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Dedication

Naqsh faryadi hai kis ki shoqi-e-tehrir ka

Kaghazi hai pairahan har paikar-e-tasweer ka

Mirza Ghalib

(To whose desire does this writing supplicate

Every letter in the text is a plaintiff dressed in paper)

Publisher's Note

Author:
Dr. Shiv Talwar, President, Spiritual Heritage Education Network Inc.

On Inclusiveness of Wisdom and Faith Traditions

Every cultural tradition seems to be marked by two ways of life. One is characterized by wisdom and the other by faith based upon belief and acceptance. Religious traditions may be many, but their wisdom is one. Wisdom transcends critical thinking yet is attained through it.

Wisdom Traditions

Seekers of wisdom are interested in knowing the truth of existence. They ask questions such as: What is the existence of the universe from? Where do I come from? What is my relationship with the rest of existence? They indefatigably seek true answers to such questions with dispassion and detachment. Having found the answers that satisfy their heads as well hearts, they live their lives in accordance with them.

They find all perceptible existence emerging from one spiritual essence. Every creature, every animal, every human being and everything else, whether terrestrial or divine, is a manifestation of this eternal reality unmanifest in itself. They find that all existence, whether manifest or unmanifest, is indeed one at the core. All humanity is one in essence, all divinity is one in essence. Humanity and divinity are one in essence. Not only

humanity and divinity, but all forms in nature, animate and inanimate, are one in essence.

They consider this imperceptible essence of existence, whether terrestrial or divine, as That One spiritual reality of metaphysics. It is this reality that manifests itself as different forms in the perceptible universe. It is the common ground from which infinitely diverse beings in the universe and the universe itself emerge. It is the common ground in which they all sustain and it is the common ground into which they all dissolve. This common ground, although imperceptible and mystical, connects all existence into a kinship of one. We are not only a family but one being with diverse bodies. Wisdom traditions strive to live the relationship of oneness and as a result there is little conflict amongst the followers of wisdom traditions associated with different religions. They have a high sense of belonging to any community in which they live. They may use culture-specific terminology and rhetoric in telling their story, their love and compassion for the manifested universe is a representation for their love for the underlying essence.

Faith Traditions

The inner structure of our very being is a barrier to the development of wisdom preventing us from living the non-dual oneness of wisdom traditions. We have a body driven from the inside by a mind. We begin our physical existence with a helpless body run by a mind with rudimentary senses and no intellectual capacity whatsoever; we are unable to think let alone think critically to develop wisdom. Our senses keep informing us of our individual distinctiveness when extrasensory integrative wisdom is well beyond our scope. Our intellectual faculty of thought begins developing when sensory divisiveness

is well entrenched in our psyche. Inbuilt fear of survival runs life unconsciously in an automatic fashion. We learn to accept things on authority. Thus, acceptance on faith has a head start over critical thinking.

The state of our early existence is the very reason why our societies want us to start going to school in our early childhood. We need to develop our ability to know. To develop our intellectual capacity, we are taught various disciplines of knowledge. We are fed the legendary stork fable when we enquire about the source of our existence. This inquiry is built naturally in being human and the academy keeps overlooking to educate us meaningfully in it keeping us practically ignorant of the metaphysical truth of the oneness of essence. This truth stays hidden from our awareness. This is the truth needed to develop the wisdom for living in non-dual oneness, peace and harmony amongst our planetary family.

Faith traditions associated with different religions, on the other hand cannot comprehend and accept the possibility of an unseen and imperceptible spiritual reality manifesting as the universe with all its existents. They are not only indifferent to logic, critical reason, physical or metaphysical truths or human wisdom, but averse to them. They are simple folk disposed to accepting things on authority and be led by faith. Traditions of faith comprise the main stream of practically all religious cultures.

Faith traditions characteristically accredit a culture-specific divine form with the creation and administration of the universe. Imperceptible to the senses of perception but perceptible to human mind, the divinity of faith is a subtle being with a finite though small degree of concreteness. Its relationship with the imperceptible Absolute of metaphysics with a degree of

concreteness of 0 (zero) is no different from that of any other manifested being with the essence. Divinity comes into existence only when manifestation at large comes into existence; only the unseen essence is eternal, it pre-existed perceptible existence and it will exist after all perceptible existence ceases to exist.

Divinity is commonly perceived as a supernatural power that creates the universe, then sustains and nourishes it as it lords over it to maintain order. Invariably such a power is seen as an anthropomorphic being whose form and attribution are culture-specific.

The appeal to faith lies in human difficulty to deal with total mystery. It develops when we attempt an expression of the inexpressible Absolute, ultimate reality or spirit. Form, whether etched in stone, wood or words, is the medium of this expression. Spiritual essence assumes expression through the use of divine forms. Faith based divisiveness is related with how the followers of a specific faith tradition perceive the relationship between the divine form and its essence. There are two opposing ways of this perception:

Monotheism: faith specific divine form is all in all with little awareness of any underlying essence except for wisdom traditions rooted in monotheism, and

Monism: faith specific divine forms are helpful for the generality of humanity, but all forms, including divinity, emanate from the underlying formless essence.

Faith based monotheism is characterized by the acceptance of one divinity, complete rejection of the possibility of any other divine form and a requirement of propitiating divinity through

the agency of a specific prophet. Direct placation of the divinity without the intermediacy of the prophet is not enough. Making a statue of the divinity or the prophet is considered an unpardonable sacrilege. Faith based monotheism, in effect, leads to a multiplicity of relative divine forms seeking appeasement through the agency of different prophets. God is the ultimate reality and prophet is the way to it. Such cultures consider it their sacred duty to save others from false gods. This practice leads to never ending intercultural conflicts.

Monotheism is characterized by its insistence on faith to the exclusion of any intellectual activity in this regard. There exists a strong feeling of tension between people of faith and those of wisdom; faith, embodying acceptance on authority, and wisdom, embodying heart mind seeking, are incompatible with each other.

In faith based monotheism, our specific form of the divine becomes the God. Suddenly, somebody's God becomes less Godlike, somebody's prophet less prophetic, and somebody's community less righteous and deserving. It naturally leads to feelings of supremacy of our faith over that of the others. In its drive to assert “our” supremacy, monotheism implicitly and explicitly encourages fragmentary thinking. It tends to divide humanity into communities with tribal values, setting them apart and against the other.

Strong religious identities may be harmless within homogeneous communities, but they are known to cause havoc between them in a world reduced to a global village by modern science and technology. Understanding the one Absolute truth as the shared essence of all relative divinities is the key to the essential unification of all religions without the imposition of any uniformity of form.

Monism, on the other hand, accepts the significance of faith for the generality of humanity, but faith must be rooted in the primacy of wisdom. According to it, faith may be a necessary step in the journey of human development but it is not sufficient for the culmination of it; the attainment of unifying wisdom is the highest goal of spiritual development.

Monism honours and recognizes the formlessness of the unseen truth with its acceptance of all divine forms as personal metaphors pointing to it; a formless principle can be imagined in any divine form. Who with any certainty can say that it can only be represented only in one particular form? Then, why not let individual persons or cultures represent it their favourite form? No harm is done to the truth if it is always kept in mind that their favourite form is just a representation of the formless that can assume any form.

Monism accepts the metaphysical analysis clearly showing the unity of essence of all divine forms of various faiths. They all are united seamlessly as being various manifestations of one unmanifest essence. As such, all culture-specific divine forms are equally venerable. This understanding has endless potential to harmonize and unify the various faiths of humankind. Not only that, it also has potential to promote responsible consumption for the health of our planetary home.

Thus, religious faith can be seen an institution with various degrees of inclusiveness. The higher the extent to which faith is moderated with wisdom, the higher its inclusiveness potential. Conversely, the lower the extent to which faith is mitigated with wisdom, the lower the inclusiveness and its acceptance of the other. Faith thus can be inclusive and unitive on one side and exclusive and potentially divisive on the other. Faith may unify

people into communities and it simultaneously divides them by building tight boundaries around them.

Religion is founded upon the bedrock of one formless, infinite and indescribable Absolute spiritual reality underlying the entire universe of finite and diverse beings. It lies at the core of human values and human spirituality. Spirit, unlike matter, is all-inclusive and totally integrative. Being the ultimate essence of all that exists, it unequivocally declares the essential oneness of all beings, natural and divine. It is at the root of our inbuilt feelings of love and compassion. This face of religion is the nectar of love, life and justice.

Wisdom traditions of all religions bear witness to the oneness of the inexpressible essence with their acceptance of multiple divine forms expressing the same inexpressible essence. These traditions tend to honour all divine forms as equally venerable because they all express the one essence. If we really want peace and harmony in the world, we must seriously consider how we can make the growth of inclusive wisdom as the primary goal of our educational systems at all levels.

Human history is the proof that divine forms change when cultures change. If a culture disappears, its divinity disappears with it, and a new divinity appears when a new culture is born. Where are the Vedic, Greek, Roman and Egyptian Gods of antiquity today? If somehow humanity disappears from the face of the earth, so will all the different divine beings for whom we are ready to sacrifice our humanity in killing one another.

Thus, one ineffable and formless essence is confined by faith and culture in finite forms. It matters little whether the forms are sculpted in stone, wood or mere words. Without the understanding that the divine forms of all faiths are

manifestations of one shared unmanifest essence, describing the indescribable in particular ways concretizes and defiles it. Without this awareness, our faiths identify the one underlying formless Absolute reality with a plurality of irreconcilable relativistic forms which fragment and divide.

Editor's Note

Author:
Sami Rafiq, English Department, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh 202002, India.

Dear Readers,

We are here again with the fourth issue of Cloverleaf but in a time unlike any other ridden with the perils of Covid 19 and its associated devastation which is worldwide.

The tremendous loss of lives and livelihood in once prosperous nations and the worsening of calamities in war torn regions ironically leading to more misery could possibly wipe out all hope and confidence from our minds.

However if one were to go back to the religious texts and re read the utterances of evolved souls when they were in strife and tribulation, it would perhaps would make us realise the transient nature of all ills that human life encounters.

Job faced all sorts of afflictions but though he would not curse God he wanted to know why it was he who was made to suffer. God responded by making up for his losses eventually and Job was wiser and stronger because of his misfortunes. God's real message was that one cannot rationalise about life and its suffering and try to get clear cut answers for every trauma. One needs to look deeper and understand the purpose of trauma and suffering.

Arjuna in the Bhagwad Gita suffered the moral agony of having to fight his own brothers.

Krishna replied: Become My devotee, always think of Me, act for Me, worship Me, and offer all homage unto Me. Surrender unto me alone. Do not fear sinful reactions.

Once again Krishna was guided to observe his divine nature and follow its injections.

There were moments for Prophet Mohammed too when he felt that God had deserted him and he was abandoned because he did not receive any revelations from God for certain periods of time.

The following translation of Surah Ad Duha highlights the presence of God and a way of dealing with suffering:

By the morning bright

And by the night that when it covers with darkness

Your Lord has not taken leave of you, (O Muhammad), nor has He detested you

And the Hereafter is better for you than the first (life)

And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied

Did He not find you an orphan and give (you) refuge?

