

PAST LIVES & PRESENT PROBLEMS

How to Prepare for a Fortunate Rebirth



Manly P. Hall



PAST LIVES AND PRESENT PROBLEMS

How to Prepare for a Fortunate Rebirth



by Manly P. Hall

PAST LIVES AND PRESENT PROBLEMS

Copyright © 1998 by the Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

All Rights Reserved. This book or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher.

ISBN-10: 0-89314-381-2

ISBN-13: 978-0-89314-381-7

L.C. No. 77-6164

Cover Art: "Death's Door" by William Blake

Published by

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

3910 Los Feliz Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90027 USA

Telephone 323.663.2167

Fax 323.663.9443

Website www.prs.org

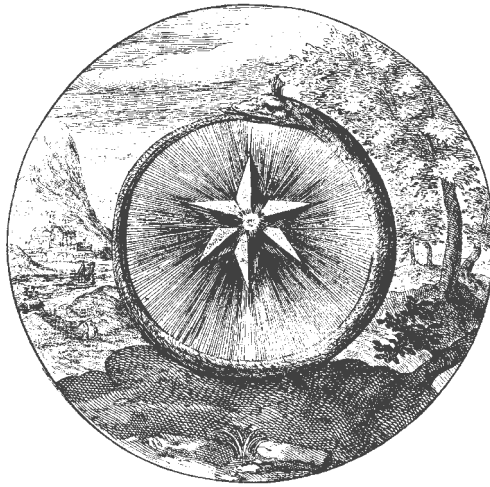
E-mail info@prs.org



Printed at the Philosophical Research Society in Los Angeles, California

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	5
Past Lives and Present Problems	
<i>The Burden of Unfinished Business</i>	7
How to Prepare for a Fortunate Rebirth	
<i>The Science of Planned Destiny</i>	35



PREFACE

Very few people realize that the doctrine of reincarnation is not a minority belief, but that it is presently contributing to the integrities of more than a billion human beings. Many of the world's most illustrious thinkers have accepted the theory of reincarnation as the most reasonable and practical solution to the mysteries of man's origin, purpose, and destiny.

One of the principal objections to the concept is due to a popular misunderstanding. It has been assumed that it means the binding of the individual to an endless succession of physical reembodiments, each of which is devoted to the payment of moral debts incurred at some remote time in the past, each incarnation leading to further karmic responsibility—the pattern extending to infinity.

It should have been obvious that the high scholarship attained by the sages and saints of the past would have recognized this difficulty if it had been actually part of the basic teaching. The operations of the law of cause and effect indicate clearly that the individual will be reborn so long as the causes of rebirth exist within himself, and that he will not return to this mortal sphere when these causes are exhausted.

The perfection of life is the purpose of living, and those who have rectified their own natures will return no more. Liberation is therefore achieved through self-discipline on the various levels of the personality. Salvation must be earned through conscious dedication to the Divine Plan by voluntary obedience to the laws of God and Nature. Some may feel that the

belief is heartless and unnecessarily severe, but it is actually motivated by a Divine Compassion. If the Power at the source of existence truly loves Its creations, It must provide the means and the incentives by which each sentient being can work out his own salvation with diligence. Nature teaches primarily by experience and reincarnation provides infinite opportunity to improve the quality of living.

A parent who fails to discipline his children does not truly love them. By catering to their whims he contributes to their sorrow and suffering in later years. Today we are keenly aware that young people are not equipped to bear the responsibilities of maturity. The human race collectively is in the same dilemma. It becomes increasingly obvious that each person must become the architect of his own destiny. Those who believe in reincarnation have strong and proper incentives to correct their own faults and develop internal resources that will reduce future mistakes and their consequences.

The mature person who has learned to carry his own life with dignity is delivered from many burdens and his physical career is more peaceful and serene. This is a simple example of how reincarnation leads to release from suffering. Ultimate release is not through freedom from law, but through obedience to the magnificent plan in which we all live and move and have our being.

The purpose of the present essay is to show some of the ways that belief in reincarnation can be of practical daily use. We hope that the reader will find some answers to questions that have disturbed him and a few suggestions that will help him to plan a happier future in this world and the life beyond.

PAST LIVES & PRESENT PROBLEMS

THE BURDEN OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS

We all have occasions when there just doesn't seem to be any fair or just explanation for the difficulties that afflict us. Yet at the very root of a good philosophy of life there has to be some way of experiencing the fact of an honest universe. If we cannot experience this within ourselves, and find some support for our conviction in the situations around us, we are left in a desperate personal dilemma.

This over-all conviction must be reasonable, or we cannot believe it ourselves indefinitely. We can be persuaded by various pressures around us to accept a number of unproven beliefs, but if these cannot be demonstrated in our personal experience, we gradually lose interest in them, and are forced back again upon the original situation. And those who have not been able to come to some constructive conclusion are the ones most likely to become neurotic or to find the course of life almost unbearable.

Let us try, therefore, to see if we can get a little law and order into this problem. In at least some systems of Eastern philosophy, there are explanations, and these do not conflict with Western beliefs because, for the most part, the West has no integrated beliefs on these issues. The West has always been inclined to live for the moment, to compromise larger patterns for immediate advantages; and a philosophy entirely contrary to such policies is not very familiar to us.

Most of us are born into this world with a conviction of our own individuality. As we grow older, we do not like to think of ourselves as identical with other people. We want to feel that we have some uniqueness, even if this uniqueness is only the privilege to make unique mistakes. We like to feel that we have a right to our own thinking, that we have as much right to have beliefs or ideas as anyone else, and we feel quite justified in assuming that our own ideas may be a little better, a little more accurate, than the concepts held by others around us.

It is perhaps on this basic point, the idea that we are born individuals—that the entire structure of Eastern philosophy rests. We are born with individuality, but this individuality, instead of being a kind of divine birthright, is actually a memorial to unfinished business. We are individuals to the degree that we are separate from reality itself. All individuality implies that we are set apart, that we have not yet found any common ground with all other life. We are individuals, and to this degree, we are also in conflict with life, for it is inevitable that the individual, with his own attitudes, cannot go through this long span of years without offending someone, or without being offended by others. The stronger the individuality, the more resolutely we defend our own convictions; and the more aggressive we become in such defense, the more we alienate others.

So we live in a world in which everyone seems to believe that he is right, and the compound result is not exactly what we want. All this right does not heap together to make a glorious, peaceful existence for us all. It heaps together merely to compound confusion, and we live in a confusion of forces in which each person is trying desperately to maintain his own convictions about things.

If we are born with this individual quality within our own psychic integration, it has to come from somewhere, and it is this individuality, as we call it, that carries the record of our

own incompleteness. The loner part of ourselves bears testimony to the degree of experience that we have actually attained in the great processes of universal existence.

We belong in various grades or levels of schooling, and these grades and levels do not mean that one person is better than another, any more than a schooling system means that there is something inevitably superior about an eighth-grade scholar in comparison to a sixth-grade one. The sixth-grader will pass on in his labor and become, in due time, an eighth-grade scholar; and the eighth-grader has already passed through the sixth grade and suffered all its limitations and problems.

So the differences in these experience patterns do not represent any aristocracy set up in universal procedure. The older student may develop a complex of superiority, but he is not entitled to. Actually, the more he studies and the more he advances in education, the more he must realize the tremendous challenge of knowledge, and his increasing insight should properly bestow humility.

In any event, individuals have come in various ways to their present focal point of individuality. At this particular stage in each person's life, he is thinking and deciding and hoping and fearing and building and working from a pattern—the pattern of his own integration. What he does and what he thinks are very closely associated, therefore, with what he is as an individual. These reactions which arise in him in turn establish the patterns of his relationships with other people. Karma, therefore, in the Indian sense of the word, is carried in this individuality factor in our natures, because this individuality determines the quality of our relationships with all other things around us in nature, and to a large measure our relationship, also, with ourselves.

If, therefore, we bring out of the past a certain focal point, a certain degree of integration, we must work from it here and

now. We cannot suddenly become someone else. We cannot immediately take on the patterns of persons on other levels than our own; and those on the same levels are having the same problems. So we level off on problem as well as on achievement, because all problems are the result of limitation of insight.

Now, limitation of insight is no crime—it is not something for which we should be punished in the sense of any arbitrary force telling us that we should be different. An integration level is simply the raw material from which a new personal career must be built. It is the availability of our own understanding, our insight, and our recognition of value. And perhaps, as the Eastern philosopher points out, it reveals most of all the degree of our self-discipline and self-control. The lower we are in this school of life, the less self-discipline we have; and lacking self-discipline, we are unable to place value above personal desire. The more completely we react to our appetites and our emotions and our instincts, the more completely we involve ourselves in situations.

Thus we may say that each grade of school through which we pass in the universe, adds something to self-discipline. It gives us new points of view, new information, by which we can orient our own relationship with the rest of life. In the lower grades of this school of experience, the individual is a complete and rugged individualist. He does exactly as he pleases, and gives very little thought to the consequence of his action. Because of this policy, the consequences add up; and the more they add together, the heavier the burden of his life becomes.

There is an Egyptian fable bearing upon this situation: the story of the man who wanders along like a beggar on the road, carrying over his shoulder a kind of double sack with two pockets—one in front, and the other in back. It is his tendency to put the things that please him and the good work he has done in the front sack, where he can watch them. The things

that displease him and that he does not want to remember, he puts in the sack at the back, which is not visible to him. Then at some moment along the way of life, he wonders why he falls over backwards. The load in the back part has gotten too heavy, but he is determined not to notice it. He has no intention of being committed to a constant survey of his own shortcomings.

In a way, this backpack represents what the Easterner calls karma. It is the load of unfinished business that is constantly increasing in the course of our growth cycle. It is only when we resolutely turn the pack around and take a good look at the contents in the back part of it that we begin to understand why the universe is just, and that it is not a fate beyond our control, but the very substance of our own conduct that determines our future.

