking an answer to its fundamental problems can agree, then who are we, as individuals, to

say that we will either add or detract from that which minds possibly greater than our own have failed to achieve?

There is, in my own estimation, a degree of an answer to this problem. Metaphysics is a great binding force. It is a catalyst, as it were. It brings together all human thought and directs it toward a purposeful end. Even if that purposeful end has not yet been achieved and possibly lies outside the realm of human achievement, it is still an effort to direct man toward the ultimate realization of why there is a universe and why there is probably an absolute force that causes it to exist.

Particularly to the teleologist these thoughts are of great value. Every intelligent individual will realize that to grow in understanding, to grow in the realization of ourselves and our place in the universe, is an experience that is synonymous with life itself. We have life to live and we have life in which to learn. Exactly what the ultimate ends are may not be clear, but we have learned enough to know that good is better than evil, that beauty is more pleasant to behold than ugliness, that health is more satisfactory than illness, that ideals that lift up man's sights to see beyond his own selfish ends are better than living merely for oneself and for nothing else.

Many people have made changes in their lives, but actually we do not change to the extent of being something different than we have been. If we make any emotional progress on this Earth, it is a process of becoming more ourselves. The person who is riddled with anxiety may change to what we might call more normal or better. By this we mean that an individual has rid himself of certain false assumptions, crippling fears, or misconceptions that have kept him from finding his real nature, his inner self.

Human nature has not changed a great deal during man's history. We have learned more, but emotionally we respond to situations about the same way in which man had always responded. True emotions exert a great influence on us, such as love and fear. There is a continuous struggle to rid ourselves of the latter so that we can live by the former. We can live and we can experience all that has gone before us through the writings and traditions that have come to us through the sciences

and the disciplines that man has developed in the process of his thought, historically speaking.

The soul is confined in a physical structure in this universe—a universe of illusion. Just as the ocean consists of drops of water, and any drop that falls into it is not lost merely because of the size of the ocean but is as much of the ocean as any other drop, so the universe and all that is contained within it will at some time be reabsorbed into the absolute, into the reality from which it emanated and will be richer in some mysterious way because of the experience of life. When reality has eventually been won, it will be inexpressibly more glorious and more inspiring than anything we can conceive.

The great challenge, the great message of metaphysics, is to seek even though we may not find ultimate reality in our own seeking, to study even though we may not reach final conclusions. The eventual culmination of metaphysics will be in the realization that man is a part of the absolute and fits in to a scheme that at this moment is beyond our comprehension.

So, while metaphysics, as it so far has developed, has all the accumulated thought that constitutes the subject as it exists today, it has been inconclusive and has not reached final aims or ends. Man can find satisfaction in the realization that he has tried, that he has moved toward a solution which some day may be ultimate.

If the universe was created by an absolute force, an idea which in Plato's mind stood above all other ideas and concepts, then man has the privilege of continuing to live and continuing to exert his effort and his ability to approach whatever the ultimate end may be. "Let neither the glories of the past nor the promises of the future cast their dimming shadows over this ever present moment in which we live." (From: "Unto the Hills," by Richard L. Evans). The Realization of reality is timeless. We can reach out and grasp some understanding of it now.

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