And He found you lost and guided (you)

And He found you poor and made (you) self-sufficient

So as for the orphan, do not oppress (him)

And as for the petitioner, do not repel (him)

But as for the favour of your lord report (it)

As the enlightened ones have shown us, times of trauma and strife are times that need us to act on our reserves of courage, generosity and faith.

Thus even at times when one feels trapped in trauma and agonising events there is still the presence of the Divine who may not answer us directly but His plan for us is flashed before us in those moments and we are made stronger for the journey ahead.

The articles and poems in this issue all highlight human concerns in the present day world.

Dr. Shiv Talwar as eloquently as always enlightens us about wisdom and faith traditions in the Publisher's Note. He focuses on how there is a unity in spite of these diverse cultural traditions.

Professor Farukh Arjmand reflects on the possible effects and outcomes of reopening post Covid-19.

Garima Talwar has commented on the idea of unity in diversity from the perspective of education in her article titled "Opinion Piece: Education to Create Unity in Diversity in an Era of Populism".

In her article titled “Love and the Subconscious” Christine has enlightened the readers about the deep and abiding relationship between deep breathing and the subconscious mind.

Christopher Hagan in his article titled “Did God Have A Choice in Making Our World” dwells upon spiritual beliefs and their necessity to survive in the modern world.

The poems by the eminent Australian poet Dennis Haskell dwell on love, loss, separation and beauty.

My own poem “Vaccine” has some thoughts on a vaccine as the ultimate resolution to the Covid pandemic.

All the articles and poems in this issue highlight some iota of human experience during the lockdowns of Covid -19 or the times of freedom before it.

We wish and hope and pray that all our readers stay safe and are able to make the most of their time in the Covid lockdowns.

May Cloverleaf bring solace and comfort to all, in these harsh times.

Articles

This section of Cloverleaf contains articles on all-encompassing spirituality ...

Is reopening safe post COVID-19 case clustering?

Author:
Farukh Arjmand, Department of chemistry, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh 202002, India.

E-mail: farukh.arjmand18@gmail.com

COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on human life and economy .Many countries are desperately looking for ways to restart their economies and ease their lockdown. People are also eager to start their normal routine life which was suddenly put to a halt since the outbreak of coronavirus in Wuhan, China in early February 2020 which was linked to a bizarre food market . Many countries that were hit early by COVID-19, China, South Korea, New Zealand etc have already opened up and relaxed the stay-at- home rules while social distancing and protection gears are being strictly followed. While these countries began easing lockdown restrictions due to decline in new COVID cases to single digits, new cases started re-emerging. Both China and New Zealand were declared coronavirus free by June 20 without a locally transmitted case of COVID-19, however, this relief was short-lived as new cluster of cases emerged in Beijing last week (137 new cases emerged over past six days) . On 6th of May, 29 -year old man was tested positive for SARS-COV-2 after visiting five dance clubs in one night in Seoul's Itaewon district which later communicated to 96 other club goers who got COVID-19. On 8th may South Korea responded quickly, postponing plans to reopen schools and urging bars and clubs to shut down again for a month. Therefore, we need to carefully study these kinds of

transmission clusters to avoid U-turns and backlash of lockdown restrictions.

There are some interesting trends which were observed by a team of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, who compiled a database of 231 known COVID-19 cluster cases. A list of these trends have been listed here to unravel the risk factors.

1. Indoor settings dominate partly because the virus hit during winter and people spent most of the time indoors which helped dissipate virus particles exhaled by infected person .Therefore, households are most common place for transmission accounting for 15 percent , or 38 of 231 cluster cases.

2. No cluster cases have been linked to eating itself, while sharing food or utensils could pose a risk for infection.

3. The largest known clusters occurred in ships (Diamond Princess cruise ship and USS Teddy Roosevelt aircraft carrier), food packing plants and prisons.

4. Dormitories in Singapore where migrant workers live in cramped conditions saw large number of infections.

Keeping in view of these high risk places, we will have to pay more attention to the places where people live in close quarters over long periods of time. Further, clusters were found to be associated with indoor sports. In cluster case of 112 cases from Zumba classes in Cheonan, South Korea, pilates and yoga instructor as among those infected but he did not pass the infection to others. High intensity sports that involves heavy breathing in confined spaces could be a prime spot for

transmission while yoga or lower intensity activities might not be risky for transmission. Crowded restaurants are also believed to lead to cluster transmission to customers. For example, in Guangazhou restaurant, one sick person infected nine others. Air conditioning units cooled different zones and one unit blew directly over the three tables where COVID -19 cases arose assuming that AC may have blown respiratory droplets over to other tables

Since we are going to resume offices, utmost care should be taken to social distancing in commercial offices and residences. Serious cluster cases in South Korean call centre have revealed how COVID 19 can emerge in mixed commercial and residential areas , out of the 1143 people tested ,97 were positive for SARC-Cov-2 . Employees sat side by side and were talking on phone for long shifts while 94 patients were on 11th floor of the building. Keeping tables or desks at least six feet apart, with plexiglass barriers between tables is highly recommended. The CDC has released reopening guidelines for everything from restaurants to water parks which is highly recommended for reading and practise.

Having claimed almost half a million lives worldwide, COVID-19 has descended the entire world into chaos. This is an unusual situation and it can only be battled successfully with cooperation from all of us.

Opinion Piece: Education to Create Unity in Diversity in an Era of Populism

Author:
Garima Talwar

The importance of education to create unity in diversity—a key pillar of SHEN's work and the theme of Cloverleaf—needs to be contextualised in today's social, political and economic dialogue.

One cannot go through the day and read or hear about what is happening around the world without reference to the word "populism". The emergence of populist rhetoric and the rise of populist governments worldwide is shaping our social, political and economic reality. While there are a number of approaches to understanding what populism means, most simply, populism is rooted in a belief that society is divided by "the people" and the largely corrupt "elite". Who "the people" and "the elite" are depends on context, and can vary along economic/income, ethnic, religious, and other identities.

While I have offered a very high-level and simplified understanding of populism, the main ethos driving populism is both real inequalities (e.g., income inequalities) and falsely-perceived differences and biases. Governments that thrive on divisive rhetoric and capitalize on falsehoods about the "other" turn select political promises into policy realities, and exacerbate the inequalities and divisions that have contributed to the rise of populism in itself.

This is where the rubber hits the road. The challenge for plural societies—ones that uphold the idea of unity in diversity, the importance of truth in public discourse, and the ability of education to bring people together—is developing coherent social and economic policies that reduces the divide between "the people" and "the elite".

This is a tall task, and I do not pretend to know all of the answers. I can, however, offer some observations that could be useful in this debate.

For example, increasing concerns about housing affordability in Canada have dominated mainstream discourse. As the cost of housing has increased dramatically in recent years, the composition of communities has changed. Although much research in urban planning demonstrates that mixed-income neighbourhoods—ones that have homes for high, moderate, and low-income families and individuals—create the best social outcomes for cities, current trends are moving towards the opposite.

Neighbourhoods in large cities that were at one time more affordable are being gentrified. Large cities are increasingly becoming only for those that have high incomes, and those with moderate and lower incomes are pushed outside of the city. As the composition of communities becomes more and more populated with like people/families, these communities are becoming less diverse.

So, what does this economic and social trend have to do with education to create unity in diversity?

Reduced diversity in our communities mean that our schools become less diverse. Although students may learn about cultures

and religions around the world, they may actually not ever meet someone from those backgrounds. The only interaction that they have with these cultures is what is taught theoretically through textbooks, or most frequently, through the media that they absorb. A pluralistic curriculum that espouses the importance of education in cultivating unity and diversity cannot effectively do so if the student population has a mono-culture.

In this one example, income and social inequalities are manifesting themselves through housing trends seen in Canada. Communities outside of cities are full of “the people” and cities are for the “elite”. Students then only ever get to know those that are from families that are like them, and do not get to know the “other”. The implications of macro-level income inequalities are experienced at the household/community level as the divisions between various communities become socially solidified—creating the conditions that are ripe for populist rhetoric to take-off.

As I said earlier in the piece, I do not pretend to know the answers to these complex problems. However, I do know that coherent social and economic policies are required not only to respond to some of the circumstances giving rise to populism, but also to create communities in which the fruits of an educational system that cultivates unity in diversity can effectively be realised.

Love and the Subconscious

Author:
Christine Grauer

Love is universal.We all want to feel loved, right? But what does love feel like?

Feelings are physical sensations in our body described with words such as hot, cold, tight, loose, soft, hard, tingling, stinging, pulsing, etc. Besides “good” (which is a conceptual label or judgment we place on a feeling), what does love feel like in the body? People generally describe love as feeling soft, tingly, warm or open. So why don’t we feel this way all the time? Seriously. Who doesn’t want to feel soft, tingly and warm all day, every day?

You may not believe this, but the feeling is always there, it’s just blocked from our awareness at times. What blocks it? For starters, our unconscious and subconscious mind… the very thing that helps keep us alive. The subconscious (sub = below; conscious = awareness) is something of which we are not ordinarily aware but of which we can become aware if we pay attention. The unconscious (un = without; conscious = awareness) is also part of the ANS, but unlike the subconscious, the unconscious is something of which we cannot become aware irrespective of attention. To keep it simple for the purpose of this article, I’ll refer to the single term of the subconscious to encompass either scenario.

Physically, the subconscious functions through the autonomic nervous system (ANS) which works without our consciousness/awareness.

The ANS does things like keep our heart beating, lungs breathing, stomach digesting, kidneys filtering, etc. Without these things working independent of our awareness, we wouldn't be able to function in life; we'd be too busy focusing on our essential bodily functions. The ANS also plays a role in functions that are not critical for life, such as walking, running, playing tennis and playing piano. When we perform an action, neurological pathways are created that instruct the body to engage certain muscles in certain timing with the release of certain chemicals. When we practice the action repeatedly, the neurological pathways are embeded in our nervous system, and the action becomes "natural" or "second nature", and we perform the action without any conscious effort. We essentially create a software program in our nervous system that enables the action to take place automatically. Thanks to these software programs, we can be super-efficient; we can walk or drive a car and talk at the same time. It's a brilliant design!

There's a but...

The subconscious doesn't serve us well when the neurological pathways correspond to actions that aren't highly functional or healthy. For example, we want to eat healthy, yet we continue to reach for a bag of chips over and over again. Or, we want to be calm and loving, yet we continually blow up at our kids or partner. We consciously don't want to do these things, yet we repeatedly do them. Why? Subconscious programming. The enter key was pressed and the software program (eat chips or scream), started running.

Our subconscious software programs are unknowingly created through environmental influences. TV commercial = subconscious programming. Consider the brands *QTip* (cotton swab) and *Kleenex* (facial tissue); many refer to the brand name

instead of the item. Information that is repeated over and over is embedded in our nervous system. And when that information is coupled with emotion (e.g. anger, fear, love), the embedding happens sooner and runs deeper. To add to the mix, we also have unconscious programming comprised of our natural instincts, which are not a creation of our environment (e.g. fear of survival).