Once we begin to sense this, we are able to find a great deal of philosophical support for our improved point of view. It seems also that, as we go along, we come upon the mass attitude of our kind. Countless human beings, moving down through history, have so united their resources as to create vast traditional complexes, which represent what we mean when we say “everybody” does this, or “everyone” does that. These traditional ways of doing things are accumulated not by insight, but by trial and error. And tradition is something that is always tinged with expediency. The individual under the broad supervision of a traditional pattern, must accept with it its weaknesses as well as its advantages—and all traditional patterns have their weaknesses, for most of them have been accumulated by human beings in midstream, who are struggling with their own unfinished responsibilities.

When we come, therefore, to our present generation and the problems with which we are daily faced, we must confront the situation that within ourselves is a complex of attitudes. This

complex has arisen as a result of short-sightedness, a prevailing ignorance about values, indifference, lack of self-discipline, gratification of attitudes, appetites, and impulses, and, to a large degree, the tendency simply to drift from one experience to another without taking advantage of what we have learned.

Experience is a great teacher, but it is not very useful unless it means something to the individual who has the experience. If an experience is a calamity, and we insist upon rationalizing out of it its entire real meaning for us, then naturally, we gain very little by the suffering through which we pass. All experience must stimulate thoughtfulness and cause the individual to recognize the deficiencies within his own pattern. Experience is a challenge. If we cannot meet it wisely and well, or at least reasonably, this represents a shortcoming in ourselves, and does not necessarily mean that the experience is overwhelmingly great and there is nothing we can do about it.

Every time something goes wrong, we should give a little further thought to the possible involvement of our own attitudes in the situations that arise. For most people, however, this is difficult, because actually, we have very little instruction in weighing and evaluating our own life experiences. We are not taught to be thoughtful. We are taught to attain certain intellectual skills, but there is very little advice that would impel us to examine ourselves, to find out our own part or place in the world motion.

In trying to understand our place in this world, we can begin by realizing that a complete collective is nothing but a group of individuals who are in some way bound to a common experience level. They must go through certain general experiences in common, and nature brings them into times and places where such experiences are most readily available. We can, therefore, simply take the philosophical attitude that we are here now because this is where we belong; this is what we have earned. So

if it does not look as though we are getting fair returns on the investment, it means that we did not make a fair investment in the first place.

Being confronted with an immediate problem takes a great deal of uncertainty out of life. If we are confused and dazed by the complexity of the world in which we live, we can take some consolation in the fact that this general complexity faces us with certain particular problems. No individual is assumed to be able to take on a universal generality and change it. He is responsible only for his own relationship to that generality. He is responsible only for his own reaction to the immediate situations that require his attention. If his own reaction is correct, his psychic integration is preserved and protected. If his reaction is wrong, then naturally he loses the advantage of growth, because growth results from solving problems. There really is no other answer to this situation of how we can legitimately grow.

Now, when we start working with a problem, we nearly always discover that our equipment is not quite adequate. We are not able to see the facts clearly; or if we do see them, we are under some kind of stress. People come to me frequently with such problems as, "I know what I should do, but it will be very detrimental to me socially if I do it. I know that I should stay as sober as the proverbial judge; but I'd rather enjoy not staying sober." Another individual will say, "I know that I should not be unkind in the transaction of business. I feel that I should not be unkind; but I can get richer if I am unkind." So in each individual there is a conflict between principle and advantage. And under the prevailing system, in which nearly all obvious rewards are bestowed upon those who compromise principles, it is rather easy to drift along and take the attitude that we are not expected to be better than our world.

We have done this in the past, no doubt. Perhaps we were merchants in the Roman Empire; perhaps we were moneylend-

ers under the Goths; perhaps at some time we were real estate agents in the division of the European continent. But whatever our background may have been, if we cannot make clear decision now, it means that somewhere in the background we also took the attitude that it was better to succeed than to be honest. Having taken this attitude for a long time, we are born with it into the present embodiment. It is a basic part of our nature, because we have put it there. And the next time the same kind of issue arises, the same problem of divided allegiance comes into our objective consciousness.

If we have no adequate concept of self-discipline, no deeper insight into life, that forces us to choose more wisely, then we will drift along and make the same mistake, and sometime in the future we will be re-embodied again and be faced with the same decision. We have to be faced with this decision, because in the maturing and evolving of human character, the ultimate goal is that the individual shall do right because he knows it is right, and because he has developed within himself the strength of character to obey the best impulses and ideals of his own nature. Until he reaches this state, he cannot properly be considered mature. All the rest is in some way adolescent; somehow it represents a groping without achievement, because the person has not the essential strength of character to make the necessary decisions.

In working with people, we notice an interesting thing in connection with human problems. Most individuals are subject to repetitive problems. A person who makes one bad marriage is very likely to make another one. An individual who makes a certain mistake in business is very likely to repeat that mistake. If we choose a friend unwisely, we will, in the course of life, choose other friends with the same poor judgment. We have a tendency to repeat our mistakes. We think this may be due to some evil star that is constantly cycling in the heavens

and forces the recurrence of a tragic incident. Actually, we repeat mistakes because we are making them from the same basic mental equipment—because our habitual way of estimating certain things is tragically natural to us. We have our tastes, our likes and dislikes, and we cater to these at the expense of value. We make the same mistakes because they arise from the same emotional complexes and blind spots within our own equipment that have been with us from the beginning.

This kind of thing occurs also in matters of temperament. Over a whole lifetime, a person may lose one friend after another by almost the same circumstances. A friendship seems to go along fairly well, and then something happens; some part of the individual's nature rises in a brittle or unpleasant manner and destroys the friendships for him. This is a recurrent pattern. And the habit of losing friends has followed some folks from the cradle to the grave. They simply cannot maintain these relationships with dignity.

Within our own pattern of integration, which is our mental focus, we also have our own way of explaining why things go wrong; and this explanation is part of the unfinished business that we carry with us. Our excuse is an example of the level of integration we have reached. We have handy excuses for almost everything, and most other folks can see through our excuses, as we see through theirs. But because we so desperately want to believe that the fault lies elsewhere, we are able to maintain ridiculous explanations with comparatively good conscience. It does not occur to us that our explanations are merely further ways of delaying our own progress; that they are simply helping us to evade or avoid the lessons that we are supposed to learn.

Out of these excuses and evasions, we also gradually construct a composite point of view that becomes automatic. It settles within our nature and we draw upon it whenever emer-

gency arises. The study of psychotic problems shows what happens when self-pity becomes excessive, or when worry or fear or jealousy or criticism or condemnation takes over. We become aware, at least in part, of how much damage can be done by negative attitudes held for twenty or thirty years.

Actually, these attitudes are only projections of basic pressures that have been damaging us for maybe twenty- or thirty- or fifty-thousand years or more. We have been carefully nursing them. We have brought forward the automatic pattern of our excuse-mechanism along with everything else. As a result of the way we isolate our natures from the real benefits of living, we are able to drift through one lifetime after another, departing with very little more insight than we started with. There is always some growth, but in comparison to the possible, it is woefully slow.

If, then, we will simply assume at this time that we are here to get over previous mistakes, rather than to attempt to justify conduct that has never succeeded, we can perhaps work out a more constructive pattern for living. No individual, apparently, is able to have a totally personal pattern. We are not sure of ourselves, and we are not sufficiently courageous -perhaps it is just as well also—to start out on our own completely without recourse to the traditions and patterns and policies of our world. We all seem to sense the need for common support of some kind. We may have original ideas occasionally, but even these we try to fit into patterns of acceptances. We like to think that our ideas are in harmony with the opinions or attitudes of the great or the learned or the good. We do not want to feel completely alone, even in our noblest attitudes.

The tendency, therefore, is to move from one traditional pattern to another. We want to move from one area of strength to another area of strength—not out into chaos. This is perhaps one of the reasons why many persons today have taken

an interest in Oriental philosophy. It is an established pattern. It is different from the one we have here, but it has a long history, with noble exponents, and with its heroes and martyrs and sages. It has influenced vast numbers of human beings over incredible periods of time; therefore, it is established - and we can move from one house to another more easily than we can move out of a house and wait while someone tries to build a new one for us.

Most people today are beginning to realize that building a house is a very special business, and that it is rather expensive for the amateur to try to supervise such construction work. It is also dangerous for the amateur to try to build a total philosophy of life; and the less mature he is, the more difficult and disappointing the result will be. We therefore look around to find something that meets our need, preferably something that already has a traditional background and has certain principles that it can bring to our attention, or to which we can be converted.

Thus, Eastern philosophy gives us a large new area of thoughtfulness. It is not something that is only of passing interest; it is not a fad; it is not an opinion of the time. Its background is as ancient and as honorable as the more familiar patterns. We therefore approach it with a degree of confidence. We begin to investigate it, however, in terms of our own need; and, of course, whether it means anything to us or not depends upon whether it meets our need.

I believe that the tremendous increasing interest in Eastern thinking in the last twenty years has been influenced largely by our own rapidly increasing need. Western man is not satisfied with the progress he is attaining or the things he is doing. He is realizing that in some way, he is multiplying his own difficulties; that the mass policy that exercises final authority over collective groups is not adequate. Somewhere along the line,

we got into serious trouble. We have had a wrong estimate of values. We have permitted ourselves to escape from what might be termed our unity with life itself. We have drifted away from Universal Law, and fallen under the tremendous dominion of man-made law. We have sacrificed our insight into the universal policies of things in our desperate effort to understand what other people think about things. By degrees, therefore, we have reduced our perspective and have become more and more immersed in the common objectives and objections of our contemporaries.

In the Oriental philosophy, we sense something, and it is perfectly possible to move this thing that we sense out of some strange, distant Eastern shrine, and put it to work in our own immediate problems. In so doing, we do not change our religion; we do not become members of some other belief. We simply try to develop the ethical and philosophical implications of these other ideas. We do not reject Plato or Aristotle because they had a different religion from ours; we are grateful for the great contributions they made to philosophy and science. We can have the same approach to the thinking of the other half of the earth, with which we are not too familiar.

