

Inclinations And Reality

<https://mail.yahoo.com/d/folders/1/messages/AO9InRENlL9UXPyF7go5MPEDmJU>

Is Human Consciousness Computable?

Human consciousness is a hot as well as a fashionable subject these days. It is because human beings want to go to the ultimate mystery of their lives – how they apprehend reality. But it is not a new subject of inquiry, it has been around since ancient times. Every new generation thinks it is special, so many times it thinks that they are the first to ask some intriguing question.

Simplest answer to the question of what is consciousness is that it is the workings of human brain. With all the theories on consciousness offered, none can question the validity of that understanding. So, then the sensible inquiries on human consciousness should be how does the human brain work?

With brain containing in the range of 100 billion neurons the product of possibilists of their interactions offer virtually limitless bits of consciousness. With that we can never quantify human consciousness.

There are so many wrong interpretations on consciousness. That it comes from God, that it is unfathomable, that it is the same stuff that guides the physical universe. All these understandings are wrong.

Human consciousness is a product of a 100 billion neurons and the physical and mental experiences of the individual carrying the brain. So, no two individuals can have exactly the same consciousness.

Human beings see reality, both inner and outer, through their brains. As consciousnesses have developed differently in human beings, their take on the complex matters differ. As knowledge expands so does consciousness. Five thousand years ago humans thought differently on complex matters. Therefore, consciousness is a developable resource. Also, it does not come from heavens. Because if it did, then it would have been the same in the ancient and the modern times. Therefore, the answer to the question that forms the title of this short essay, Is Human Consciousness Computable? is a resounding no.

Suffern, New York, June 8, 2019

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Ghalib

Dr. Frances Pritchett is among the greatest Ghalib scholars extant. She is from Columbia University, N.Y.

Recently I had an exchange of correspondence with her on Ghalib. Her reply to my letter indicated at the top was lost. Read bottom up. I hope you will enjoy reading it.

Dear Fran Pritchett,

I feel enormously uplifted by your response to my letter, and that too so fast. When you ask for a moon and are instead given a star, your faith in ethereality of life is reinforced.

Thank you for providing the two links that are supposed to indicate Ghalib's happy personality. The first one I was already familiar with, the second one I have no access to at this point. But I am with you on the idea that Ghalib was a life-loving personality, who could indulge in humor, wine, and flirt with women and participate in other joy-inducing activities. But that was only one side of his personality, there was another side to him also, without which he would not have been the superlative poet that we know him to be.

All poets who write on human condition, are inherently sad. Thoughtful people can not but see the suffering as one of the realities of human existence. But it does not necessarily mean that they live a life of melancholy. Artists and other thinkers compartmentalize their lives: one part lives in the world, the other in their soul. Ghalib did exactly that. On one side he was intensely oriented to achieving worldly success, but on the other he was resigned to accept the builtin tragedy of human life. He wrote intense verses on the

suffering of life. To think that they were merely his cerebral exercises would be a vast misjudgement of the architecture of his soul. My strength in this perspective on artists does not only come from my understanding of human life in general, but also on the basis that I am a poet also. So, Ghalib, in my view, was not only a cerebral poet but also a wounded-soul one. It is in the latter aspect of him that has gained him a high status in the realm of poetry.

Why this upliftment of Ghalib in modern times? It is because with the decline of the old culture of conservatism in philosophy and culture of life, people saw in Ghalib's poetry the unglossed and un-rationalized depiction of human suffering.

In his superbly sensitive love poetry they saw was one of the anodynes available to their suffering. His love for wine and less than idolatry relationship with God, further drew them towards him. His dialog-like unpretentious letters even more enhanced their respect for his realism in all walks of life. It is just about seventy-five verses of Ghalib that have made lay people adore him. They do not care for his cerebral verses. In this selected genre of realism-verses, people find a vision of first the latent acknowledgement of the inherent suffering of life, then a liberation from it in form of the ridiculousness of life, its ironies. In them lay-people find that the real hero of human life is a human being, and not God.

I am sending you a short essay What Is Poetry? in the attachment below, which

may

or may not be relevant to what I have written above.