Most of our subconscious programs were developed early in life, often before the age of six, when we were sponges and had no filters developed to censor the information bombarding our minds and bodies. Our parents were great and did the best they could; but let's face it, they weren't Jesus or Buddha (and neither were their parents, and so on and so on). For most of us, when we were "good" we were rewarded and praised and maybe hugged and kissed. When we were "bad" we were punished and told we were "bad" and maybe we suffered consequences. Not every parent raised their children this way, but it was common, at least for the baby boomers.

The point is—we create beliefs about ourselves and our world based on early life experiences. So, when early childhood influencers (parents, siblings, teachers, etc.) told us we were *bad* or *stupid* or that our opinion didn't matter because we were just a kid, we absorbed it. And when we heard things over and over, or perhaps a single thing that evoked a strong emotion in us, like grief, those thoughts, events and associated information were engrained in our subconscious mind and formed beliefs, which we fully believed about ourselves and the world. Several such beliefs combined to form our personality—a personal reality—who we believed we were in relation to our world, based on a subjective belief system adopted from our environment: *I'm shy* or *I'm not strong enough* or *I'm not good enough*.

How does all this relate to the feeling of Love? It's those subconscious beliefs, the negative, non-functional ones that block the flow of love. Beliefs like, *I'm not lovable, I'm not pretty, I'm stupid, I don't matter*, etc. And, unless raised by highly evolved parents, we all have at least one such belief preventing us from feeling the constancy of love in our lives.

There is hope! We were equipped with an override feature—our breath—that stops our software programs from running. The breath is the one subconscious function which we can easily regulate consciously, and when we do so, it can override the subconscious and stop the cascade of physiological sequences when a software program is initiated.

Invest some time and go within. Sit quietly. Sit alone. Just be. Breathe deeply into your belly and keep your attention on the breath. Observe where your mind goes. Get to know your thoughts. When you notice them, just notice them. Then bring your attention back to the breath. Slow, steady and deep. Commit to just 5 minutes a day!

As you do this, you'll develop an ability to become aware of your thoughts, words and actions throughout the day. When you're in a situation and you're about to lose it, close your mouth and remove yourself from the event, if possible. At that moment, do a body scan. Don't ask why—ask where. Notice where in your body you feel any discomfort. Maybe it's tightness in the chest. Maybe it's a knot in the stomach. Acknowledge it. Feel it. Contract the muscles around the area and massage it with your hands. Let it be known that you are aware of it. Then breathe. Deeply and assertively. This will help to diffuse the energy associated with the activation—essentially, it helps to create a new software program. One that produces

thoughts, words and deeds which are aligned with your loving and wholesome desires.

This won’t magically allow you to feel soft, tingly and warm all day, every day; but it will help bring awareness and perhaps more ease and harmony to your life.

For more information, see the blog at www.christineg.ca

Did God have any choice in making our world?

Author:
Dr Chris Hagan, chris@thinkingreadforum.org

THE INFINITE WALL THEODICY

ABSTRACT

The Infinite Wall Theodicy: God's divine objectives for human life and reality include instilling true free will, unique identity, consciousness, and intellect and 'painting reality' with suitable manifolds for living environments. In so doing a synthesis of divine objectives and universal laws and mechanisms is required to achieve those objectives including the removal of human life beyond God's control to negate determinism. Therefore this synthetic a priori generation of compatible configurations of human circuitry and environments is mathematically constrained by the absence of an infinite repertoire of designs and manifolds rendering a perfect human circuit and perfect environment not reasonably possible.

INTRODUCTION

A similar question was asked by Albert Einstein. A vivid challenge was Stephen Fry's question for God if he ever arrived at the 'pearly gates of heaven': - "Bone cancer in children, what's that all about?". This question formed the focus of a paper by Dr. Shane Clifton, Emeritus Professor of Theology, entitled "Challenging Stephen Fry's diatribe against God"1 who said: "My examination of this topic stems from an accident I

had in 2010 that left me a quadriplegic. So, I have some sympathy with Fry's complaint, and since the accident I have struggled with faith and doubt. Even though I mostly come out on the side of belief, I may well air a complaint of two when and if I arrive at the pearly gates."2

Importantly, Dr. Clifton observes: "…too often philosophical theodicy talks about evil and suffering in the abstract, setting aside the existential- the personal experience of suffering that defies the impassive logic that frames abstract talk of evil". The answer to this type of question is generally called a Theodicy, namely, a set of reasons explaining why an all good, all-powerful and all-knowing God would create our world despite its evil and suffering.

To add to Dr Clifton's observation of the seriousness of the question, a surprising connection to this discussion was highlighted in a 2013 medical sociology paper on palliative care in hospitals and nursing homes where theodicy was proposed as the core principle for clinicians counselling patients to provide comfort and understanding for those holding religious or spiritual beliefs. (See Dein, Et Al, Theodicy and End-of-Life Care 3)

Many patients can have spiritual distress caused by guilt or regret over the view of their life against the background of their beliefs. The clinical experience indicated in that paper is that a compelling theodicy can remove the spiritual distress providing peace of mind to patients suffering from mental distress and anxiety. Moreover, it is hoped that the distress highlighted by Dr Clifton can equally be addressed by a compelling theodicy or defence. Indeed, philosophy retains the power to transform the key ideas governing our lives, existence and reality for the better – hopefully not with mere impassive logic.

This paper proposes an answer through analysis of what world God could create for human beings including why God did not make a better world in the sense of creating 'perfect' human beings free of disease, disability, disaster, despair etc. The focus will be on whether or not it was reasonably possible to make such a better (coherent) world rather than whether the presence of suffering in the world was for the greater good or spiritual development of mankind (although that remains important).4 Whilst this might appear to be more impassive logic, it turns out to be a rich and hopefully inspiring topic when applied to the nature of reality. The importance of this focus includes the puzzling significance of what is termed, natural evil such as Alzheimer's Disease or cancer in children which proponents of the 'greater good' or 'spiritual development' theodicies may find challenging to answer.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

Notable philosophers in this field include Alvin Plantinga5, and Richard Swinburne who wrote Providence and the Problem of Evil 6. Alvin Plantinga's free will defence was explained by him as follows: "A world containing creatures who are significantly free (and freely perform more good than evil actions) is more valuable, all else being equal than a world containing no free creatures at all. Now God can create free creatures, but He can't cause or determine them to do only what is right." 7 His paper is regarded as refuting an earlier challenge to God's existence by Mackie.

In Evil and Omnipotence, 8 Mackie threw a challenge to the free will defence stating that "…why could he not have made men such that they always freely choose the good?" Mackie discussed the unresolved paradox of omnipotence – why or how

God could create creatures which he then put beyond his power to control. Importantly, he stated, "…omnipotence has never meant the power to do what is logically impossible, and on the present view the existence of good without evil would be a logical impossibility". His paper did challenge that 'present view' forcefully but it is beyond the scope of this paper to reproduce the expansive analysis of the semantics of 'omnipotence' in this regard except to restate later the important principle that it does not extend to doing the impossible. (my italics).

Mackie's remaining challenge – many years later Mackie conceded Plantinga's free will defence remained logically in force but raised the challenge that this paper seeks to address:

"Since this defense is formally [that is, logically] possible, and its principle involves no real abandonment of our ordinary view of the opposition between good and evil, we can concede that the problem of evil does not, after all, show that the central doctrines of theism are logically inconsistent with one another. But whether this offers a real solution to the problem is another question." 9 (my italics). This paper is intended to provide a real solution.

Swinburne defines theodicy as follows: "I thus understand by a 'theodicy' not an account of God's actual reasons for allowing a bad state to occur, but an account of his possible reasons (i.e. reasons which God has for allowing the bad state to occur...)";10

Swinburne has also laid down a core principle for theodicies which he terms "The Logical Straightjacket which he explains as follows: "God will seek to provide all the good things and none of the bad things…. But he cannot- for reasons of logic.

For, as simple non- religious examples will make evident, some good states are logically incompatible with each other." He demonstrates that a coherent reality is necessary by citing examples such as both teams cannot win a game of football or two different people cannot be president at the same time etc. and makes an interesting point:

"…. People sometimes think that a really powerful God ought to do the logically impossible…But to say that some 'action' is logically impossible is just to say that what appears to be a description of an action does not make ultimate sense."11

Many philosophers would agree with Mackie that the Problem of Evil is very much alive.12

This question reduces to a clash between competing schemes of thought - the grand scheme of reality that science has constructed against any grand scheme of 'God's Reality' that can be constructed from philosophy and theology. Religion is not meant to be accessible to reason but faith should be based on reasonable foundations beyond 'God's mystery'.

CHOICE OF WORLD

Einstein's famous question regarding whether God had any choice in the way he made the world exposes the crucial issue of theodicy i.e. why an all good, all-powerful and all-knowing God chose this world despite its evil and suffering. This question, which strikes at the heart of the nature of reality, has been considered in depth technically by many philosophers but few have approached it with an analysis of the nature of reality. Similar sentiments to those held by Dr. Clifton were expressed by C.S. Lewis after he lost his wife to cancer despite earlier logical arguments about what world could be created: "We can,

perhaps conceive of a world in which God corrected the results of this abuse of free will [i.e. moral evil] by His creatures at every moment: so that a wooden beam became soft as grass when it was used as a weapon…[however] the very conception of a common and therefore stable, world, demands that [miracles] be extremely rare." 13

One of history' s greatest thinkers, Gottfried Leibniz invented the word theodicy and wrote a treatise Theodicy in 1709 proposing: 'God made the best of all possible worlds' because if there were a better one there would have been no 'sufficient reason' for God to withhold it. So, if God did have a choice he chose wisely. A critic of Leibniz, Voltaire was so disturbed about the Lisbon earthquake that he wrote his famous novel, Candide making fun of Leibniz's theodicy.