In this thinking, we come upon one essential, basic principle or concept that we seem to feel we need—the dynamic of self-discipline. The small child who is spoiled actually resents the parent who is spoiling it. While children are naturally perfectly willing to be spoiled—we all are—they know that they are being damaged. They wish their families would exercise leadership, and that they could depend upon their parents for constructive, integrated guidance; and they would be perfectly willing to accept this guidance if it were fairly and honorably given. It is a mistake to assume that the individual has an armament against all forms of common sense—he does not; but

he does have strong appetites and impulses that are perfectly content to drift if leadership is lacking.

It is the principle of self-discipline, then, that divides Eastern philosophy sharply from the common policies of the West. If we do discipline here, as we do in regimentation in the army and things of that nature, we discipline for material purposes—for defense, or in order to achieve the skills that contribute to economic advantage. We do not discipline for the sake of principles. In the East, discipline is essentially dedicated to man's relationship with the universal facts of life. It becomes the power of the person to lead himself according to the best part of his own nature. It is understood that this best part is also a variable—tomorrow it should be better than it is today. But whatever it is, it should also lead the rest of his compound nature. His principles should direct his conduct; his ideals should lead his thoughts; and his true objectives in the universe should lead his activities and direct them. Until such self-discipline is found, the person is incapable of changing himself, or of outgrowing the limitations that result from an inferior level of self-discipline.

In the East, the point is very strongly made that for most persons, whatever their problems may be, solution lies in self-discipline. By this is meant that the person inwardly resolves to do that which is the best for all concerned at the moment; that he shall follow primarily the leadership of conviction. And whatever his code may be, whether he is a Christian, an orthodox Jew, a Moslem, a Hindu, or a Buddhist—he must apply that religion which he has accepted in the administering of his daily affairs. If he is not religiously dominated, then perhaps his convictions are based on ethics, but he must have some pattern, some perspective, some archetype of what is right. He must believe in something. And whether this belief is a simple faith or a great scientific formula, whatever is believed, must be

practiced. If the belief is wrong, the practice will reveal this. If the individual has certain beliefs and these do nothing but get him into trouble, he most certainly recognizes that his believing is not right.

Most of us are not able to take upon ourselves the responsibility of creating a basic pattern of total believing. We cannot create a new Sermon on the Mount or a new Decalogue or new creeds or great moral structures. And because we recognize our ineptitude in these ways, we all have heroes; and the wisest have the best heroes. These heroes represent the individuals who exemplify the principles we most admire. In religion, they are the great saviors and world teachers whose doctrines and revelations have become the principal spiritual reservoir of hope. So whatever we do, we will turn almost certainly to some nobler example some individual or conviction that transcends our immediate conduct.

All nations and peoples have developed these concepts, these over-patterns of regulations, and have considered it to be spiritual, religious, ethical, or moral virtue to attempt to live these convictions. For Western man, the teachings of Jesus represent such an essential code, and these teachings are familiar to nearly every Western person. They are brought into the lives of children in early years, and there are very few homes throughout the entire breadth and length of Christendom in which these concepts are not at least intellectually known. They are not always practiced, but they are known.

The essential creed of Christendom is summed up in the statement that we shall love our God with all our hearts and all our souls, and our neighbors as ourselves. It would be hard to find a creed that is simpler, more direct, or, for most people, more impossible. We have a sovereign belief that this is right, but we do not practice what we believe to be right—except perhaps on an occasion when it is comparatively convenient to

do so—because of two problems: first, because we lack the self-discipline to stay with principle under pressure; and second, because we lack the willingness to sacrifice some desire for the maintenance of a principle. We are in business to compromise; and to compromise; we attempt to carry two complete patterns at the same time—patterns which in Western civilization have never been reconciled—religion and economics. Our only solution for the moment is to organize religion economically. We have never been able to get around to organizing economics religiously - that is much too large a problem.

Having principles and being unable to live them, or untrained in the art of living them, we have a little tendency to be ashamed of ourselves. We know that we are not living as we should, but we are not quite certain what to do about it. If the world took on a general reformation, and all men became bound together in the fraternal bond of fellowship, then we could work it. We could be like everyone else, because the temptation to be otherwise would not be so great. But as this situation does not occur, and the millennium does not appear to be rapidly approaching, the pressure of self-advantage and the lack of any way to curb our own natures allow us to drift along to become more hopelessly involved in complexity and confusion.

In the Eastern concept of discipline, we have certain ideas that are rather attractive. We find, for example, the realization that the only individual who can direct his own life is a disciplined person; that without self-discipline he can never be a leader over his own nature. He cannot use his faculties wisely, he cannot have any dedications that are valuable to him, he cannot even develop consistent interests to make life more enjoyable. Without self-discipline, he cannot become self-sustaining.

Now, we would all like to be self-sustaining, but the discipline part gets in our way. In the East, of course, they have an

advantage that we do not have—namely, that their society was based upon self-discipline. It has been the instrument of their culture from time immemorial. This does not mean there have not been many examples where it failed in Asia—let us not be unfair about this—but whether it succeeds or fails, whether it is popular or unpopular, whether it has a large group of devotees or only one lonely follower, the fact we must all consider is a very simple one— is it best? Is it right? If it is that which is necessary, we are not concerned over its popularity; nor are we concerned with the fact that not everyone has been able to live it. If we can point out the weaknesses and shortcomings of other faiths, we should also take a good look at our own. We are not doing too well either.

Beneath man's inability to perform all the good things that he would like to perform, however, there is still this need for skillful, enlightened living itself. And I believe we will ultimately be forced to face the conclusion that the only answer anywhere on earth to the confusion that is spreading today, is self-discipline. It is this that enables us to create better karma. Most of the load with which we are suffering today is a memorial to lack of self-discipline. We are in difficulty because we have never mastered problems, and we cannot achieve positive gain without effort of some kind. We cannot simply drift into eternal bliss. Something has to move, and be motivated by our own determination.

Most persons today who are thoughtful, who have studied, who have tried to improve themselves with increasing knowledge and reflection, have attained the materials from which progress can be made. They have a better knowledge than those who have not made this effort. They are more aware of the contributions of all the great philosophies and religions of the world. They are no longer bound by some creedal limitation that prevents them from estimating the true state of human

existence. These individuals have gradually built up a certain degree of insight, and the problem then becomes to transform insight into merit.

The term merit is used, in Buddhist philosophy particularly, to represent the deed that confirms the belief. Merit is the doing of the thing we hold sacred. It is the achievement through action of a certain increased wealth of insight. It is not meritorious to know more than others; it is, however, meritorious to take this knowledge and make it the foundation of living more wisely than others. Every action performed from genuine benevolent insight is meritorious; and a merit is simply a way of compensating for a demerit. Every time we achieve a merit, we wipe out something of a negative nature that has previously burdened our lives.

In Zen, the idea of merit is given a new application in a sense. Merit represents a detachment from the pressures of life; and it is part of self-discipline that the individual, having chosen to do that which is best, must at the same time renounce certain other things which are not best. Always, self-discipline must cause the person to choose a better course in the presence of a lesser one, to make some distinct advancement in character. The reward for every act of merit is an enlargement of internal insight. Merit becomes part of the subjective nature of the individual, and provides an availability of better material from which to build character. So merit is the constant enrichment of the inner life by conduct consistent with conviction. If we can achieve to this, we will begin to solve problems.

Another point that we have to take into consideration is perhaps a larger and more universal one. Every philosophy must be grounded in an adequate concept of universal value. We must establish some relationship in our consciousness between ourselves and the Infinite. In Eastern philosophy, this relationship is rather a straightforward one; namely, that man is a product

of universal procedure. The universal procedure knows what is intended; man does not always know. The universal procedure, by the very fact that it is universal, is inevitable. Therefore, the individual cannot resist it indefinitely. And the universal procedure supports that which sustains it and penalizes that which violates its laws. Therefore, man's happiness, peace of mind, and security lie in his acceptance of the great examples of universal procedure.

Now, here is where science should have made its greatest contribution to our wellbeing. The scientist, perhaps more than other men, is best trained to estimate universal procedure. He is best trained to realize the magnitude of the universe in which we live, to become aware of the immutable laws that govern this universe; and in a way, he is perhaps also surprisingly well equipped to determine man's relationship to this larger scene. He is even able to estimate the relationship of man's mind to universal phenomena.

Out of all of this understanding and insight gained by scientific progress, the scientist should be in the best possible position to develop a magnificent and mature moral-ethical code. We do not necessarily demand that he produce a religious code, but we would like to see him make an important step forward, transferring the basis of civilization from the opinions and attitudes of scattered individuals to the immutable and unchanging foundations of Universal Law. He must, as a scientist, realize that the term good can be applied only to that which is in harmony with the infinite unfoldment of life around us and through us. This is the only final authority we have—the authority of nature; the authority of the infinite workings of cosmic principles. We are quite certain from experience to date that this authority cannot be influenced by man. The human being simply is not sufficiently important to have the slightest

moral effect upon the law of gravity or the nebular hypothesis. These conditions continue, and man must adjust to them.

Wisdom is the discovery of this, and self-discipline is the ability to achieve that adjustment which is observed to be necessary. As soon as we begin to think in terms of universals, instead of in terms of personal advantages, our karmic load will lighten. It is due to evolution and evolutionary processes that we gradually become aware of laws; but once we become aware of them, there is an insistence that arises within ourselves—we want to do what we know to be right. We want to grow; and certainly, we want to escape the miseries and sorrows that have burdened our civilization from the beginning.

Nature tells us that there is no way of escaping except by outgrowing. We have to transcend. We cannot escape by evasion. We have to lift the penalties of law by becoming law-abiding, not law-evading. And we must realize that these universal laws are the patterns around which happiness and unhappiness must accumulate. These patterns, as great principles, are becoming a little more familiar to us. Eastern peoples have had them longer than we have, because for some reason, and by some wonderful intuitive faculty within themselves, they sensed man's relationship to the universe many thousands of years ago. We are just beginning to discover it. But regardless of how we discover it, or when, the discovery bears its own responsibility with it. Having discovered, we are responsible for obeying the principles that we now know to be true.