I had not intended to interview you in my request to meet you. I just wanted to meet

you, to discuss not only Ghalib, but also your experiences in India, of its civilization

and ethos. Also, in case you had been to Kashmir, I wanted to know your experiences

there. I was born a Kashmiri Pandit and lived my early years in the juxtaposition of

Hindu and Islamic cultures. I write a lot on Kashmir Problem.

But I believe now that my request to meet was a nouveau-fan-crush on you. How would

you spend time with a person unknown to you, who is neither in your field, nor a celebrity,

nor a journalist seeking an interview. To punish my juvenile audacity, I have decided to

go without food for one day.

I live in Suffern, N.Y., thirty-five miles north of midtown Manhattan.

With a handshake in thought, I remain your fan,

Maharaj Kaul

What Is Poetry? | Kaul's Corner

What Is Poetry? | Kaul's Corner

On Saturday, April 27, 2019, 3:57:03 PM EDT, Frances Pritchett
<fp7@columbia.edu> wrote:

Dear Maharaj Kaul,

Your approach to Ghalib- that he wrote melancholy verses because he was melancholy at heart- is contradicted by many anecdotes about his sense of humor told by his biographer Hali (here are some

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/meaac/pritchett/00ghalib/apparatus/ghalibiana.html>

of my favorites) and also by his own cheerful and enjoyable letters (best translated in

<https://www.amazon.com/Ghalib-1797-1869-Letters-Oxford-Paperbacks/dp/019563506X>

by Russell and Islam). If you look at both those sources and don't change your mind, we can proceed to discuss literary theory (for example, since all ghazal poets write melancholy verses, did they ALL have melancholy lives?).

As for interviewing me, where do you live?

Yours with good wishes,

Fran Pritchett

PS-

http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ghalib/174/174_10.html

On Sat, Apr 27, 2019 at 1:56 PM maharaj.kaul@yahoo.com <maharaj.kaul@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Prof. Frances Pritchett,

I recently came across your site on Ghalib, oh! what a site it is.

Day in and day out I am absorbed into it. What an encyclopedic

site it is, what a labor of love it must have entailed of you?

One element of Ghalib in it I did not find so far, Ghalib's personal emotional life as gleaned through his biography and poetry. It, perhaps, is in the site, I only may not have found it as yet.

While analyzing Ghalib's poetry - you are adept at that - you do not discuss the emotional

factors that may have influenced it. Though Ghalib was an intellectual, but more than that overall his poetry has been influenced by his personal suffering, which was perhaps much more than his joys. To me Ghalib was a very sad man, he viewed life as an unmitigated suffering. And that aspect of him we cannot leave out when discussing his poetry.

I have a personal request to you, which I have never made to a celebrity until now.

I would like to meet you for half an hour or so, to discuss Ghalib. Though I know that this

is doomed to a failure, but I thought there is nothing to lose in trying it out. I take comfort in Ghalib's

words:

Hum ko hai malum janat ki hakikat,

Per dil ko khush rakhne ke liye Ghalib ye khyal acha hai.

(I may not have quoted this *shair* accurately, but the essence is there)

With admiration,

Maharaj Kaul

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On Human Consciousness Part 1 of 2

These days it is hard to avoid reading about human consciousness. It has become a buzz word in intellectual as well as popular discussions about human mind, life, and mankind's future. Though consciousness has been a subject explored in distant antiquity, but it got a strong impetus after 1935 with the advent of Quantum Mechanics (QM), a branch of physics dealing with elementary particles.

What is human consciousness? An intelligent lay man would say that it nothing but the workings of human brain. That is an answer which cannot be dismissed. Afterall if there were no brain there would not be a consciousness as we know it.

But the consciousness that philosophers and scientists are talking about is not just the workings of human brain, but a specialized product of it. It is a fundamental awareness of his existence that every human being carries with himself. It has nothing to do with his worldly life, other human beings, fear of

death, etc. But it is his awareness of his existence in the universe. What is his relationship with the physical universe, what is he doing in it, who drives him, where does he end? What is the essence of his existence? This is what we mean by human consciousness. This perception is not continuously present in him, but can be easily summoned by him at times, and at other time it requires effort.

The problem of the human consciousness is how it is produced? Can it be controlled?