However, Leibniz expert, Professor Antognazza comments that Voltaire might not have appreciated the intricacy of Leibniz's argument, but recognizes a major flaw in Leibniz's Theodicy:

"Assuming (as Leibniz does) that there are infinitely many possible worlds, and that the actual world, as many others, is also itself infinite, how can there be a 'best' one? For there to be infinitely many possible worlds means that no matter how many we can think there are, there are more. …And …..no matter how great is the number of beings we think there are in each of these infinite worlds , there are more."….Leibniz's strategy for repelling this (for his purposes, quite devastating objection, is to appeal to the principle of sufficient reason." 14 In effect, Leibniz acknowledges we lack the knowledge as to what that sufficient reason may be and indeed we are seeking to discover that reason in this paper. Clearly, his argument has not been seen as compelling. The question of whether God chose the best world is a crucial issue but we need more than the

simple inference that it was a good choice. Indeed, Swinburne states that there cannot logically be a 'best of all possible worlds' because whatever world we imagine God could always add more good people to make it better (a similar objection to that of Professor Antognazza). 15 In response to Mackie's challenge, Plantinga has also referred to God's inability to make any possible world as 'Leibniz's Lapse' because some worlds would involve logical inconsistencies.16

KNOWLEDGE AND CHANGE

Plato's definition "that knowledge is …. justified true belief - has proved to be the most influential definition of knowledge in the history of philosophy", according to Emeritus Professor of Philosophy William Prior. 17 Moreover, Plato developed a theory of Forms which involves the system of universal concepts of things. Things of the world that you can sense are called sensible things but no matter what a sensible thing is made of (or resembles) it can represent a universal. Thus, a hammer could be made of steel or wood or other materials and have a "T shape" or other shapes but the 'universal' hammer exists for Plato in the world of forms. However, whilst Plato saw all worldly objects as definable as forms this "did not apply to sensible things, because they were always changing…. In the Theaetus, [Plato] shows that, in a Hericlitean world of perpetual flux, there could be no knowledge. [Moreover] In the Phaedo.....…he argues that the equal things we see…only imperfectly instantiate perfect Equality. Thus, perfect Equality, a Form, cannot exist in the sensible world." 18 This scheme leads to the view that there are 2 worlds – first, the world of eternal immutable forms – the world of being and second, the sensible temporal 'becoming'. In the Republic, Plato deals with ideal things. Prior explains further: " As it would be no

criticism of a painter who painted an ideally beautiful human being if it turned out that no actual human being ever perfectly resembled the painting so it is no criticism of the model …if it turns out that no state perfectly exemplifies that model. It would be enough if a state could come close to the perfection of the model." 19 For the purposes of this paper, we need to test the likelihood that God could make a perfect human being or failing that an approximately perfect human being. Our intuition may be that both of these objects are achievable but our probabilistic world of universal laws and mechanisms is governed by those laws and mathematics. To take one example, mathematician Ian Stewart comments: "Human intuition for probability is hopeless." 20 This paper strives to provide a framework for this intuition which can fail us badly. Scientists initially believed that Newton's equations would allow precise predictions of the movements of 3 planets until the mathematics revealed that chaos intervened to create the insolubility associated with what is called the '3 body problem'. This issue will be revisited later. Plato's theory of knowledge is based on the world of conceptversus the world of perceptions, flux and change. This is his ontology, namely, 'an account of what exists' and 'an account of the ultimate principles of the universe'.

This seems to simplify reality between God's realm – the metaphysical realm and the world – the sensible or empirical realm until something peculiar arises from more analysis.

According to philosopher Dan O'Brien, something is a priori if it can be known without the "course of natural events in the world". 21 Kant refers to a priori truths as analytic – i.e. they are 'true in virtue of the meanings of the terms used to express them and their truth can be discovered through philosophical analysis…Synthetic truths do not simply depend on what our terms mean, but also how the world happens to be." 22 A

peculiar anomaly is then raised by Dan O'Brien namely that of the 'Synthetic A Priori' which he explains: "I know that 'if something is red all over, then it cannot be green all over', and in order to know this I do not have to observe various coloured objects…I can know that this statement is true just by thinking about it. This is therefore an a priori truth. It does not, though appear to be analytic: it is not part of the meaning of something being red all over that it is not green all over." 23 Colours of things are not the only examples of the synthetic a priori. Dan O'Brien refers to Kant's law of morality as synthetic a priori and Descartes' ontological argument for the existence of God - God exists because we have an idea of a perfect God existing already. 24 (Fortunately, there are now more compelling arguments for God's existence footnoted here!)25 He cites Kant's key objection to this argument, namely that 'existence' is not a predicate like something is yellow – i.e. existence is not a necessary property of something.26 In fact, if God exists, perfection, omnipotence, omniscience and omnibenevolence and infinitude are all properties that must be tested for qualifying as 'necessary' qualities of 'God' (or the scope of reasonable meaning of such qualities) which this paper seeks to do.

Taking omniscience (the other qualities will be dealt with later in this paper), the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy defines Omniscience as "The property of knowing everything. The traditional philosophical problem is to reconcile the orthodox idea that God knows everything with the absence of predetermination….[t]o many thinkers it has seemed that if God knows already, what will happen tomorrow, then human free will and responsibility must be a mere sham." 27 Plantinga in reference to the Mackie challenge puts a complication to his own free will defence to the effect that if God is omniscient, He

has ‘Middle Knowledge’ i.e. He knows how people will act in the future and thus could have limited their ability to act badly.

Swinburne rejects that God can have such Middle Knowledge as such knowledge lacks truth value. This is because if J has a choice tomorrow of an action then, in essence, God really has a belief as to what J will do. Now as the past cannot affect the future – “causes cannot follow effects” – then God’s belief “today will be what it is before and independently of what J does tomorrow. …If J is indeed free, he is free to make “[God’s]” belief, whatever it is, false.”28

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy records a more formal definition of omniscience: “S is omniscient =df for every proposition p, if p is true then S knows p.” 29Without traversing the detailed discussion there, the Stanford entry refers to a long debate30 between Plantinga and Patrick Grim where Grim argued that it is not possible to know all truths because there is no set of all truths by virtue of Cantor’s Theorem applied to units of knowledge- truths.

Cantor’s Theorem “says that the set of real numbers is non denumerable” and is really explained by the second part of the theorem – “the power set of any set is always greater than the set itself.” 31 Being non denumerable means that there is no ‘one to one’ correspondence and relevant here is that applying his theorem means that the sub sets of the ‘power set’ is not in one to one correspondence with the elements of that set.32 If the ‘power set’ is considered to be the set of all truths then Cantor’s theorem shows this set cannot be the set of all truths-

thus, omniscience on the above definition is impossible. Despite Plantinga’s resistance Grim essentially ended with a more compelling argument: “Omniscience is standardly glossed as

being ‘all knowing’ or ‘knowing everything’ …. [but]…” if there is no ‘everything’ of the relevant type to know, there can be no omniscience as standardly glossed. you suggest that

we understand omniscience as a ‘maximal degree of knowledge’ or ‘maximal perfection’ ...” But should it turn out that for any degree of knowledge there must be a greater, it would appear that there can be no ‘maximal perfection’ with respect to knowledge – and thus no omniscience as you suggest we understand it.”33

Cantor was famous for the continuum hypothesis i.e. that “there is no set with a cardinal number between aleph null which is the cardinal number of the set of natural numbers and the cardinal number of the set of real numbers i.e. the continuum.” 34 Thus, if there were a continuum of truths which were matched ‘one to one’ to the real numbers then the set of truths would be infinite and as ‘infinite’ means without end I will argue below that this is unknowable. How could the set of all truths be ‘unknowable’? It really depends on what qualifies as truth. Swinburne has stated that there is no truth value in what God thinks can happen tomorrow. This would seem to also apply to what changes can occur tomorrow or whatever flux of events is happening in the world. Future data is not knowledge.

Now making possible worlds involves selecting designs for the parts of such worlds from a repertoire of designs that God can possibly conceive of. However, recall here Plato’s original concept that knowledge cannot include change or flux ‘data’. Swinburne might say that there is no truth value in the changes or flux that will occur tomorrow or the potential changes or fluxes - Whitehead would call them the ‘potentia’ that congresce to become actual objects in all possible worlds. If so any design in that repertoire must be specified to fit, handle, manage and

adapt to all such changes. If these 'potentia' of such changes of fluxes are infinite – even if the possible worlds to choose from that are prima facie suitable are finite -

then there is no truth value in those potentia nor any designs (until actualized) that might fit such changes. Moreover, if those potentia are infinite then the designs must be infinite. It would seem thus that omniscience cannot include all possible designs for change or flux in any possible world that God may choose from because an infinity of possible solutions for designs accompanies an infinity of possible changes or fluxes.

If so, the next question becomes whether God's omnipotence includes the ability to gain such knowledge and this is the question that will be tested under "The Infinite Wall Principle below".

THE NATURE OF REALITY

Despite ideas such as materialism or empiricism35, some philosophers see philosophy as 'metaphysics'36 and in the twentieth century, no better demonstration of the great value of metaphysics probing 'reality' has been seen than in the number of instances when the 'metaphysical' has predicted the 'physical' e.g. Gellman and Sweig's work on symmetry predicting the existence of quarks, the prediction of the Higgs boson many years before its discovery and Hoyle's anthropic principle predicting carbon -12 by the very existence of human life. These are also instances of the 'synthetic a priori'. Dan O'Brien also cites mathematics as another surprising synthetic a priori system of knowledge: "Mathematical truths are not analytic: it is not part of the meaning of 12 that it equals 7 plus 5. If it were then 12 would also mean 6 plus 6 and 2.5 plus 9.5, and an infinite number of other combinations. It is not plausible

that we must grasp such a set of mathematical truths in order to understand '12'." 37 Indeed, mathematical discoveries continue to be made which seem to indicate that mathematical knowledge is growing and not merely a priori.

Now to illustrate manifolds, in Euclidean space, if we conceive of a line as straight then it cannot be a ring. Yet Einstein's theory of relativity now shows that, in non-Euclidean space, if a line occurs in curved space that folds back on itself then a line could become a ring (or a helix!). Clearly, this is a synthesis of the a priori idea of both a line and a ring and the manifold of curved space. We deal with manifolds (or spaces) of reality below but it is interesting that Husserl in his phenomenology classified definite and indefinite manifolds. (Husserl saw pure consciousness as the fundamental reality dealing with a priori ideal objects including experiences of consciousness.) 38 Whilst a priori analysis can ascertain the domain of the definite manifold, Husserl, a mathematician and philosopher, saw difficulty with ascertaining the indefinite manifold.39 In my opinion, this is because an indefinite manifold may have infinite forms. This concept of the manifold comes from mathematics (topology) and is used in physics to describe systems of reality. We live in a 4 D manifold of x, y z coordinates and at time coordinate. Yet in string theory it seems that there are possibly up to 10500 dimensions with vast numbers of manifolds that may account for our full reality. In philosophy there are infinite possible worlds and so infinite possible manifolds. Thus, again omniscience cannot include all possible manifolds as they are infinite – whatever set of manifolds can be conceived of, there are always more.

Similar to this concept of infinite manifolds is what has been termed the 'Infinite Background Problem' (also allied to the 'Frame Problem') raised by philosopher Hubert Dreyfus in

relation to Artificial Intelligence (AI) with reference to the philosophy of Heidegger.40 (AI in this context is suggested as analogous to considering what God possibly can know.) Dreyfus outlined the problem facing an AI-based computer in analysing incoming environmental data: [Each receptor or element receiving such data must be interpreted] "…according to different rules and which rule to apply depends on the context…But if each context can be recognized only in terms of features selected as relevant and interpreted in a broader context, the AI worker is faced with an infinite regress of contexts". 41 Philosopher Michael Wheeler, in commenting on Dreyfus's description states: "An infinite regress would be bad enough, but may not be the worst of it. As Horgan and Tienson (1994) point out, the context-sensitivity of cognition cannot be achieved by a system first retrieving an inner structure" [i.e. retrieving the key knowledge] "and then deciding whether or not it is relevant, as that would take us back to square one. But then how can the system assign relevance until the structure has been retrieved? The result is a kind of cognitive paralysis." 42 Taking the infinite background problem to its implications the set of contexts i.e. background data is infinite i.e. omniscience cannot fully extend to it.