If we begin this type of thinking and work gradually with the principles of self-discipline, we will have a number of interesting experiences that will be valuable to us. For example, an individual making a certain mistake in the decisions of daily life, does not simply add to some remote karmic burden of the future. This mistake starts a reaction immediately, and it is very hard for the average individual to tell the difference between a

mistake that is brought forward from the past and one that is made now. If we make a mistake now, we can wreck the next twenty years; but in the process of being faced with twenty years of wreckage, we cannot determine whether this is old karma or new, although we like to suspect that perhaps it is simply an unavoidable load from the past.

In some instances, this may be true, but in many instances, this terrible fatalism that seems to afflict us had its origin in a decision made in the present embodiment. If this decision had been better, our entire psychic load for this time would have been lighter, regardless of what we carried forward from the past. It is bad enough to carry forward a heavy load, but it is still worse to compound this load after we arrive here. There seems no reason why we must pile one adversity upon another. If, then, there seems to be any doubt in the matter, it is certainly advisable to begin a corrective procedure immediately.

One thing is reasonably sure: we will not be confronted again with a problem we have solved, for the obvious reason that once a solution has been discovered, there is no problem. The circumstances might arise again, but we will know exactly what to do with them; therefore, there will be no problem because there will be no confusion. Once we have solved anything adequately, properly, fully, we are free of it—not only in this life, but also in all future embodiments. We are free of it because we have conquered in ourselves the cause of that difficulty; and having conquered it, we have built into our own psychic integration a new degree of insight that cannot be taken from us and will always be at least subconsciously available in time of emergency.

We can begin, then, by trying, as we go along, to meet some of these difficulties not with just patience, not with despairing fortitude, but as we might meet the challenge of a game in which we are playing against a highly specialized opponent.

Now, in a game like chess, for instance, woe to the player who insists on learning from someone who knows less than himself. One of the best rules of chess is not to play with anyone who cannot beat you. This is the beginning of good chess. You will gain nothing by playing with a poor player. You will only become less thoughtful, less skillful, and more careless. So always play with a skilled opponent.

In the same way, the most important thing in life is the difficult problem, because here we are playing against a skilled adversary. Whether this adversary is the weakness in ourselves or a pressure in society around us is not important at the moment; the main thing is that this adversary is a worthy opponent, one who is going to tax our skill and force us to be more than we are now if we are going to solve the problem.

Knowing that solution lies in growth, we are able to meet the challenge if we so desire. We must, of course, become a little quiet and a little observant of our own reaction to a problem. We tend to have a more or less standardized way of meeting everything. One group of persons, when confronted with a problem, simply waits for the best possible moment to brush it off, forget about it, pay no attention to it. Others will rush to the nearest counselor and get advice on how to handle the problem—anything rather than take personal responsibility. A third group will promptly drown, no matter how shallow the water may be; the problem is just too much. Then there is the bluffer, who becomes belligerent. He is going to talk his way out of any problem, especially if it implies any fault on his own part. Every kind of a reaction is available—from hysteria to the flat denial that the problem even exists. Many people have a skill for doing that—they can look the problem right in the face and not see anything.

As soon as we decide to do a little better with a problem, we must begin to estimate what we are doing wrong with it at the

present moment. Thus we do not always try to begin by rearranging the men on the chessboard; we begin by investigating what is wrong with the existing arrangement. We study our own contribution to the emergency. If we find that we have a little streak of egotism that just will not let us admit that we are wrong, even when everything is falling apart—if we have to be right—this is our karmic load from the past. This is the way we have faced everything we have ever faced before, and why we are up to our neck in trouble now.

Here is where self-discipline comes in. We must reduce this pressure. We must gradually gain the power and skill to be quiet and find out the other person's side of the question. We have to learn to be patient and compassionate toward the viewpoints of our associates. If we are able to listen long enough to find out why this other person has taken the attitude that he has, we may ultimately be forced to agree with him. This has happened in a number of instances, to everyone's amazement. And, of course, such agreement is the end of the controversy. But the use of agreement simply to get out of the problem, whether we really believe it or not, is useless. There is no use agreeing with a person who is wrong, just to end an argument. We must agree with a person when he is right, and disagree with ourselves when we know we are wrong.

This is honesty, but it comes hard. It is worth cultivating, for as we gradually develop this situation, we find changes arising in our own health, in our capacities to learn and enjoy. We find the continual enriching of life when we get away from what is often the most terrible of all stumbling blocks—personal infallibility. Actually, it takes only a little honest thinking to know that we are not infallible—no one is. We are not always right—no one is. We are lucky if we are right fifty percent of the time. We like to think we are right, and we support this by forgetting our mistakes and remembering only our occasional victories.

But by thoughtfulness and self-discipline and relaxation, we can enter into a receptive relationship with a problem, concerned primarily with what it has to teach us, and not whether we win the argument or not.

Having just come back from Japan, I would like to mention a White Paper that has been issued there recently on the health of the Japanese people. It is a rather interesting little side-view. For many years, the greatest killer in Japan was tuberculosis, and in the thirties and forties, the average length of life of the Japanese people was under fifty years because of this disease. In the last twenty years, however, the Japanese have added seventeen years to the average life of the citizen. This is one of the most rapid developments in the lengthening of life span anywhere in the world. The main reason that has been given for this is that they are gradually able, through scientific help—not only from their own leaders, but through the discoveries of other nations—to more or less control the tuberculosis situation.

The White Paper then goes on to say that during the last ten years, while they have been gloriously fighting tuberculosis, and winning—in the last ten years, under extreme economic integration and pressure, under the rise of the industrial system and the general shakeup of their culture resulting from their becoming assimilated into the great family of nations—the death rate from heart disease, cancer, arthritis, and kidney trouble has gone up phenomenally. In other words, the more progressive the people are becoming, the sicker they are getting with an entirely new group of ailments.

The fact that this experience is identical with ours—over a somewhat longer period with us—might give a little pause for thought. It would appear that some of the things that we are doing, which are essentially unreasonable, may be transferred to that country; and these people, beginning to do the same unreasonable things that we are doing, are beginning to suffer

the ailments more familiar to us. Altogether, it would indicate that a way of life that escapes from reason ultimately leads to the destruction of health.

Our karmic problem, therefore, presents us with the challenge of the reorganization of our own lives as rapidly as our consciousness will permit, in order that we may not only improve in character, but also strengthen those resources and insights that will protect and guard health. For karma definitely operates in the health area, and that which tears us apart psychically will ultimately disintegrate us physically.

Nature is determined that it is going to win this extraordinary game between human egoism and natural law. Man was created to use his mind, but not to abuse it, and nature simply does not have any sympathy for individuals who break basic rules. Nature continues its function, and man must make the adjustment—not nature. Nature has provided man with all the equipment necessary for that adjustment, but it will not direct the use of his mental energy. This mental energy is something that he has to learn to use; and until he learns to use it wisely, he will suffer from the consequences of his own ignorance.

We are here now, after thousands of years of growth; we are looking forward to growth in the future. We realize that even if man's final insanities lead him to destroy his way of life with nuclear fission, nature's evolutionary program will not be damaged. Everything will continue until nature wins. Everything will go on until man learns to bow before the infinite wisdom of a space too vast for him to even imagine. He must relax his own self-determination in these matters, and recognize his relationship to universal procedure. If he does this, he immediately begins to correct old karma because karma is nothing but the pressure of mistakes demanding solution. It is nothing but the accumulation of weakness, which will never be solved except by constructive strength.

Karma is the result of thousands of years of compromise, of selling out. It is everything that has made up history. If we want to know where our karma comes from, we can read history — its wars and pillages. And through this rather sorry story, we can also read of the magnificent achievements of individuals who did see straight and think straight, and who have become the most admired of human beings. But everywhere in history we see the record of continual compromise, and each person, in his own right—because he was part of that history, because he lived it and made it, because he was the very substance from which history is fashioned - carries with him the unfinished business of philosophical history.

So here we are, with all our lore, and sometimes, like Faust, fools no wiser than before. But we are still trying, and we will have every opportunity necessary if we will try. At any moment in our lives, we can begin a quiet campaign against our own past debts. The first thing is to estimate the nature of our mistake. What is the characteristic in us that keeps us in trouble? What are the common mistakes we make every single day? Are we highly competitive? Must we have more than we can afford? Are we too selfish to take care of our family responsibilities correctly because they interfere with our own pleasure? What are the pressures, the faults, and the attitudes that are making problems for us? We have brought with us compound weaknesses, and every time we reassert one of these failings, we re-establish its karmic pattern.

It does not take too much effort—only a little honesty—to at least find out a few of these weaknesses. I would not recommend that we try to list them all at once—it might be rather discouraging; but there are always a few minor problems that we can start with until we get the knack of it. We can take some characteristic such as forever trying to excuse ourselves when we are wrong, and we can try saying, “I guess I made a

mistake.” The next lesson is, “I know I made a mistake,” but we start by guessing so because it is easier and it is at least a breakthrough in our infallibility complex, and this helps.

We can take a few of these simple things, and by self-discipline, guard our natures against the tendency to perpetuate small errors and faults. Recognizing that we have tendencies to be impatient or discourteous or unpleasant, we can quietly put our minds upon these problems. They are small, but they are often the beginning of greater problems. The individual who does not make the small mistake does not have to compound it later in order to survive. So we can take something, and assert our own character over this trait, recognizing that in the basis of our nature there is the power to make new rules of conduct. There is also the will and the energy necessary to support these rules and make sure that they work. We cannot hope to live well in a personality that has no rules, no governing principles, and no general pattern of conduct.

Little by little, therefore, by increasing our general insight into knowledge, by becoming a little wiser in essential principles every day, we can build up new resources of understanding. These resources will enable us to make better decisions, and self-discipline will give us the courage, by gradually developing control over mental and emotional processes, to carry out these decisions in a proper manner. By learning in this way to make right decisions, we will automatically stop making wrong decisions. We will then discover that by degrees, our karmic patterns work out. Even though we have brought a lot of unfinished business with us from the past, the gradual strengthening of character will create new relationships with experience immediately.