These questions have been asked since homo sapiens developed consciousness, after the significant cognitive expansion 70,000 years ago. The questions asked were: who he was, was he being directed by someone or something? The idea of God emanated from this mystery surrounding him, which is still the most popular answer to it.

Human mind is developmental, which can be easily seen from the thinking of man thousands of years ago compared to his thinking now on virtually everything. Thinking on survival, child rearing, physical and social surroundings, etc. These changes have been brought about by his experience leading to knowledge. We continue to learn. Knowledge leads to ideas. Idea is conceptualization of experience, where it is possible to do so. Modern man is a store house of knowledge. So, we cannot say that a foreign agent or agents control human mind.

Spiritualists are people who believe a foreign force is responsible for the creation and workings of human mind. This is because, they argue, you cannot otherwise explain where human mind came from and how it works. But that is fallacious as human mind is evolutionary and it is a developable resource. Ideas are the key elements of its developments. It is conceivable that after some time no new ideas are developed, as they have all been exhausted. This we are talking about man's ideas about himself. For the ideas about things outside himself, like the physical world surrounding him, the ideas have still a long way to go before they ae

exhausted.

So, human consciousness has developed over thousands of years, and is still developing. The machine that helps in the production of ideas, the primary elements of consciousness, the brain, must have also evolved. The most significant milestone in its evolution came some 70,000 years ago when its cognitive abilities enlarged significantly.

One of the upshots of Quantum Mechanics (QM) is that physical reality exists only when human beings make an observation of it. That is, without the observation, and human beings are the only observers that we know of who exist in the universe at this time, there is no reality. This is a huge condition to prescribe, as the development of science is based on the basis that physical universe exists independent of human beings. It is understandable that at elementary particle level we may not be able to clearly and precisely make observations, but we cannot say that they do not have a past, present, and future. We may have to rely on statistical methods to get some information on these conditions, but there is no denying that these properties do exist.

QM's strange assumptions have encouraged spiritualists in thinking that human beings play a part in prescribing what physical reality is and where it is. Although QM has nothing to do with spiritualism, but spiritualists have taken QM's outlook on physical reality to endorse that universe and human mind are made from the same stuff. They have gone as far as believing that man's consciousness creates physical universe. That is, matter is created just by man's apprehension of it. Einstein, who was one of the founders of QM, could not reconcile with its latter developments. Since QM uses statistical methods to determine some of the physical attributes of elementary particles, he created the famous expression, "God does not place dice." Meaning that the fundamental laws of nature cannot be statistical. Universe exists independent of man by its own laws.

Many thoughtful men, since time immemorial, have ascribed man a spiritual dimension. Not that there was ever a proof for that, but the thought that he has an ability to understand universe so he must have a universal dimension to him. The concept of cosmic consciousness ingrained in man has roots in that thinking. Hinduism is explicit in according him a Brahman potential. Brahman is universal consciousness. That is, beyond his worldly and individualistic soul, encapsulated by *atman* concept, he has the scope of attaining the universal self. The problem with such concepts is that not everyone has the inner framework to embody them.

So, human consciousness is a general self-awareness, which not everyone is aware of. In the hands of ambitious, thoughtful, and imaginative people it can lead to a high-level experience of life. In India there are ascetics who go through established programs to develop a higher level of consciousness. But it must not be easy, as I have never met a man who achieved it. Even if getting there, holding on to it must be challenging. Even an inferior state of higher consciousness is better than its common level.

The basic consciousness a human being is born with, after growing up and some introspection, points toward something larger than oneself. This is what most of the human beings possess. But it does not become something of a force until it is worked upon. Then again due to an individual's potential it may never flower into something significant.

(To be continued in Part 2)

Suffern, New York, Jan. 20, 2019

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Man and God

God is totally a product of man's imagination. This idea exists outside man but most of the men are endowed with a faculty to imagine him. By inspiration and hard work some people are able to experience him much more than others.

Man has been made in God's image; that is, a lot of attributes of God exist in man. Man can elevate his being much higher than a common man's level. Specially gifted and hard-working men lift themselves further.