Now to play devil's advocate, what if God was perfect and infinite and so perhaps able to 'read' infinities? This seems to repeat the objection of one of Plantinga's counter- arguments to Grim when he referred to: "…omniscience as a 'maximal degree of knowledge' or 'maximal perfection'" which Grim rebutted. If there were a way of bypassing the problem of infinity then despite how remote, uncompelling or unbelievable this may be, philosophers will demand that the possibility be flagged. Thus, the statement that God can not be omniscient in respect of the set of infinite truths, changes, fluxes, manifolds or

backgrounds can be qualified for this purpose by adding “unless there are alternative means” (and will be done so below) .

Now in regard to the question of God being infinite yet perfect. Mathematician Ian Stewart, the author of Infinity, A Very Short Introduction, has considered the theological aspects of infinity:

“Early theologians seem not to have considered God to be literally infinite. Around 200 A.D. in De Principiis (on first principles), Origen, the first Christian theologian of repute,

maintained that God’s power is finite. The reason is that perfection can’t have blurred edges. Its limits must be sharp. Latin perfectus means ‘complete’. If God’s power were infinite, it would be incomplete, hence imperfect.”43

Today, the more standard usage of ‘infinite’ or ‘perfect’ by Christian theologians means a God as having attributes not limited in any way as this passage from the New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia (online) demonstrates: “When we say that God is infinite, we mean that He is unlimited in every kind of perfection or that every conceivable perfection belongs to Him in the highest conceivable way. In a different sense we sometimes speak, for instance, of infinite time or space, meaning thereby time of such indefinite duration or space of such indefinite extension that we cannot assign any fixed limit to one or the other. Care should be taken not to confound these two essentially different meanings of the term.” (my italics)44

In effect, this encyclopedia warns that the term ‘infinite’ should not be conflated with the mathematical /scientific meaning of ‘infinite’. However, for philosophical rigour the meaning of ‘infinite’ in this paper shall be the same as is used in mathematics and science

, namely a quantity without end such that no limit can be assigned to it.

GOD'S OBJECTIVES TO CREATE LIFE

Any theory of God must involve the universe being created for a reason and that reason appears to be to create life because a barren universe of stars, planets etc. would not seem enough to fulfil God's apparent purposes of 'meaning' or 'value' in creation such as creation of love, sentient beings, new knowledge, wonder etc. Let us focus on human beings who have reached the highest intellectual value through evolution of consciousness. What else can we surmise about the key features that God intend to instill into human beings and the universe?

That life would participate in an overall scheme of living life against the context of human beings and God being in an existentially causal relationship which by the provenance of human creation imports a dimension of meaning to life.

That we would not be 'puppets of heaven' or mere automatons. God would surely not want a race of 'CD players' replaying God's pre planned thoughts and actions like some bizarre play or trivial intellectual exercise which achieves nothing.

God must then relinquish control over human beings by granting them autonomy of self-control and self-regulation. Again, Plato's observation that the world is one of flux and change requires that human beings are enabled to systematically manage and adapt to change.

Thus human beings must possess teleology and be goal- directed beings - at its simplest level the goal to live and not die e.g. homeostasis – as philosopher Ernest Nagel has pointed out that

whether an observer discerns ‘teleology or not’ is a matter of viewpoint and clearly if God exists human beings are teleological. A key point he makes is that the difference between a physical system (where the variables depend on each other) and a life system (where the variables are independent of each other) is that the life system adapts to those variable changes and is not created by them.45A reasonable conclusion is that this reflects loss of control by God because any possible chain of causation is broken once you have self-regulating autonomous organisms coupled with quantum uncertainty.

Note that beings can be collective or individual or a hybrid and so individuals may reflect the best autonomy with the highest degree of free will.

Human beings must then do something. They think, act and sustain themselves in a myriad of ways which involves functions to implement these activities. Activities will involve an activity tree of possible permutations and combinations which will resemble a‘logic circuit’ divided into possible routes for each such activity to be activated via each function implementing or regulating such activities. This requires systems of organization of units of matter and energy into the necessary circuitry of nodes and links to house such function – activity array. Units of matter have been called atoms, monads and more recently quantum particles. Units of energy have been called electrons, charges or other quanta.

Euler’s classic circuit problem involving the 7 bridges of Königsberg demonstrated that circuits cannot allow all configurations – akin to Swinburne’s Logical Straightjacket.

Moreover, biological circuits and systems display inherent insolubilities arising from clashes between competing functions.

This human circuitry must be governed by an intellect also made of the units of matter and energy i.e. the brain or the collection of energy flows, fields, or other entities constituting the intellect.

Then to provide what seems to be the ultimate purpose in God's creation the intellect must be instilled with a number of features to constitute a 'meaning of life'.

What is the substance to the meaning of life of human beings? One of Spain's greatest philosophers José Ortega y Gasset ("Ortega") described the fundamental reality of human life: "Reality, precisely because it is reality and is found outside our individual minds, can reach our minds only by multiplying itself into a thousand faces or facets." Ortega saw that the scientific reason or Kant's pure reason did not work so well in human affairs and introduced the concept of vital reason which involves a scheme for the comprehension of the temporal elements of human life as experienced. 46 Yet attempts to make the history of human affairs a science fall short according to Isaiah Berlin who says of the nebulous concept of scientific history: "What would the structure of such a science be like, supposing that one were able to formulate it? It would presumably consist of causal or functional correlations – a system of interrelated general propositions of the type "Whenever or wherever Φ then or there Ψ'" 47 Berlin's scheme would suggest a type of 'quantum mechanics' of states of human elements of consciousness. thoughts, experiences, emotions, convictions, beliefs, conscience etc. Whilst Berlin rightly says we cannot yet proceed to define such a scheme of human phenomena, it would seem that such a scheme does exist. This would be a matrix of elements linked to a matrix of interactions of those elements to form a circuitry of human experiences upon its own manifold chosen from many. Mackie, in effect, thought either this

manifold or the matrices could eliminate evil but Swinburne might justly claim that his ‘Logical Straightjacket’ constrains the configurations in that scheme are simply not workable under Mackie’s scheme.Husserl dealt with ideal objects which were a priori and the high water mark for this topic was ‘human experiences’. Yet any Berlin type scheme would be synthetic a priori because it would seem these human elements are phenomena combining ideal concepts within the manifold(s) of our universe i.e. a synthesis of heaven and earth. In Husserl’s language, the type of experiences manifested by each of these elements is dependent upon both the infinite possible circuitry of each intellect and the infinite background manifolds.This Berlin type scheme involves an elaborate grid of circuitry which becomes the complex synthesis of these human elements – a seeming masterpiece of intellectual functionality which is not yet understood. . It is this masterpiece that we must assume as God’s objective to achieve this meaning of life goal but in light of the constraints, perfection may not be possible. This circuitry is subject to quantum uncertainty and chaos – features facilitating true free will. The instilled human elements such as love, heroism in handling suffering, curiosity, conscience seem to be synthetic a priori concepts which could have developed in many more (infinite) manifolds.

Hopefully, these insights may transform the theodicy in this paper from impassive logic to more inspiring ‘vital reason’ to use Ortega’s terminology. The late Stephen Hawking is a hero in the eyes of many through his success despite his suffering and disability.

The necessary internal features to achieve this latter goal would seem to be an intellect, ability to experience, assume identity, consciousness, free will, capability for action or inaction,

movement, and the ensemble of emotions that enrich and facilitate life and experience.

The necessary external features of a possible world to 'paint reality' to enable the existence and experience of the human being must also be chosen from the infinite manifolds of spaces, times, energies, fluxes, fields, change including the infinite manifolds of phase space or other possible manifolds of reality. For instance, the arrow of time would seem a necessary feature for experience – reality would become incoherent without the arrow of time e.g. a two-way time might see human beings experiencing a picnic and then undoing that picnic or building anything before it becomes undone. The arrow of time determines that effects follow causes and provide coherence of experience to human beings.Again each of these chosen manifolds must allow a coherent experience of human life. It may be that evil and suffering could be quarantined by a slicing of space into millions of compartments but interactions of matter and life might then become incoherent in any such scheme of reality.

True free will would also need to be a feature unfettered by any overwhelming iron cloak of God's presence which is facilitated by the 'Silence of God'. (A corollary of this could also cure Kant's observation, in effect, that God's imposed moral rules import no moral virtue if made under the duress of God's presence.) Recall also the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy's definition of strict omniscience as having a potential paradoxical outcome in that it would mean free will is a sham. Mention has already been made of

Mackie discussing the unresolved paradox of omnipotence – why or how God could create creatures which he then put beyond his power to control. Clearly, providing true free will

requires certain features to be instilled in the world. Perhaps Heisenberg's Uncertainty could not only serve its function as part of the fabric of reality (perhaps a 'solution seeker' which 'lubricates' reality to unblock unsolvable physical reactions?) but also as the break-in causation in strict determinism lest the almost infinite chain of causal events since the Big Bang be considered a chain of determinism i.e. determining our thoughts. As our brains are governed by quantum processes Heisenberg's uncertainty creates true uncertain outcomes of thought processes – leaving aside other processes of uncertainty such as chaos which is discussed later.

Finally, the question of why a world using laws of nature and mechanism and not miracles nor magic was created? The above objectives call for a coherent world, with consciousness, self-autonomy, free will, etc such is the phenomenon of human beings that special features of life experience are needed to allow human being to fulfil the meaning of life objectives for which they were created. Perhaps hardship and suffering are required and so the world is a 'Vale of Soul- making' (as the poet John Keats described it) – 'No suffering, no heroes' or there would be no pride in any achievement without overcoming the hardship and suffering of that achievement and so on. If God wishes to preserve true free will and removes control, then universal laws and mechanism are necessary - not miracles or magic which presumably would require direct control by God. And so to summarize, in any circuitry involving a Berlin style matrix of human elements Swinburne's Logical Straightjacket constrains such circuitry so that only certain configurations are possible in terms of synthetic a priori trade-offs in possible mechanistic realities.

THE INFINITE WALL PRINCIPLE

We saw that omniscience cannot extend to the infinite possible worlds, manifolds or realities and many other things especially the infinities of change and flux – call them infinite walls. Indeed Plato had not seen the information content of change and flux as 'knowledge'. In modern terms, we might see this information content as 'bits' but they do not form the meaningful knowledge that would form part of a reasonable definition of omniscience nor would any infinite repertoire of designs (call this 'ultra- theoretical knowledge') that could fit or handle such non-meaningful information. Thus, a more reasonable definition of omniscience might be to know all existing knowledge that it is possible to know and not unknowable, ultra -theoretical or future knowledge. The question remains therefore whether a reasonable definition of omnipotence could include the ability to gain any knowledge that would normally be outside this more reasonable definition of omniscience.