This is one of the subtle aspects of esoteric philosophy in Asia—that the individual, setting up a new chemistry within

his own consciousness, does variously rearrange the karmic patterns. He does not escape them, but he discovers that they are not as difficult or as dangerous as he might at first have thought. Karma is consistently more dangerous when you perpetuate it by stubborn continuance of mistakes. Gradually it becomes more and more set in this way, and nature, rising against it, has to use greater and greater force; and this greater force is something we dislike intensely when it is turned in our direction. It is much better, therefore, to make these decisions, corrections, and amendments ourselves.

If we will accept the fact that we are carrying this unfinished business, and consider it no bad symptom—no worse than having to carry the problems of today into tomorrow—the idea will not distress us unduly. We realize that we have debts that we contracted five years ago, which we are paying off at so much a month, and we accept this. We may regret it, we may wish we had not been so foolish, but we survive these bills. The mere fact that our karma, or the old unfinished business of consciousness, comes from a long way back, does not especially alter the situation. Having contracted a debt, we expect to pay it. Every honorable person does. If he has not enough honor to be willing to pay his own bills, he is not very far up the ladder of progress. But we would like to make good use of the things for which we have created indebtedness. This means that we should solve something; we should pay these bills as reasonably as possible and prevent the accruing of compound interest—and psychotic miseries are a sort of compound interest.

We can, therefore, try to make sure that in the future we have greater wisdom in accepting obligations or causing them, than we had in the past. From this point of view, we come to look at these things very reasonably, and quietly, but we do accept the responsibility for what we have done. We do not consider ourselves the victims of some horrible disaster because the bill

comes in; if the bill is correct, it was bound to come in. So the next thing is to learn how to pay it as quickly, easily, and constructively as possible, so that there will be no problem.

Philosophy does not make this universe a harder place to live in. A place is never too difficult if it is honest. A universe is never impossible if its principles are straight. It comes down finally to the decision of the individual to play fair, to pay his bills, and to try to be more careful and discriminating in his future use of credit. We are here with this burden, but nature has been kind, for in the midst of the payments of old debts come flashes of rewards for old virtues. Life is not just one long debt-paying procedure. We all have pleasant interludes. The optimists remember them; the pessimists forget them; but most of life, for the average individual, is not impossibly difficult. If at this time in his life he will atop making the mistakes that he makes every day, he will find that his allotments of happiness are really greater than he thinks.

For many people, life is full of interesting and valuable experiences, and we must not overlook all this. But when a clash arises, and we see an old happiness slipping away from us, then it is immediately necessary to stop and consider. What are we doing to destroy it? How are we failing to maintain the balance of those good things which are our natural birthright?

If we can solve this problem more or less scientifically, as well as philosophically and spiritually, we will not have too many anxieties, and we will not feel that we are wayward stepchildren of the Infinite. We will recognize that we have our weaknesses and our strengths, and it is our privilege every day to overcome some weakness and increase some strength. If we keep on doing this with a good attitude, ultimate victory is assured.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A FORTUNATE REBIRTH THE SCIENCE OF PLANNED DESTINY

It was not without justification that Gautama Buddha was called “the great psychologist of Asia,” for of all the philosophies of mankind, perhaps there is no other that is so penetrating in terms of practical application of psychological principles to human conduct. This is clearly revealed in Buddha’s teaching about rebirth, and in order that the subject will be as clear as possible, we want to make a series of comparisons between Eastern and Western thinking.

Today we are all heavily burdened with the pressure of our own subconscious psychic load, and we experience ever-increasing difficulty in releasing inner tension. We find it hard to direct our own mind and emotions, which easily escape control and lead to inconsistencies of action, and attitudes foreign to our best beliefs about ourselves and others.

According to Buddhism, the elements of this psychic load conspire to form a kind of entity which we usually call ourselves. We do not differentiate between the pressure-person and the real person. We assume that if we are tired, it is the person who is tired, and that if inconsistencies arise, they come from the total fabric of our nature. Buddha was not of this opinion; he was convinced that the objective experiences of living, and our reactions to situations around us, set up false instincts and attitudes which gradually become identified as ourselves. Thus we become the servants of perpetual emergencies within our own characters.

The Western mentalist, exploring man's subconscious today, realizes more and more that there is danger in unlocking this Pandora's box of chaotic circumstances. A few years ago, it was customary to take the attitude that everyone should be thoroughly ventilated psychologically. His entire inner life should be brought to the surface as rapidly as possible. This attitude is changing, and today we are inclined to believe that the average person would be incapable of orienting himself if his entire psychic load were precipitated upon his objective consciousness. Instead of being immediately inspired, he would be instantly discouraged. Moreover, if he is encouraged to let down the barriers between himself and his own psychic life, he may launch upon his exterior personality so many pressures that they will result in wrong attitudes toward those around him, leading to conflict in family and vocational adjustment.

The Western idea that we should do anything we desire, is gradually disproving itself in our conduct-relationships. We are not absolutely free agents so long as we remain within a pattern of social organization. We have duties to ourselves and responsibilities to society; and to launch this tremendous pressure from within ourselves upon society may, in a small way, parallel the release of an atomic bomb. It may shatter our own lives, as well as the lives of our friends and associates.

Buddhism takes the attitude that such total release is not only unnecessary, but is also very likely to be a detriment rather than a help—particularly if produced by psychological techniques only. Certainly we need to release such pressures as we have, but we must do it in an orderly manner; that is, according to our capacities, and with certain directives from our own consciousness; and perhaps with the wise cooperation of properly trained counselors. The complete extraversion of ourselves reveals, in most instances, too much indigestible material—psychic content which emerges prematurely and

therefore places us in dilemmas for which we are not yet able to find reasonable remedies.

To prevent this problem, Buddha stressed the importance of reducing psychic pressures before they are released into expression. Any individual, who is under tension, already has the possibility of self-diagnosis. He knows there must be a heavy psychic load, or he would not be under such stress. Nature tries to give him outlets for these pressures, as in dream symbolism, or through the development of his external interests — vocational and avocational. Nature is forever attempting to release pressures gradually, in a way not likely to endanger the integration of the person.

In the East, the problem of reducing psychic pressure becomes the essential science of well being. This science is very important in Buddhism, because of Buddha's formula that psychic pressure is the primary cause of rebirth. The doctrine of reincarnation is therefore presented not merely as an opportunity-concept, not only as an escape mechanism from the pressures of now, nor even as a reasonable expression of man's instinct toward evolution and survival—it is more than this. It is an ethical-cultural concept, impelling the individual who believes it to the immediate task of reforming and revising his own internal content.

According to the Buddhistic idea, tensions create a kind of fixation which centers around a hyper-ego that is built up of I want and its correlative I am. The individual is building a hyper-ego if he deifies his own desires, making his own purposes sovereign and supreme in his life, and sacrificing common good for personal gain or aggrandizement. This person also develops other personal-relations complexes which have certain familiar characteristics.

We have probably all had some experience, for example, with an individual who is always right, regardless of his obvious mistakes; or the person who is determined to dictate and force his own way of life upon those around him; or the one who sets himself up as a universal critic, passing judgment upon all other persons or things; or the individual who feels so sovereign a uniqueness that he regards himself as indispensable and feels that all life will be impoverished with his departure. Anyone who builds this kind of hyper-ego structure within himself, is isolating his own center of life, whether he realizes it or not, from all the motions and natural rhythms by which the order of living is properly maintained.

Thus, the more personal we become, particularly in a negative sense—in the sense of proprietary or dictatorial personality—the less flexible we are. As the tendency grows to exaggerate small and trivial concerns into tremendous emergencies, the individual interiorly crystallizes into a hard core, and this crystallization sets up within him a person who is peculiarly deaf and, at the same time, constantly subject to shock and stress. The moment we exaggerate ourselves, we move out of harmony with fact and we invite the supreme penalty of misery, misfortune, and tragedy. As long as we remain flexible and receptive to ideas; as long as we can adjust psychologically and are capable of estimating values with moderation, so long do we find that our lives are better.

Through the experiences of living, and through the psychological emphasis upon the sensory reflexes, the story of man's life is the story of a gradual crystallization; the isolation of the hyper-ego until it remains comparatively alone within its own little fortress. As Westerners, we like to think sometimes that our inner life is a fortress against the world. In the East, the tendency is to think of the inner life as a garden uniting us with all that exists.

Thus, Western man, turning inward, goes for defense; whereas Eastern man turns to his inner life for release. The difference in these two attitudes is not based upon what happens to us, but upon the conditioning by which we interpret these happenings. If we believe, basically, in a doctrine of release, everything that happens contributes to release. If, however, we believe in a doctrine of defense and offense, then everything contributes to these pressures; and because of the frustration of circumstances around us, unassimilated experience passes into us as pressure and sets up further pressure mechanisms in our inner life.

In order to cope with this predicament, we try, in one way or another, to lower this pressure, because we know that we cannot survive if it is not finally brought within manageable boundaries. In Western living, we regard this pressure that we build up as the dynamic motivation, or the volitional principle, behind progress. We like to think, for example, that the neurotic is the patron of progress. There is no question that he does make tremendous, pressureful contributions. But where have several thousands of years of such contributions brought us? We have arrived at one great cumulative pressure, which we find extremely difficult to manage.

Today we are beginning to sense that a civilization built upon pressure is not secure; that a career built upon it is not secure; that a culture founded upon it may not be an essential culture. We are beginning to suspect that we are striving to attain something worthwhile through wrong methods. There is always the possibility that even wrong methods will ultimately contribute to the final form of good, but it is a long and difficult course, attended by a great deal of unnecessary suffering. From the time a young person starts out in life today, he is placed in a pressure-culture, and we give very little thought to meeting this emergency.

Some time ago, I read an interesting article dealing with what constitutes the ideal psychological background for a successful clergyman. In this classification, the first requisite for success is to be an adequate business executive. Under those conditions, certain of our Wall Street brokers should make excellent ministers, but it is not quite certain that they are going to be called to the ministry.