Pain in human life, generally, comes from the world. The tragedy of man is that he has to live in a world which has been created by his predecessor fellow human beings, while he bears the many attributes of God when he is born. Man is not a God, but God-like. If there were no world, man could reach a much higher level of spirituality than he generally does. It is the world that instills greed, unfairness, unnecessary painful competition, hatred of other human beings, lust for material things, wars, etc. Without the world man would be in a near-divine position. Without the world man's concentration on God would be great. As the English poet Blake said, "If the doors of perception were cleared, one would see things as they are, infinite." So, pain is an unavoidable part of human life. But truly gifted

people see the beauty of the universe hidden behind this pain.

I look at human life in a non-dualistic way. Everything is one-piece. That is, man's and universe's physical infrastructure is based on the same elementary-particle physics. The so-called mind is a human quality, but there may be other phenomena in physical universe that may have similar attributes. Human mind is based on ideas and experiences. It is the faculty of creating ideas that distinguishes humans from animal kind and botanical world, two other "living" entities on earth. The facility to create ideas in human consciousness reportedly underwent a big boost in the expansion of cognition some 70,000 years ago. The history of modern man, Homo Sapiens, is the history of the interactions of their ideas about themselves and their physical surroundings and their experiences. We have different ideas now than we had thousands of years ago. God is an idea that transcends all other ideas.

The tragic irony of human life is that it is on one hand endowed with God-like attributes but on the other hand it has to live through the worldly pain. Obviously, gifted people enhance spirituality over pain through religion, science, and art.

Suffern, New York, July 29, 2017, Rev. 5.20.18

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The Last Smile : A Humanitarian Movie by Jeevan Zutshi

The movie *The Last Smile*, released in 2017, is based on the book by the same name, written by Jeevan Zutshi. Following is an excerpt from my review of the book in May, 2017:

The drama of human life falls into a few types, but every life is a special case. The book we are dealing with is the story of Jeevan Zutshi, who immigrated to U.S. in 1972 and went through the usual struggles of a new immigrant and ended up a success story. Then what is captivating and interesting about his story? It is the epic tragedy he met in 2008 in the form of the loss of his eldest child, Amit.

Amit Zutshi died at the age of thirty, not by an illness, an accident, or a crime, but by the dietary supplements, the ubiquitous health enhancement drugs on the American self-initiated health improvement revolution scene. That is the drama of the book, that is the soul of the book. A crime was committed on author's son, who bore scintillating promise, and who was the apple of his eyes. This is a Hamletian drama, where the author wants to scream:

The time is out of joint—O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!

If the book had just contained a father's sorrow over the loss of his beloved child, depending on how it was written, it would have had an immense human appeal. But it rises higher than that. It depicts his sorrow's transformation into a searing crusade to harness and guide the dietary supplement industry's blind lust for money. That is the special dimension of the book.

Dietary supplement industry in U.S. has remained unregulated, even though it kills and hurts thousands of people annually, especially the younger ones. On one hand Federal Drug Agency is most likely the world's most stringent and thorough body screening new prescription drugs and their continuing record, but it does nothing about the multi-billion-dollar dietary supplement industry. The latter remains an unexamined industry, free to create and sell drugs, which are consumed by millions of Americans. But it is going to change now, to a good extent due to this book and its author's persistent efforts at the U.S. Congress and elsewhere. Just about a year ago U.S. sued over a hundred dietary supplement manufacturers and marketers for spurious labeling and other indiscretions of their products. The cat is out the box now, one day dietary supplements will be subjected to the same scrutiny as the prescription drugs. A movie based on the book, bearing the same name, was released a few months ago, which will further drill the message: do not let people be killed by the wanton lust of businessmen. Chapter 17 of the book, A System Overdue for Reform, will haunt the dietary supplement industry for a long time

The movie is an independent production and eighty-seven-minute long. It was directed by Shankey Srinivasan. It has been screened in many countries It has won eight awards at major international film festivals, including the prestigious Best Feature at Burbank International Film Festival in 2017.

In January of this year the movie was released on various online platforms, the links for which are given below. Now, you can watch it from the comfort and privacy of your home.