The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy describes Zeno's Paradox as follows: "Achilles runs a race with a tortoise, who has a start of n metres. Suppose the tortoise runs one –tenth as fast as Achilles. Then by the time Achilles has reached the tortoise's starting- point, the tortoise is n/10 metres ahead. By the time Achilles has reached that point, the tortoise is n/100 metres ahead and so on ad infinitum. So, Achilles cannot catch the tortoise."48 The paradox raises the issue of whether it is possible by an infinite number of identifying tasks to identify the infinite points in the continuum between Achilles and the finishing line. A similar problem could be whether an infinite survey of an infinite repertoire of designs could take place to create objects in possible worlds. Even during a finite time, if an exercise of power needed completion of infinite tasks to actualize an object by choosing the best design then the object could not be actualized because the last task will never be

completed. If one objected that the Zeno's paradox situation could involve infinite steps over a finite distance (the infinite fractions contained in the continuum of that distance) and lead to 'completion' this does not refute the assertion because unlike Zeno's runner reaching his destination (which we know) we do not know whether the object can be actualized. Furthermore, this knowledge that Zeno did complete the journey and all the ways that philosophers have postulated to overcome Zeno's paradox merely create a possibility that God could complete an infinite set of tasks somehow. This still leaves the original reasonable possibility that God cannot complete an infinite set of tasks. If so, that is a potential basis for a credible theodicy. What is the significance of this 'somehow'.

Philosophers have studied infinite tasks and have called them 'super tasks' and in this paper, we consider what objects can or cannot be created with regard to whether an object's creation requires a super task or not. It is convenient to call an object requiring a super task (ie infinite tasks) a super object and knowledge having a prerequisite of completion of super tasks super knowledge (for example, it might require infinite iterative investigative checks to ascertain the super knowledge). Some super knowledge could be acquired by means other than infinite iterative investigative checks. For example, assume that to create a super object that its precise volume is required (- to create an object its features would be required and volume is one of such features). The precise volume of an object could be argued to be super knowledge as calculation of volume would have required an infinite iterative series of steps (i.e. adding the infinite slices of the object) and then the summation of the infinite slices but there could be no final 'step' to add the last slice. However, calculus provides an alternative means to acquire that super knowledge but our framework of intuition as outlined in this paper informs us that there are possibly infinite

super objects where there are no alternative means to by pass the super tasks. In fact, this intuition is aided by such work as mathematician, Marcus du Sautoy whose book “What we cannot know” describes the types of knowledge that we have postulated as beyond omniscience. 49

Crucially, this must reflect on God’s creative knowledge of what objects can be created – what we termed “ultra-theoretical knowledge” which does not form part of any reasonable definition of omniscience. Knowledge of what can and cannot be actualized must, therefore, depend on whether for any proposed objects of creation an infinite number of tasks may be required to actualize an object because, if an infinite number of tasks is required to actualize a theoretical super object, then it cannot be actualized.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy’s entry for Zeno’s paradox explains further:

“…a number of philosophers – most notably Grunbaum (1967) – took up the task of showing how modern mathematics could solve all of Zeno’s paradoxes; …..What they realized was that a purely mathematical solution was not sufficient: the paradoxes not only question abstract mathematics, but the nature of physical reality”.50 (my italics)

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy lists some possible ways a super task could be accomplished. However, in our context, these ways do not resolve the problem. 51 There seems no way that an algorithm could be created to iterate through the infinite shapes, functions and forms for a biological entity because the algorithm would need to first contain all the shapes, functions and forms – a ‘chicken or egg’ problem of self-

reference akin to the Frame problem or infinite background problem referred to earlier.

Thus, we have seen that God's creative knowledge does not include super knowledge of how to create super objects except a subset of those super objects whose method of creation could be only be obtained by alternative means.Thus, if it were possible to create a perfect human being from an infinite repertoire of designs then creating perfect human beings that are pre-programmed to only behave in Mackie like perfect ways without evil and who would not be prone to disease, disability, despair, etc. would not be based on our framework for 'improved intuition', seem reasonably possible (it may be logically possible but that would seem an extreme uncompelling explanation of God's creative power in light of the analysis thus far). Rather creation probably faced an 'infinite wall' of infinite possible designs and insoluble equations. The question remains as to whether or not this limitation has any empirical credibility (in the doxastic sense) as to what can or cannot be created?

THE INFINITE WALL PRINCIPLE APPLIED TO OUR WORLD

At first sight the sceptic might ask why couldn't 'God approximate perfection?' despite being unable to access an infinite repertoire of designs for the universe or designs for a 'perfect' human being (if those designs were possible). However, this idea faces a difficulty that has been discovered which was really unknown until the late twentieth century - the discovery of chaos. A whole mathematics and science has now developed around chaos.

In the age of Newton, the world was considered mechanical running like a 'Clockwork Universe'. However, chaos, quantum mechanics and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle have changed that. The seventeenth century mathematician Simon Laplace had postulated scientific determinism such that a 'vast intellect' could know everything about the universe given enough data to submit to analysis. As Laplace said "…for such an intellect nothing could be uncertain." 52 Assuming this 'vast intellect' to be God , we have already seen that God's omniscience does not extend to such data and as such data is infinite God's omnipotence does not extend to acquiring such data. A God with infinite sets of eyes or intellects is neither coherent nor credible. Chaos is explained by mathematician Ian Stewart: "Chaos is apparent randomness with a purely deterministic cause…Chaos inhabits

the twilight zone between regularity and randomness…The discussion is made more difficult by a philosophical problem: does true randomness really exist?"53 Heisenberg Uncertainty is a feature that produces randomness yet may have been an introduced feature in God's creation as it does not appear logically necessary to create reality (although, as mentioned, it could be a 'solution seeker' to 'lubricate' reality). Chaos, on the other hand despite not being truly random, may have a de facto randomness quality because of mathematical insolubilities associated with it such as infinite decimals. For example, a common form of chaos, turbulence, although modelled by the Navier Stokes equations does not provide exact solutions according to one expert on turbulence. 54 In summary, in the light of chaos and Heisenberg Uncertainty, the reality is now seen as probabilistic, stochastic and chaotic perhaps as 'lubricating' features to evolve the universe. Biological systems are a fortiori stochastic and with the absence of an infinite repertoire of designs, it can be seen that the stochastic nature of

evolution as a ‘design seeker’ can overcome the ‘the problem of fantastic probability’ associated with the origin of life highlighted by leading biologist Eugene Koonin.55 Perhaps this is the reason for the vastness of the universe, namely, to provide ‘stochastic soil’ for originating life. Many previous theodicies were founded upon a deterministic Clockwork Universe rather than the more realistic, indeterministic, probabilistic, stochastic and random/chaotic universe.

How significant a threat is a chaos to testing whether ‘God can approximate perfection’? To answer this synthetic a priori question, an example is provided by considering DNA. The right-handed chirality in DNA and the asymmetry of the weak nuclear forces could even affect the evolutionary behaviour of DNA based on work by Physicist Dilip Kondepudi. Ian Stewart explains the asymmetry of DNA: “One consequence of this asymmetry is that the energy of a molecule and that of its mirror image are not quite the same. Until recently this was thought to be unimportant because the difference is vanishingly small – to be precise one part in a hundred quintillion…. physicist Dilip Kondepudi showed that if nature is biased in favour of the lower energy version of some biologically significant molecule (even by this tiny amount), then within a mere hundred thousand years a massive 98 percent of those molecules will be of the lower energy variety. The difference is amplified by the reproductive processes of life.” Stewart The Beauty of Numbers in Nature. 56 Clearly, the slightest change in DNA can cause genetic defects.

So, if the atheist were relying on intuition to claim that ‘surely God can approximate perfection’ then chaos corrects such intuition.

Prominent physicist Carlo Rovelli sees reality as a network of granular events with the inputs and outputs of each event

connecting each other in a cloud of probability. Early in the twentieth century, scientists discovered the world is quantum and probabilistic meaning that precision in measuring these inputs and outputs is impossible – only approximation is possible and this causes serious problems. The immediate answer could be "Well, then why did not God make a world where precision of inputs and outputs was possible?' If we apply mathematics to all possible worlds that we can imagine we can ask 'is there any world where mathematics would be precise?' Rovelli also refers to the mathematics of physics and observes that in the 'standard model' of physics quantities of inputs and outputs from its equations can be infinitely large. Stephen Hawking famously said that maths really can't handle infinities and Rovelli also observes that physics handles these infinities by 'renormalization' – the result will be an approximation of reality.

So, what about bone cancer? Here is where we switch to biology. Instead of Rovelli's network of inputs and outputs of granular events, we have the body's network of systems synchronizing inputs and outputs of biological events – our working metabolism including the human circuitry of a Berlin type scheme. This can become complex so it is good to use an analogy. Instead of the body's network of hundreds of systems, think of hundreds of countries around the world each having inputs and outputs of currencies. We never see a precise exchange rate because it must be approximated into a decimal. The health of each currency cannot be precisely measured – only approximated. The approximation does not matter too much to currency traders who make profits from the discrepancies in approximation. However, instead of currencies let us now consider the health of each system of the body and the inputs and outputs from each system. In fact, a whole science governs this called metabolomics. The book, Principles

of Bone and Joint Research by Peter Pietschmann refers to a study: Combining Targeted Metabolomic Data with a Model of Glucose Mechanism… by Salinas Et Al. Plos One 2017 12(1) e0168326 where the systems governing the cells in cartilage are modelled using a vast (40x40) spreadsheet reflecting inputs and outputs of the body's systems. The paper states that most biological models have infinite numbers of solutions. This is similar to the same problem that Rovelli referred to which physicists fix by 'renormalization'. In engineering, certain equations, known as indeterminate equations, have infinite solutions – no help in finalizing a design unless external assumptions can limit the infinities. In biology the 'fix' occurs by using new assumptions- i.e. approximate predicted values not infinite values - infinite decimals would be common but unworkable mathematically without a 'fix'.

In both physics and biology these infinite decimals crop up requiring scientists to 'renormalize' or 're- model' by approximation of values. We are not talking about some backwater of reality. The greatest mathematical values governing the core of reality result in infinite decimals such as π, e, 'sins, cos's, tans 'and 'radicals' e.g. square roots that produce infinite decimals. How important are these to human beings? Well, anything round involves π, anything growing can involve e, radicals are often found in biology and 'sins cos's' etc. involve anything angular i.e. are ubiquitous to our 3D reality. Thus, if we wish to avoid bone cancer an organism must metabolize perfect settings to achieve perfect synchronisation of the body's systems but these settings could not be knowable theoretically – they could only evolve. Why? Once you have any of π, e or these 'radicals' etc., infinite decimals become 'spanners in the works' in these inputs and outputs throwing up a roadblock to calculated 'perfect settings' unless God had alternative means which did not violate the severing of divine

control. Without perfect settings, the potential for the body to malfunction, to overheat, to exhaust itself or for cells to grow at the wrong rates (i.e. cancer) becomes inevitable risks of mechanistic (not magical) systems. Furthermore, DNA can be of no help because it merely replicates the organism, it does not regulate it and the body's systems need to be adaptable to optimize its metabolism for living in a variable environment. DNA itself must be variable to improve the networks of systems as evolution proceeds – indeed this is why evolution is an essential process to creation. If DNA is variable, it is also subject to environmental factors and degradations producing the risk of defects in DNA and, if affected by chaos, tiny defects can amplify their effects as seen in the example above involving the evolutionary behaviour of DNA.