The article was attempting to be entirely fair, and it indicated that the duties of the modern minister covered practically every field of human experience. He had to be a psychologist, for he was frequently forced to arbitrate the social and personal relationships of his parishioners. He had to be practical and farsighted; he had to be a bit of a scientist and a bit of a philosopher, and in the list of things had to be "a bit of," religion appeared to have been overlooked. Perhaps it was assumed that all of these things had to be sustained by religious motivation, and that only a very dedicated person would attempt so difficult and variegated a career.

The actual fact was, however, that the Western clergyman was exposed to as much psychological pressure as any member of his congregation, inasmuch as he was expected to become a highly competitive person, working with identically the same factors with which the world in general is burdened. He had no surer escape from the common psychological pressures than those whom he attempted to lead. He was a man who had to live a noble example and at the same time take care of the elders, the small talk, the gossip, and the minor politics of his denomination. It was his mission to tread that very narrow path between the service of God and the pleasure of his temporal superiors in the hierarchy. If he was able to accomplish all this, he was indeed a noble person.

Here is Western religion moving into precisely the same basic pressure-pattern as economics, and if our religion moves into

this pattern, what have we left? Our culture in general is moving into disillusionment, discouragement, and a kind of wild exhibitionism to escape from the tremendous psychic load that is within the individual and the collective. There is no clear vision of any other purpose, and there is a prevailing materialism in education, science, and even in psychology itself, although this is opening in many places to idealism because the practitioner cannot survive without it. These conditions bring us, as Oswald Spengler pointed out in his *Decline of the West*, to this emergency in our modern way of life which drives us desperately and inevitably to the East.

Now, this East toward which we are being driven is subject to certain modifications of its own. East, by virtue of physical circumstances, is being pushed toward the West, and today the Asiatic countries are struggling for their place in the great economic pattern of life. Therefore, the East, as we know it, and perhaps the West as we know it, are no longer historical-geographical areas. East and West are represented by archaic but fundamental systems of culture. These cultures may gradually lose all geographical orientation.

To the modern Western thinker, the East is not just Asia; it is Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tse. To the East, the West is not any longer a geographical region; it is an area of activity represented by the great rise of economic industrialism. So these boundaries become in themselves almost psychological, and the East that the truth seeker is seeking is mostly an orient in himself - a way of life which he has interpreted as existing elsewhere, and which he wishes could exist in him. He is interested in a concept with which he has associated Asiatic thinking, and that is the concept of the Eastern way of life, particularly as embodied in the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

In these teachings, we are searching for a solution, and we no longer regard Buddha as essentially an Oriental. We recognize

him as a world thinker with basic contributions to persons of all nations, races, and times. His conclusions were based upon the caste system of his own day, which was loaded with frustration. What he called caste we may call class. What he regarded as the tyranny of religious tradition, finds its equivalent in our recognition of the tyranny of industrial, economic, social tradition, as we have it here in the West. In both instances, East and West, an artificial, man-made pattern destroys man. Buddha spoke against it in Asia; Plato spoke against it in the West; great leaders, religious and idealistic, have always spoken against it; but their voices have been drowned in the common cry for success, aggrandizement, and what we have termed progress. This progress must be re-evaluated.

It does not follow that the individual can hope to change immediately these general conditions. His first step, as Buddha pointed out, must be the changing of himself in relation to these conditions. The conditions are not the danger; the situations that factually exist are not the cause of the trouble. The real cause lies in the misinterpretation and misuse of these things, and a false alignment between the individual and his environmental responsibilities. It is not our activities that give us trouble; it is our lack of internal integration in and around the areas of our activities. We simply are not leading ourselves in the right direction, and if we do not, we will not arrive there.

Recognizing this pressure-personality as having within it certain negative attributes, Buddha came to the conclusion that the most powerful of these negative attributes was the individual's personal desire to survive. In some mysterious way, survival—the impulse to continue—became the minute, almost unnoticed foundation stone upon which the entire super-structure of human problem has been erected. Behind and beneath it was this little center of determination to be, to sacrifice everything else to self-survival. Consequently, we have the concept

that self-preservation is nature's first law. There is some doubt as to whether this is essentially true, but certainly, for man, it has become not merely a drive, but the source of a tremendous structure of psychological pressure.

What does man mean by survival? Does he actually mean the continuance of himself as a spiritual force in nature? Usually he does not. He regards survival as the continuance of his attitudes, his beliefs, his opinions, and his desires. Since he cannot approach directly the problem of survival, he attempts to create symbolic monuments that will continue after him, by which he will be distinguished and remembered for being a certain kind of a person. There is some question as to what kind of a person he will be, but this is not important in comparison to the fact that he will survive in the memory of man. The struggle for survival, therefore, extends not only to the continuity of life, but to the continuity of the achievement of the individual.

The immediate struggle for survival is still more intimate. Here survival is based upon the fact that we survive only to the degree that our way of doing things is accepted by others, so that we can overwhelm some other surviving thing. Every time we are thwarted in anything, our instinct seems to tell us that our survival is threatened. Here, again, the Western point is that survival is the assurance of the continuing right to do as we please; whereas in Eastern thinking, it is the continual right to do that which is right or necessary. Survival, in the Eastern concept, arises from obedience; in the Western concept, it arises from complete freedom of thought and action, with no acceptance of responsibility.

Thus, the struggle for survival is the struggle for freedom; freedom from work, worry, responsibility, ideas, attitudes, demands, and needs of others. Freedom also requires the total right to devote ourselves to what we regard as our own needs. It is obvious that such interpretations are dangerous to the home,

society, and to the world. Yet what we call hyper-individualism, the right of the individual to be himself at all times, causes us to regard this psychic pressure-field as the self, and to go all out in a complete program for the defense of our right to act as we please and impose our moods upon ourselves and others. We do not usually say bluntly that we do not care about others, but only about ourselves; more often, we develop diplomatic ways to gratify our own requirements or opinions.

This tendency, according to Buddha, is actually the root of the entire problem of rebirth. Rebirth is therefore the continuance of a pressure-personality, which is reborn simply because it has an entity-existence created by the individual who has tolerated it and enabled it to develop and express through the conflicts of action in his life. The attributes of this personality then become the dominating conditions which must be faced in the future.

Consequently, the person who is able to organize his internal life, not only achieves a real benefit for the moment, but also directs his future destiny in wiser and better ways. If what actually survives is this pressured person, then this person will continue in this peculiar qualified survival until the pressures themselves are exhausted by the infinite duration of life, which has within it the power to exhaust all things contrary to its own nature and its own purposes.

To prepare for a better future, then, in the concept of Buddhism, requires identically the same mechanisms as preparing for a better immediate perspective on life. This type of thinking is contrary to our Western way, but we are not doing well enough with our way to be able to advance it as a valid course of conduct. If we continue as we are going at the present time, Western civilization cannot endure; and if it fails to endure, this is not because it is right. It is failing because it is wrong, in the same way that a person who is always right and always

unhappy cannot be right, because rightness does not end in misery.

If we then compare the Eastern and Western concepts, we observe that the East is seeking ways to reduce pressure, and the first and most obvious defense against pressure is a certain directive imposed upon the interpretation of sensory phenomena. Through his sensory perceptions, man is constantly carrying a certain baggage into his inner life, where it is stored away. Ultimately, the space for such storage becomes exhausted. The individual's internal becomes overburdened, but the testimonies continue to flow in, and they are placed under the censorship of faculties which have lost their power to judge righteous judgment.

Thus the individual, accepting continuous phenomena through his sensory perceptions, does not understand what he accepts, and cannot think through the challenge of the symbolism with which he is surrounded. He is continuously allowing these pressures to move in, but he is opposing no discrimination of his own.

Buddhism therefore points out that the beginning of the reduction of pressure lies in man's gradual development of censorship over the things he sees and hears, and in his ability to integrate the experiences of life with more wisdom and understanding. He must learn to prevent bitterness and negation from moving in and becoming part of his memory-pattern. If we can remember only what we have suffered, we are not having a good life, nor a wise life, and we certainly are not having a spiritual life. Our suffering, in most instances, is the result of frustration in some purpose of our own, and as a result, the universe has lost its attractiveness.

So we must learn to use discrimination in accepting the stimulation of sensory reflexes. This is directly involved with the ability to find the facts about things. The only thing that will

not cause pressure is fact. The discovery of fact is the recognition of the inevitable, and in the presence of the inevitable, man is not pressure-ridden. The great facts of living are not the things that cause him the greatest anxiety, for he accepts these facts. It is only when he misinterprets them or, in one way or another, departs from an honest evaluation of them, that he comes into difficulty.

Now, the deadly enemy of right interpretation of fact is haste, which results in preconception taking over. Haste does not give us the opportunity to be ourselves at our best. The tremendous tempos that we build up therefore make it relatively impossible for us to find fact and the continual interference of our emotional attitudes also results in the loss of factual existence.

Buddha said that it is vanity to attempt to correct this false set of values by a tremendous effort to penetrate, to organize, to dominate, or to overthrow. The real answer lies in the capacity of the individual to become receptive to fact. To gain this receptivity, he must have certain principles and values within himself. First of all, he has to know, as completely as he can, that this acceptance of fact is right, and that these things which he has substituted are not right. He must recognize that this acceptance of fact is true religion, true philosophy, true science, true medicine, true psychology, and true art. He must gain the realization that the power, or the ability, to be completely and entirely factual brings man as near to the truth as his objective life permits, and that fact is the long shadow of proof extending down into matter. Fact should not be worshipped or regarded as ultimate, but it should be recognized as the immediate necessity to the restoration of man's place in nature.

If we take our own best factual convictions and give them authority in conduct, the pattern of our living changes almost instantly. Most persons believe, with St. Paul, in the spiritual significance of hope, faith, and charity. Also, they believe that

by charity St. Paul meant Love, so that the greatest of our needed virtues are faith, hope, and love. Buddhism and other great religions of the world confirm these to be factual statements, and we believe them.