How a family disregarded the agony of revisiting the painful memories of the tragic demise of their child, investing their financial resources and time, to first write and then produce a movie based on that experience, for the sole purpose of saving other children from the same calamity as their son fell in, is a testament to humanitarianism.

iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/movie/the-last-smile/id1298500230>

Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Last-Smile-Keith-Stevenson/dp/B076V4LY6F/ref=sr_1_1?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1511305575&sr=1-1&keywords=The+Last+Smile

Google

Play: https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/The_Last_Smile?id=3FAdsi2DJY4

Vudu: <https://www.vudu.com/movies/#!/content/906014/The-Last-Smile>

Xbox: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/store/movies/the-last-smile/8d6kgwyl7t34>

Suffern, New York, May 5, 2018

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Search for Nirvana and Gabriel Iqbal

The search for nirvana holds such a pull that in every few generations someone attempts to find it. Gabrieleal Iqbal, a Canadian, originally from Kashmir, India, states that he has found it in *heart intelligence*. It seems that the name is not his creation, it has been around for some time.

The concept of heart intelligence rests on the premise that human consciousness rests in human heart and not in human brain, as has been traditionally believed. Furthermore, the supreme creativity of human beings rests in their hearts or emotions as opposed to reason dominated mind. Obviously, it goes against time honored understanding that reason is the supreme architect of human understanding of physical universe as well as man's inner universe. But Iqbal and some other thinkers believe that both the universes are not mechanical either in their delineation or their functionality. The strength for proposing such a skewed concept is drawn from Quantum Mechanics, which among other things says it is the human observation that makes reality. But not all of Quantum Mechanics is still on a solid scientific foundation. It is a pity that many immature students of physics use it to further their spiritualistic view of human life and universe.

Iqbal's view that human beings should be driven by their hearts and not heads (minds) is nothing new. From time immemorial religions, artists, and some philosophers have been saying the same. The only new element is that he is backing it by science, which is wrong, because he is using it wrongly to justify his intuition.

So for my knowledge of Iqbal's nirvana, heart intelligence, is based on his website. But today I have ordered his book on heart intelligence and I will report on it shortly.

Suffern, New York, January 29, 2018

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Some Comments on Rakesh Kaul's Article, The Triumphant Trinity: A Statecraft That Can Reinvent Kashmir

Some Comments on Rakesh Kauls Article

The Architecture of Intellectualism

The world intellect means the power of knowing, as distinguished from the power to feel and to will. It means a capacity for knowledge and also a capacity for rational or intelligent thought, especially when highly developed. An intellectual is a person given to study, reflection, and speculation. Also, a person engaged in activity requiring the creative use of intellect. So, intellectual persons engage in high level reasoning in the pursuit of acquiring definitive knowledge of something or in pursuit of solving a problem. There are other type of problem- solvers: religious people, psychics, poets, fortune tellers, and others who claim to solve problems and make prophecies, which at times come true. But an intellectual has to follow prior knowledge on the subject he is dealing with, use established reasoning, based on established principles and rules, and scientifically verified data. In the words of Einstein there should be an inner harmony and external verification in postulating a new theory. So, an intellectual's work is harder than, say, a poet's, to make a projection of a phenomenon. In the intellectual world a lot of things are still unknown but a religious person, through his presumed divine connection, is able to know things without much thinking.

In modern times, as mankind has advanced greatly in science and technology, man's intellect has come to be greatly revered. Religion, though for away from extinguishment, has been diminished. Understanding based on verifiable facts and established scientific principles is given the highest place in today's man's consciousness and in the pursuit of understanding the material universe and the world. It is on the strength of this consciousness that the edifice of science has been built. Science is almost a modern man's religion. The reason that it is not a complete religion is because science cannot help man in his many aspirations and in his psychological architecture and states. Though some people think that

science will become a complete religion one day but I think it will never become so. So, man's intellect has gained a high stature. Therefore, an intellectual is highly regarded because it means learning on the scientific basis, which is based on a foundation of knowledge resting on concrete facts and principles and cognizant on any new evidence. The claims of science have to be provable, if they do not meet this test they are expunged from the body of science. There are no favorite theories in science, each one has to stand on its legs of verifiable facts and well-established principles.