The crucial point is that it may be mathematically impossible to know the perfect settings that the body needs to be in perfect synchronization. Instead, mechanisms to regulate the settings must evolve empirically not theoretically to produce optimum settings. This means the design of a regulating mechanism for perfect settings may be incalculable leaving only optimal mechanisms evolving. Optimal mechanisms retain the risk that cells can grow at dysfunctional rates ie become cancerous.

In summary, God's divine objectives for human life and reality include instilling true free will, separate unique identity, consciousness and intellect and 'painting reality' with suitable manifolds for living environments. In so doing a synthesis of divine objectives and universal laws and mechanisms is required to achieve those objectives including the removal of human life beyond God's control to negate determinism. Therefore, this synthetic a priori generation of compatible configurations of human circuitry and environments is constrained by the absence of an infinite repertoire of designs and manifolds rendering a

perfect human circuit and perfect environment not reasonably possible. This is sufficient for a credible theodicy.

St Thomas Aquinas's also saw limitations of divine power - such as God cannot make 'Socrates running and not running' or that 'God cannot change the formula for a triangle'. Perhaps we can add 'God cannot change the logic governing human circuitry' It is also interesting to note that the bible records one of the earliest theodicies in the narrative of Job when he rebukes God for his misfortune. God answers: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Who determined its measurements …. or who stretched the line

upon it…? Job 38.4, 38.5. and in another place "Do you know the balancing of the clouds…? Job 37.16 This suggests constraints in creation. In essence, Job was not a 'professional creator' and so his challenge was misconceived.

GLOSSARY

Chaos: Behaviour of a system(s), particle(s), wave(s), light or energy or other matter which is incapable of complete mathematical analysis without knowledge of the initial conditions. "Chaos is apparent randomness with a purely deterministic cause." (quoted from Ian Stewart) (p24) Even knowledge of the initial conditions may be impossible by virtue of mathematical restrictions resulting from infinite decimals.

Heisenberg Uncertainty: The position and momentum of a particle cannot be known completely. This is a feature of the universe that produces necessary randomness by virtue that any state of matter (i.e. of particles) cannot be known completely –it removes an essential foundation for determinism. (p25)

Infinite Background Problem: A problem involving Artificial Intelligence (AI) used by a theoretical computer in analysing incoming environmental data: " [Each receptor or element receiving such data must be interpreted] "…according to different rules and which rule to apply depends on the context…But if each context can be recognized only in terms of features selected as relevant and interpreted in a broader context, the AI worker is faced with an infinite regress of contexts" (after Dreyfus) (p13).

Infinite Decimals: Any mathematical value that when represented in base 10 results in an infinite representation of natural numbers in base 10 and includes transcendental numbers such as π, e, trigonometric values e.g. 'sins, cos's, tans 'and 'radicals' (e.g. square roots, cube roots etc.). These numbers have no exact value and may be ultimately unknowable without alternative means of evaluation or derivation e.g. using calculus, different number systems or representations. The problem then becomes can the natural numbers to base 10 be precisely related to new representations of natural numbers without infinite decimals – in many cases this will be impossible.

Knowledge: "that knowledge is …. justified true belief" (after Plato) (p7)

Manifold: - a space or system of reality which typically may involve coordinates or can merely be used a term to describe different realities or aspects of a reality. (p13)

Middle Knowledge: includes knowledge of how people will act in the future (p10)

Omniscience: "The property of knowing everything. The traditional philosophical problem is to reconcile the orthodox

idea that God knows everything with the absence of predetermination….[t]o many thinkers it has seemed that if God knows already, what will happen tomorrow, then human free will and responsibility must be a mere sham." per: the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy. (P10)

Perfect settings : the human body requires synchronization to function and does so through its settings – its gene circuits, protein circuits and neuronal circuits which are effectively logical circuits governed by logic in the sense used by Leibniz – like super tasks perfect settings would be settings where no malfunction will ever occur by interaction and synchronization of all these circuits (p28) – this term is used in concluding 'God cannot change the logic governing human circuitry' (p29)

Potentia: - in the sense used by Whitehead (in Process and Reality) that are really states of reality which represent a thing in the making (other than that change itself!) and indeed if for example the potential of all possible infinite designs are considered there is no truth value in that and furthermore, being infinite, is unknowable. (again, it may be possible to know part of these potentia but that is also a complex question). (p11-12)

Reality: (relevant to human life): the phenomena perceived by human minds that "reach our minds only by multiplying itself into a thousand faces or facets" (after Ortega) (p17)

Synthetic A Priori: refers to a non- analytic a priori truth which prima facie appears anomalous but as explained in the paper is not and leads to interesting insights into the nature of reality (p9)

Super Tasks: Tasks that require an infinite number of steps before they can be completed (p22)

Super Objects; Objects created by super tasks (if they exist) (p22)

Super Knowledge: Knowledge gained through completing super tasks e.g. completing an infinite numerical process such as completing iterative investigative checks of designs to arrive at a ‘perfect design’ (p22)

The Infinite Wall Principle: Creation of the universe and life faced an ‘infinite wall’ of infinite possible designs and insoluble design equations by virtue that many objects in a meaningful or purposeful world are super objects requiring super tasks to be performed with super knowledge. For example, the objects of life such as humans with the necessary human circuitry in DNA gene circuits, protein circuits and neuronal circuits do not seem to allow perfect synchronisation and interaction due to the mathematical impossibilities and limitations in logic circuits leaving the making of a perfect human being impossible. (pp21-24)

Theodicy: “a set of reasons explaining why an all good, all powerful and all-knowing God would create our world despite its evil and suffering” (p3)

Truth Value: value in a statement as to whether something can constitute knowledge – for example I argue that future data – predictions of data sets that may be produced by future events (or future designs) cannot constitute knowledge – thus middle knowledge of all possible future infinite designs has no truth value and furthermore is unknowable (although it may be possible to know part of that middle knowledge but that is a complex question). (p11)

Ultra-theoretical knowledge: knowledge of possible super tasks or super objects including super knowledge (p23)

Vital reason: a scheme for the comprehension of the temporal elements of human life as experienced. (per José Ortega y Gasset).

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Book Review

Author:
Dr. Sami Rafiq

Book: The Common Ground

Reviewer: Sami Rafiq
Author: Shiv Talwar
Year of Publication: 2019
Publisher: Xlibris Us
Price in Indian currency :Rs 2,300.00

A Quest for Unity in Diversity

The book is a well researched document on the common inheritance of humanity that underlies the dividing lines that threaten peace and harmony. It takes into account various spiritual thought systems from different world religions which univocally assert the oneness of humanity arising from one cosmic mind.The perceptions in the book have been worked out on a scientific level with logical precision and without any political undertones.

In the beginning we have been introduced to the term ‘identity tribalism” which refers to exclusive religious, regional, racial identities that create an endless struggle.

This book is a voice against this very identity tribalism which has created widespread hunger, disease, poverty, mental disorders, conflicts, terrorism and pograms which lead to mass migrations and ensuing refugee problems.

In the writer's own words," Religion through misdirected institutional loyalty, has become a tool of powerful political and economic forces with a divisive agenda.It is ineffective in addressing the crises of the human condition we face today."

If religion which was created to bring to human beings the highest ideals and standards for living cannot help us then what will.

It is this question that Shiv Talwar's book *The Common Ground* addresses. This book helps us look deeper into the core of all religious systems that reveal a commonality and a common ground.The author sees spiritual education as a way to understand this common core and the books goes deep into the spiritual core of different religions.In the words of the author:

This book is undertaken with the thought of doing something different.It envisions integrating humanity into a planetary family through meaningful education on the common ground of existence.We all are an individual expression of this common ground.

The writer has taken great pains to quote the original verses from various religious texts and their different translations in an attempt to highlight the unity of thought of the spiritually enlightened ones.

With his background of science he has been able to make a compelling study of the the science underlying spiritual principles and thus bring science and religion at par with each other.Thus if religion seeks to highlight higher consciousness, consciousness itself has a scientific basis. In other words it is created out of matter which is perceptible and imperceptible. Therefore the author has rightly perceived that everything that

exists has a dimension of materiality and a dimension of consciousness.

The book is an attempt towards spiritual education in the widest possible definition possible meaning that it is an offering of knowledge of soul, self and inherent spirituality which would help a person transcend limitations and be able to access one's potential to understand one's being in the entire universe.

At the outset the author puts forward one important question namely why we should question our existence and the meaning of our existence.

Perhaps he has hinted at a quality or a habit that is fast disappearing from the modern mind which is losing its flexibility and its powers of reflection in the mire of digital tools in the modern age. Inner reflection and contemplation help us to stay in touch with our spiritual nature and it is the only resource which would help in rewiring our brains to lives of oneness.When we lose touch with our inner spiritual self we become closed and rigid and easy prey to the exploitation and politics of the digital age and we see the world as us versus them.It is contemplation alone that can lead us to understanding the oneness of humanity which would give freedom from disease and suffering.

As the title suggests the book shows the way to visualise the common ground between people of different religions.It has attempted the formidable task of uncovering the essence of humanity, the very spiritual essence which is the source of matter and the entire universe with utter clarity and lucidity.This spiritual education has been supported by meaningful diagrams wherever possible.

The very first chapter is about the story of the existence of the universe.It explores existence from the outer manifestation to the inner manifestation which is the common ground of all religions. In order to understand the common purpose of existence the following lines are very pertinent with reference to the adaptive nature of the human brain and the quest of for wisdom and enlightenment.

“The process of exploring and living with the awareness of the unseen as the bedrock of all existence rewires the brain of the explorer, enabling him/her to deride individual living and embrace life in cosmic unity.”

In his analysis of the idea of the unseen principle in the universe, the writer also finds that science calls it energy.

“Einstein’s name is associated with a principle of equivalence between energy and mass, mass being a measure of the quantity of matter. According to this principle, matter and energy are interconvertible.This inter convertibility principle leads to an understanding that energy is the underlying reality of the material universe and all the abject it comprises.”

In attempting to highlight cosmic unity the writer makes mention of Einstein’s letter dated February 12, 1950 to a distraught father who had lost his son thus:

“Einstein empathised with the father sharing a thought about the position of a human being in the universe—-a human being is not apart from the universe but an integrated part of it, although limited in time and space. For our peace of mind, we need to free ourselves from delusion of separateness.”

In the chapter titled Abrahamic Wisdom he makes mention of mystics such as Ibn Arabi, Moses de Leon and Meister Eckhart who recognised 'the unknowable reality beyond their culturally specific God.' However God was not culturally specific for them who were aware of the universal source of spiritual truth rather God was culture specific to the Abrahamic traditions.

Thus the book reiterates the oneness of humanity through religion, science and spirituality.

It talks about the ultimate reality of the universe defined as the non existent in Vedic literature because of a lack of words of describe it.In other words the whole universe materialises from nothing. Brahman or the source is defined thus:

"The name Brahman then is meant to imply or conjure a picture of the primeval essential substance that grows into all things or that makes all things grow, a field of undifferentiated existence underlaying he existence of the differentiated universe."