Therefore, the problem is to discover these facts and impose them upon our daily living. Why do we not live according to them? The obvious answer is that we are able to retain these facts in our minds, but we are already so completely loaded with subconscious pressures that the factual ideas have not enough energy to overcome our long-conditioned negation. Our inner lives are so flooded that they burst through and bring our conscious purposes to nothing.

Consciously, we accept faith, hope, and love; subconsciously we are burdened by our own immense load of fear, superstition, ignorance, and egoism. Wherever we would do good, therefore, evil is ever nigh unto us; evil, in this sense, being pressure, or the inability of the individual to be the person that he knows he ought to be. Yet if he continues to know one thing and do another, has he any right to expect happiness or security? If he believes in love, yet hates, is it reasonable to hope that the love he believes in will serve him, rather than the hate which he practices? If he affirms he has discovered certain inalienable facts relating to conduct, and then lives contrary to these facts every day; if he honors the great world teachers, but disobeys them in every particular; under such conditions, has he a right to assume that his life will be harmonious and successful?

Buddha pointed out that this inconsistency is impossible, and must result in utter confusion. All this confusion leads to the overwhelming of a conscious being. The consciousness of now, inspired by the good book, by the kindly word, by some generous and pertinent discovery, is resolved to live according to principles, and decides immediately that there will be no more bickering and contending. But there arises an incident, perhaps

a trivial one, and all this resolution dissolves. The moment the pressures are released, man forgets the principles upon which he depends for existence.

The method for reducing these pressures is the highest form of philosophical and religious discipline. Buddha bound this thought with reincarnation, because to him, the cycle of necessity, or of rebirth, represented nothing more or less than the long road which leads ultimately to release from pressure. The purpose of reincarnation is to exhaust the error in the life, mind, and hyper-ego of the person. We are born because we are wrong; and because we are all here, we are eternal monuments to our own errors. We continue because, to some measure, we are bound to that which is not ultimately true. To modern man, most, if not all, ultimate truths are dim, for they can be known only as we release our inner life from pressures and make it susceptible to the presence of reality, or facts, without distortion or exaggeration.

Buddha said that the doctrine of rebirth, in its cultural meaning, is a very factual statement that the individual must continue until the substance of his individuality is exhausted. In Buddhism, individuality is a state of separateness or difference from truth. Under no other condition can it exist, because reality is one, fact is one, truth is one. Anything that wants to be different, therefore, must be separate, in its own mind, from that which is substantially indivisible.

Actually, no individual, as a living thing, can be separate from life, but he can imagine that he is, and he can live as though he is, and the result is trouble. He can believe that his mind is different from Universal Mind, but the only way he can prove this is by being wrong; he cannot be different and right, for there is only one right. Therefore, to the degree that we fall short of unity on the level of life, we are capable of the illusion of death. Death is merely man's inability to experience the fact

of life totally. In order to experience any of these deficiencies, we must fall short, in our understanding, of that which is sufficient and factual.

For example, when doubt or fear assails us, it must be because we have misunderstood love. We have misunderstood the universal kind of love which is infinite, benevolent, and according to the law. The person in trouble has separated himself from the divine plan of things. He is trying to build his own universe, like the fallen angels who set up their kingdom in the abyss against the kingdom of heaven. Everything which arises from ignorance, loaded and burdened with superstition and fear, attempts to set up its own way, contrary to the way of the universe. But the structures of self-will are like monuments raised on the shore of the sea; the rising of the tides of reality will destroy these monuments. Everything that is built of vanity is ultimately the victim of that vanity.

In harmony with this concept, Buddha pointed out that reincarnation is a psychological state, and not, as many people think, simply a going-on-forever. It is not the concept that your previous mistakes give rise to your present life, and your present mistakes will give rise to your next life, and the mistakes of that life will give rise to another, and so on to infinity. This is not the teaching of Buddha. The real Buddhist concept is that the individual must continue to exist somewhere, as an individual, so long as he is incapable of experiencing his unity with life.

Now, the mere affirmation of that unity means nothing; just as the affirmation that we are going to be friendly means nothing if a few hours later we are extremely critical of others. This may be a nice notion in passing, but it has not the weight of real vitality. The individual may resolve to achieve unity, but this requires a series of pre-achievements which the person usually does not attain. Therefore, he continues; and this

continuance is for several reasons: he believes in the virtue of continuance, and he believes that it is more important for him to survive than it is for him to be right. This may sound like a strange kind of choice, but when the decision is next, it is natural, and there is no choice, and actually, no conscious decision. The average individual is wrong in so many things, that to him, wrongness is security, and this continues until rightness begins to take over.

The path of the Buddhistic philosophy on rebirth consequently points out that rebirth itself is not necessarily a total punishment. An individual is rewarded according to the things he does well; that is, he is simply placed in situations where his natural integrities operate. If he has attained a certain degree of victory over circumstances, he comes to better circumstances; but as these grosser problems are corrected, more subtle ones take their place. For instance, the individual with many abilities and many opportunities, earned by a good destiny, may become arrogant, thereby frustrating his advantages.

Thus, the pattern of living is never secure until the person moves toward reality; until he moves gradually, simply, and naturally into a highly factual relationship with life. He does this by inviting discrimination in his nature, and very often this journey begins with a reasonable amount of thoughtfulness and perhaps a survey of the basic real thoughts which have made man important in nature.

With a moderate amount of study and research, the individual is more likely to arraign his facts. From the great religions and philosophies of his race, he gains certain intellectual concepts about facts. If these concepts impel him to obedience, and cause him to do the things which are revealed to him as right, then action begins the process of transforming destiny. And it is action of some kind, not hopes or fears, which must

transform the life of man and move him profoundly in an orderly direction.

There are two kinds of essential action: the mental-emotional, physical action of the objective level, where thoughts, feelings, and activities are gradually brought under discipline; and contemplative action, which is the internal establishment of foundations through which certain enrichment begins to move from within. This enrichment is largely supported and nourished by a censored, regulated diet of the senses, so that the judgment of the person begins to lose its eccentricity and excesses.

Let us take a simple example. Almost every individual today is prejudiced on some level, and has never thought to question or doubt these prejudices. To him, they are facts, for he receives continuous confirmation of them. This is because he will accept only that which confirms, and will remain totally unaware of that which does not confirm his own attitudes. If by some opportunity he is forced to be aware of something that is not in conformity with his prejudices, he will regard it as a hopelessly isolated example with no direct bearing on the theme. Thus, his prejudiced opinion helps to build a hyper-ego, which in turn becomes an instrument of the prejudice.

In this way, the prejudice becomes a factor in the continuity of life, for rebirth for that individual must go on until that prejudice dies by being replaced with a fact or a reality. Prejudice is always intemperate; fact is always temperate. Prejudice is destructive; fact is the rescuing agent of the destructive instinct. If it takes ten lives, a hundred lives or five hundred lives, the prejudice must be replaced, and the harder the person fights for the prejudice, the greater the number of his embodiments will be.

This is the basic Buddhistic idea. Now, if a man has only one prejudice to work with, he may get out of this sorry situation in

five or ten lives. But when you realize that the sensory perceptions plus the faculty-combinations are setting up a continuous pattern, operating from forty-nine different focal points to produce literally hundreds of millions of possible errors, this becomes a tremendous force fighting against truth. All errors are barriers, or isolating situations. Working together, they no longer appear as separate entities, but as a blend.

In man, the total of all these prejudices, or errors, creates a hyper-ego which does not exactly resemble any of them, but exists only because of all of them. This hyper-ego is the point of view within ourselves, which dominates our conduct, and finally imposes itself upon our senses, until we have what is called a closed corporation. The individual is set in his ways; he is set in a pattern from which he cannot usually escape voluntarily.

Now let us suppose that this person could live for five hundred years instead of some four-score and ten years; what would happen? Would this pattern break? Probably not, for the reason that if he could live this long, and this phenomenon were a general state, the motion of change in society would be much slower. If the same persons continued to dominate society for four or five hundred years, then we would have the continuance of similar policies for that length of time; whereas now with a group dominating only twenty to thirty years, and then giving its rulership to another generation, arising under different conditioning, we have a great deal of social variety.

In the same general thinking, if the individual lived longer, he would merely become more and more immersed in the consequences of his own patterns. He would discover a lingering disquietude. He would find that instead of being a creature of vaster opportunity, he would have a greater and greater karmic reaction falling upon himself. He would find that the longer

span, producing a greater number of errors, would merely extend the period of tribulation attended upon living.

By the circumstance of death, therefore, nature very wisely breaks up the environmental pattern. This is the strongest force which it exercises against crystallization—both physical and psychological. By this circumstance, a group of individuals with approximately the same social-psychological reactions to environment, move out of the pattern more or less together and, after a certain time, enter into another pattern. This pattern, however, has been moving during the absence of that group, and the new pattern stimulates and offers a clean opportunity to begin to work off some of the accumulated pressure. The world-pattern has changed, and a great number of situations by which crystallization was intensified have broken up. Thus, the person is born each time with tendencies which he must revive in a new environment, under different conditions, by the continuance of the same principle of error within himself.

It is this principle of error, therefore, moving within the person, that will cause him to wreck the new environment as he wrecked the old. It is only when this principle is corrected within himself that he can move into a new environment and achieve the maximum amount of progress. The unpleasant person living in a certain home, decides to leave that home and move into another home. In a short time, the new domicile is subject to the same miseries as the old one, because the individual has brought his troubles with him. In the same way, we bring our troubles into incarnation, but we bring them always into a new pattern. In this new pattern, we must once more go through the process of proving the infinite diversity of error, and how error can continue to create particular maladjustments which obscure fact, truth, and reality.

Buddha said that the only answer is to get at the root of the error as quickly as possible; not only for individual good, but for

the common good; not only for this life, but for the future. It is necessary to find out what this error is and why the individual has been a slave to it. It is the person who goes on, but the error with which he has identified himself so completely is himself, and he is the error. This, while it is a rather abstract philosophic thought, is not completely incomprehensible. It becomes more meaningful as we watch the motions of error in our present society. To correct error, means to build upon certain instincts and values, which do exist if we will give them a chance.