The book talks of the cosmic soul or supreme soul or Paramatman as permeating every atom of the universe and thus everyone and every thing is bound into a cosmic whole.

An in depth study of various translations of each single Vedic hymn all lead to the same idea of the cosmic soul and the idea of the creation of the cosmos from non existence.The writer also defines the cosmic mind as the total mind of a community. When this collective or cosmic mind of a community changes, its culture changes. Thus the importance of the human mind is highlighted which can be enlightened to understand underlying unity between all religions and humans.

According to the writer this broadening of vision or understand of cosmic unity can lead to the feeling of compassion and boundless love.

It is interesting how the writer sees the principle of Tao the sustaining energy of the universe as similar to the sustaining Divine power in Abrahamic religions or the Paramatman in Hinduism. Since Tao itself is so abstruse it is a challenge to see it in the light of oneness and unity with other spiritual belief systems in the world.

Though the comparison between God and Tao appears unlikely as the former is a Being worthy of worship while the latter is non being and not worshipped, yet at some level the idea of a universal creative source fits in with both.

Dr.Shiv Talwar has done justice to this idea along the lines undertaken by Toshihiko Izutsu in his book titled *Sufism and Taosim: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts.*

It is interesting how the two systems see the unknowable mystery; sufism as *Haqq* or absolute truth and Taoism as the Absolute.The only difference lies in the stages of evolvement.

Dr. Shiv Talwar has presented a close parallel to the idea of contemplation and contentment as put forth in Tzu, Yellow Bridge:

Not going out of the door I have knowledge of the world.Not peeping though the window I perceive heaven's Tao.The more one wanders to a distance the less he knows.

(Tzu,Yellow Bridge:The TaoTe Ching n.d.,47-1,Goddard's Translation), with lines 4:18 of the Bhagwadgita:

Those who see action in inaction and inaction in action are truly wides amongst humans.Although performing all kinds of actions, they are yogis and masters of all their actions.(Bhagvad Gita n.d., 4:18)

In the conclusion the author envisions spiritual education for all for emancipation and liberation. According to him human beings are uniquely equipped amidst creation to rewire the brain and understand the unity of all created life in the universe.

He quotes Jalaluddin Rumi in the conclusion which appropriately highlights the overall concern in the book thus:

….Not any religion or cultural system.

...

I belong to the beloved, have seen the two worlds as one.

_____

Poems

This section of Cloverleaf contains poems on all-encompassing spirituality ...

Presence

Author:
Dennis Haskell

Mid-November, the year races towards its end

frantically; time, the clock says, counts

in a measured, tick-tock regularity

but the older you get the faster it goes.

2017: an eventful year for the world

and for me; but for the world every year

must be eventful. For myself, I look back

on many good things: we went to Singapore,

I sold my haunted house

after almost two years of trying, I bought

a new computer, a new car … the material,

important banalities

that have such presence in our lives.

One thing, though, stands out: in August

just shy of her 93rd birthday, my mother died,

in a mixture of tragedy

and relief. It's at least three years

since she's had any measure

of the world she once controlled. I got the call

and flew the next morning, but she had died

the night before. Does that bother me now?

I used to think Woody Allen's "I'm not scared

of dying, I just don't want to be there

when it happens" Jewish-hilarious.

The last time I had visited

was the first time she didn't know

who I was, though for years

she hasn't known my name.

A good year: festivals, friends' book launches,

a trip to Adelaide, a first to Kangaroo Island,

a tour of fascinating Japan, nice
modifications to my life. My mother
died quietly, almost abstractedly; my brothers
and sister and I of course knew, but she
wasn’t there when it happened.

A New Song of Innocence and Experience

Author:
Dennis Haskell

A New Song of Innocence and Experience

after "Paula, I" by Carlos Muro Aguado (Madrid 1947-)

A child’s eyes are full of vulnerable curiosity,

a sense of wonder tinged with a touch of fear,

no sign of adult defiance or animosity,

they look straight at you, but you almost hear

those questions of what we’re doing, why we’re here
starting to grow. A child’s eyes trust
that a mother knows, a father can, a sheer
unblinking faith they hold to because they must,

a faith that slowly turns into something more,
a gentleness easily lost, the necessity of care
too fragile, too valuable to possibly ignore
with no pretentiousness, no sign of despair

when the predictable is full of possibility
to eyes enabled by the mischief of naivety.

Time and the Wall

Author:
Dennis Haskell

Plangent, silvery light

flickers along the wintry river

like ripples, like a breeze

the bus tyres squelch through

as through a mist,

skimming the river’s margin,

the Busport road.

This afternoon I walked

past the low wall

where I used to sit

to wait for you, a tiny wall

near the office

which, ridiculously,

I still think of as yours.

I've avoided it for years.

I scrambled past, of course,

as quickly as I could

to the ghostly bus stop.

While you are gone

and I am largely gone

from this place, that

life has gone, time

has marched on

in its mindless thrust,

when you look back

time always adds up

to more than it seemed

at the time; yet something

of me, misty and lost,

as patient as death,

seems to sit on that wall

like a useless version of forever.

Stealing the Words

Author:
Dennis Haskell

Stealing the Words

for Eliza

Black-haired, with a whiff of powder

and distant murmur of perfume

you dance into the louder

reaches of the noisy, crowded room,

elegant and colourful, yet silent

your step as graceful as flight

so that every voice is suddenly lent

a moment of your quiet

and unassuming, with such verve,

with a colourfulness you've never heeded

open and smiling you have the nerve
to be yourself, no acting needed.

The burble of noise resumes, absurd
with self-importance – it’s enough
that for a moment you stole the words
from every open mouth.

Vaccine

Author:
Dr sami Rafiq

It stands at the doors

Unfurling its talons

On benches where love dwelt

At tables where candles used to be lit

On door knobs of domesticity

In places both holy and profane.

It swoops down

On unsuspecting humans

In the warmth of a handshake

In the softness of a hug.

The spectre of Covid 19

A denizen from netherworld

Depressive, deathly, cold

Picking its victims with ease

Stalking the streets

Slinking in hospitals

Camouflaged as air

Unseen, unsmelt, undetected

Knowing no lines

No divisions

No boundaries

No groups.

All are vulnerable

All that is living

Is under its vicious eye.

Yet ;

There is hope

There’s light in the dark

With the coming

Of a vaccine

A vaccine

The healing touch

From human hands that cannot touch

From troubled minds that cannot dream

From human hearts that are selfless

In their service to mankind.

The vaccine

When it comes

Does it mean

That all sorrows will end

And Covid 19 will be powerless then

And the horrors of death will dissipate.

I think not——

Covid is the Irony

Of the darkness within us

That has been let loose

And a prayer is needed

To heal

All the fissures

From where Covids spring

——-Sami Rafiq

Our Contributors

Dr. (Mrs) Farukh, Arjmand was born in Srinagar, Kashmir and is currently working as Professor of Chemistry, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India. She has research and teaching experience of 26 years in the specialization

area of medicinal inorganic chemistry. She has published 145 research papers related to her specialization in the peer reviewed journals of international reFarukh pute and has contributed 49 articles to national and international conferences/symposium. She also has two patents on metallic antitumor drug entities. She has 3980 citations to her credit with h-index 35 and i10-index 93 . Prof Arjmand is presently serving as Co-director of APJ Abdul Kalam STEM ER Centre – a joint collaboration venture of The Ohio State University, USA and AMU, Aligarh. She has successfully completed the Academic leadership (LeAP) program at AMU, India, and OSU, USA. She was recently awarded the CRSI bronze medal 2019 and was chosen a prestigious CRSI council member in 2020.

Grauer, Christine completed a Master of Science degree in Human Biology and Nutritional Science and a post-graduate Certificate in Adult Learning from the University of Guelph and has spent her entire career in adult education and training. She's been a spiritual seeker for the past 20 years and continues to be a fervent student of life. She's a mother, an editor, a writer, a speaker, a life coach, a yogi, a runner, a renovator and a corporate nine-to-fiver. Christine has realized the essence of her True Being.

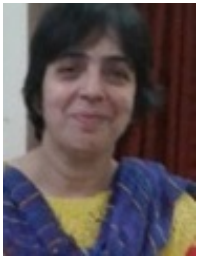
Regardless of external conditions, she now lives each day with joy, vitality, unconditional happiness and love, and she is an unstoppable force in helping others to experience the same in their lives.

Mr HAGAN, CHRISTOPHER, BA. LLB , Solicitor , Sydney Australia has majored in philosophy, mathematics, geosciences and law at the University of New South Wales. He established his law practice in 1982 and in 1983, he pioneered the flotation of the first biomedical company onto a stock exchange in Australia. He practiced law for many years advising resource, biomedical and technology companies before taking on executive roles in industry. He is a founding director of the *not for profit*, Thinking Read Forum-see www.thinkingreadforum.org. Amongst other works, he has produced two manuscripts for the educational and popular science genres in recent years - A history of science manuscript: '*Newton's Reality after Hawking*' and a philosophical work: '*Ideas to blend Science and Religion'*. His other passions are philosophy, biology, cancer research, physics, mathematics and spiritual health. He continues to write in these areas. He has been married for over 30 years with one adult son and lives in Sydney, Australia.

Haskell, Dennis is the author of 8 collections of poetry, the most recent Ahead of Us (Fremantle Press, 2016) and What Are You Doing Here? (University of The Philippines Press, 2015) plus 14 volumes of literary scholarship and criticism. He is the recipient of the Western Australia Premier's Prize for Poetry, the A A Phillips Prize for a distinguished contribution to Australian literature (from the Association for the Study of Australian Literature), and of an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from The University of Western Australia. In 2015 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia for "services to literature, particularly poetry, to education and to intercultural understanding". He is currently Chair of the Board of writingWA. His website is dennishaskell.com.au

Kapoor, Garima Talwar is the Director of Policy and Research with the Maytree, a charitable foundation that works to advance systemic solutions to poverty through a human rights approach. Prior to this position, she held one of Executive Assistant and Special Policy Advisor to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Income Security and Pension Policy at the Ministry of Finance in Ontario, Canada.

Her main interests are in understanding how various sectors of society (government, civil society and private industry, for example) can work together to improve the well-being of populations worldwide. She holds a Masters of Public Health from the University of Toronto.



Dr. Rafiq, Sami is a professor of English at Aligarh. She is a translator, writer, poet and novelist who celebrates human values.

Sami Rafiq had her education from St. Mary's Convent Naini Tal and Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya, Gwalior. Her undergraduate and graduate studies are from Aligarh Muslim University in India.

She is the founding editor of Cloverleaf: Journal of Education in Evolvement and All Encompassing Spirituality, http://cloverleaf.spiritualeducation.org/.

Talwar, Shiv received his undergraduate degree in civil engineering from the Punjab University, India and his graduate degrees from Lehigh University, USA and the University of Waterloo, Canada. He retired from his career in 1996 and established Spiritual Heritage Education Network Inc. in 2000. He has been serving as its President since its inception. He owes his spiritual education to his parents, his school teachers in India and his mentor, Swami Vishwatma Bawra to whom he is eternally indebted.

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All Encompassing Vision