Thus, each person can be, in large measure, his own physician, if he will observe what makes him sick and stop doing it. Now, he may not always be sure, but in many instances he can be reasonably certain of the general nature of his errors. He knows culturally, and he knows by conscience, that certain courses of action are wrong. If he recognizes that he is not right, this means that there still exists within his nature a preserving principle of right which is strong enough to grow with help. If, however, he ignores this principle long enough, it will apparently cease to function, and there will be no way of recognizing error except by its unfortunate consequence.

Assuming that most persons in our way of life have some basic cultural concept, through association with philosophy, with good books, with kindly persons, so that they already have a rudimentary structure of available ethics, then the problem is the quiet, methodical application of this realization to conduct; for the inner life of the individual is moved by conduct alone, either exterior or contemplative. Recognizing that contemplative action is a kind of activity not visible, but rather more valuable and intensive because it is not visible, it then becomes part of the discipline of philosophy to encourage the contemplation of value as an interior experience. The individual can therefore sit down quietly and attempt to contemplate upon value as he knows it should be. Perhaps, in his daily life, he cannot practice

it completely, but he can strengthen inwardly the realization of its rightness.

This, to a large measure, was the original import of prayer; the individual restating his basic allegiance to truth and the ever present God of mankind. The actual dedication of self to the divine is identical with dedication to truth. So, by some contemplative means, the individual restores, at least as a mental-emotional experience, the fact of his allegiance to truth. He reaffirms his inward dedication to reality. He admits the weakness of his outer life, but affirms that he is aware of this, and he resolves to try sincerely to do better. This contemplative mood, moderately held, and supported by consistent action, does have a valuable psychological effect upon life. The moment we acknowledge the sovereignty of reality, we begin to scatter the shadows that arise from non-reality; we develop a central strength against adversity.

If, then, we also realize that this struggle against unreality is a large and long-range problem, we can see how the attainment of truth, the achievement of a complete adjustment with fact or reality, cannot be a hasty attainment. There is much more to be done than man can do in one lifetime. The great artist can never be a perfect artist in one life; nor can the great musician satisfy the fullness of his own musical insight in one life. The supreme achievement, therefore—the achievement of man's victory over the illusion in himself—cannot normally be attained with rapidity; it takes a continuous effort and constant dedication.

Thus, rebirth becomes a period of future opportunity to complete progress, rather than punishment for past mistakes. It means that nature, in its wisdom has provided man with the means of working out his salvation. Reincarnation, or rebirth, is therefore this period assigned to the individual to work out

the illusion in himself and to place his life firmly upon the foundation of value.

Buddha pointed out that the first step on this path, like the single step which is at the beginning of every journey, is the gradual inward realization that there is a problem. This must come first. Also, there is the conviction that within man, the core of his problem lies in the illusion resulting from excesses of thought and emotion. The individual gets into trouble because he cannot be quiet long enough to examine, reasonably and completely, the situations in which he finds himself. He cannot be factual because he jumps at conclusions; because he is for this and against that.

In Buddhism, meditation is the moderation of all intensity of the mind and emotions, whereby the individual gains a clearer insight into fact because he does not distort it with his own mind. Nature conceals no facts; when man creates fiction around fact, he produces mystery. To remove mystery, doubt, and fear, he must therefore search for fact, discover it, and cling to it. He will learn that fact is not cruel, nor difficult, nor heartless, but is actually the kindest and most gentle of all things, and that all hardships arise from the attempt to evade it. Fact is a beautiful and sacred thing, giving to the religious person the full opportunity for the expression and realization of his philosophic insight; and to the scientist, the full comprehension of the magnitude of the laws with which he is concerned. Every field of knowledge and learning is ennobled by fact, crippled and deformed by error.

The second Buddhist point is very definite. Namely, to recover from the belief that we already have the fact. The circumstances under which we exist are the perfect evidence of the degree of fact we have attained. If, therefore, we are not sufficient, if we are not able to relax, if we are not able to face our own inner life without fear or negative thoughts; if we are

not at peace with ourselves, our neighbor, our God, we do not have fact. Buddha pointed out, however, that the attainment of fact does not require a total departure from a reasonable physical adjustment with society. It simply means that the individual must penetrate with understanding through the physical state in which he lives, so that he is able to meet all of his responsibilities here, but not to be caught in the turmoil of this world. On the level of economics, for example, fact is manifested by the best, the noblest, and the most real use of all that we have or which is under our control. Thus we prove fact by right use, even as we prove it by right attitude and by right feelings.

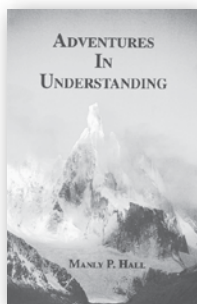
If we attain these ends, we gradually influence the future lives which we must live. According to Buddha, we are then born more advantageously, in larger spheres of opportunity, because we have earned it. This earning does not mean that an abstract judge of some kind presents us with this benefit. By the very fact that we change our living, we become capable of attuning to a better level of value, thus achieving victory over circumstances. Through time, ignorance is diminished; through repeated embodiments, the desire of the individual to continue in a separate relationship with reality, diminishes, until finally, having exhausted that which is false or incomplete, only reality is left. This reality is an indivisible state of total consciousness. Therefore, it is the Parinirvana of Buddhism. The individual no longer seeks truth, accepts truth, or adjusts to truth; rather, the individual is truth; he is indivisibly identified with reality. This is the end of all punishment, all sorrow; for punishment and sorrow are the consequences of wrong adjustment.

The individual who attains to interior apperception, gradually achieves right adjustment, and the reward of it begins as soon as it is attempted. By this means, as Buddha pointed out, the transition from one life to another becomes a gentle acceptance of the needs of consciousness; the natural inclination

and instinct to improve, to go on until final victory is achieved. This victory is *at-one-ment*, or union, with the Divine. Beginning with this simple procedure, we can work toward it if we accept it as so. Having thus accepted it, we must scientifically practice this acceptance as a guide to conduct. Living according to our acceptance, we grow with it; living contrary to our acceptance, we create tension and pressure within the psychic life. The great remover of pressure is acceptance, even as the great cause of pressure is rebellion.

Through these basic processes, Buddha worked out a very simple and natural science. It is a science because it is factual and lawful. It is scientific because if the method is followed, the result is inevitable. Thus doubts, fears, and uncertainties are removed from living, and a basic and complete pattern of values is established.

Other Related Works by Manly P. Hall



ADVENTURES IN UNDERSTANDING

Eight lectures on the art of interpersonal relationships to help sincere individuals deal with the practical problems of life. Chapter titles include: "*Simple Defenses Against the Impulse to Become Irritated*" and "*Achievement Without Tension.*"

\$14.95. Paperback. 218pp. ISBN: 0-89314-809-1

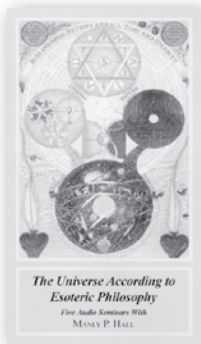
MEDITATION SYMBOLS IN EASTERN & WESTERN MYSTICISM: MYSTERIES OF THE MANDALA

The fruition of a lifetime of study and interpretation of Eastern and Western mystical symbolism, this classic text explores meditation symbols throughout history in thirteen illustrated chapters, highlighting Meditation symbols; meditation, the experience of reality; the mandala as a symbol of the universe; the *Lotus Sutra* and its mandala; mandalas in Chinese Buddhism and Western mysticism; mystical symbols of Jacob Boehme; mandalas in world government.

\$29.95. Paperback. 91pp. Illustrated ISBN: 0-89314-929-6



Recommended Audio Recordings by Manly P. Hall



THE UNIVERSE ACCORDING TO ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

This archival audio series of Manly P. Hall includes over eight hours of lecture material.

1. *Of Creation and the Gods*
2. *Of the Universe and Its Laws*
3. *Of the Sun and Its Planets*
4. *Of Nature and Its Kingdoms*
5. *Of Man: His Origin and Destiny*

\$40.00. 5 Audio Cassettes. ISBN: 0-89314-289-1

Visit Our Online Catalog at www.prs.org

UNIVERSITY of PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH

A CONTEMPORARY WISDOM ACADEMY

Nationally Accredited MASTER'S DEGREES

- **Consciousness Studies**
- **Transformational Psychology**

TRANSFORM YOUR PERSPECTIVE AND YOUR LIFE | In today's global postmodern world, a holistic, multicultural, evolutionary and spiritual perspective is a **necessity in every life enterprise**. For those lacking these consciousness skills, today's world presents a crisis; for those possessing them, a wide opportunity and a promise. With a graduate degree from UPR, you can more fully realize your **highest potential** and become a **dynamic participant** for achieving universal cultural and spiritual harmony in our time.

WHAT OUR GRADUATES BECOME | Our graduates are inspired by the aspiration to become leaders of society with the capacity for living well and doing good as teachers, writers, scholars, life-coaches and administrators.

Online Learning | the wave of the future

- **UPR utilizes universally accessible online and telecommunication technologies to teach its graduate courses**
- **Learn in your free time and wherever you can access the Internet and/or a CD player**
- **Enjoy the privilege of interacting with the world's leading teachers of wisdom**
- **Online learning keeps tuition at affordable rates**

For complete information, including a Catalog visit our website at <http://www.uprs.edu>

e-mail | registrar@uprs.edu

phone | **800.548.4062**

fax | **323.663.9443**



UNIVERSITY OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH

3910 Los Feliz Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90027



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Manly P. Hall founded the Philosophical Research Society, Inc., a non-profit organization in 1934, dedicated to the dissemination of useful knowledge in the fields of philosophy, comparative religion, and psychology. In his long career, spanning more than seventy years of dynamic public activity, Mr. Hall delivered over 8000 lectures in the United States and abroad, authored over 150 books and essays, and wrote countless magazine articles.

VISIT US AT WWW.PRS.ORG