Many learned people believe that Einstein's General Theory of Relativity is the greatest feat of intellectuality. It took about ten years to develop. Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity was completed in 1905 and it is considered as the first floor of a two-story house, while General Theory of Relativity is the second. Special Relativity dealt with the relativities of motion, space, and time. Any uniform motion when looked from another uniform motions is different and, therefore, synchronicity is not an automatic phenomenon. Time is always measured in relationship with something. So, both motion and time are relative, not absolute. Newton thought otherwise. One of the deductions from Special Relativity is the most famous scientific equation, $E = MC^2$ (square). It implies that an enormous amount of energy is stored in a small amount of mass. But this energy can be very difficult to release because of the enormous engineering difficulties needed to do so. This equation was the precursor to the start of the atomic age. Two small atomic bombs thrown on the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in August, 1945 destroyed huge number of human lives and material structures.

General Theory of Relativity (1915) developed the theory of the gravitation (the first developed after Newton). In Einstein's understanding gravity is a curvature of space-time in which the objects of universe lie. To see a pronounced effect of the space-time curvature consider an object like our earth near a star like our sun. The rotation of the earth round the sun is an example of the former following

the space-time curve near the latter, which before General Relativity Theory was simply a gravitational attraction between the two objects. It is based on this understanding Einstein predicted that even a ray of light will bend near the sun by a certain amount he calculated. Now, in the earlier understanding light was the straightest thing in the universe there was, because it was massless and therefore unbendable in presence of a mass. In 1919, during a solar eclipse, two teams of scientists verified Einstein's claim. One was sent to the island of Principe, South Africa, and another to Brazil. Both teams obtained data that was reasonably close to Einstein's prediction. These teams were organized by the British astronomer, Arthur Eddington. Britain and Germany at that time were in war with each other and therefore this scientific effort was greatly hailed as step toward peace and friendship between the two, besides its great scientific achievement.

The above description of Einstein's work was only given to indicate some extraordinary works of one of the supreme intellects of the mankind. Let it not be misunderstood that every intellectual has to be at the level of Einstein. Any person who frequently indulges in intellectual activity at a developed level is an intellectual. Let us say there is a professor of physics, with a Ph.D. in it, who teaches in a college. This does not automatically make him to be an intellectual, because mere teaching, even at graduate level, is not intellectual enough. On the other hand, if he indulges in research, at a good level, he is an intellectual. A man may be intelligent but he may not be an intellectual. Here is an example to illustrate the difference. An intelligent man may know all the facts of the formation of stars but if he does not know the theories behind the facts and cannot answer new questions, even if on speculative basis, about the formation of stars, he is not an intellectual. Let us take another example: we have a mechanic who can fix problems occurring in a household refrigerator but he does not know the scientific principles of refrigeration and temperature control. He is an intelligent person but not an intellectual. Also, in this case, an engineer who knows the scientific principles of refrigeration and temperature control does not qualify to be an intellectual. He has to be indulging in the research on the new problems in these fields to qualify to be so. Ability to solve difficult and new problems in a field or fields of knowledge is a significant element in the definition

of an intellectual. Because a man may solve old problems by the sheer power of his memory, but an intellectual is a thinking person in his significant and well-established field of inquiry, who can either solve or speculate on the new problems in it. There are intellectuals also who come from the fields of philosophy, arts, sociology, and others. Actually, one can be an intellectual without belonging to any established field, just as a thinker in general human and other non-established fields. The point is that the man has to be learned, a thinker, and right in many of his thoughts. General people often get disappointed when they see that the intellectuals have not solved many great problems in the world: religious intolerance, inhuman conditions in many parts of the world, distrust among many people, etc. Intellectuals have said all the right things about these global problems but they are so large that they need a change of heart and mind in the involved people, helped further by the political and cultural leaders. Mankind is still immature even with the emergence of the modern civilized man in the last five thousand years. A hundred years from now the world may be a safer and more tranquil place than it is now. But, alas, the present generations will not be there then.

Suffern, New York; Original: Sept. 29, 2010 under the title: Who is an Intellectual;
Rev: March 25, 2017

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Enigma of Happiness

Harriman State Park is a sprawling slice of nature planted just forty miles north of the epitome of modern urban living in Manhattan, New York City. It encompasses thirty-one exquisite small lakes, two-hundred miles of enchanting trails – overall 51,000 acres of unspoilt virgin nature.

Through summer, fall, and spring the park is teeming with people from adjoining counties and Manhattan, and states. Even in winter there is human life lurking under the bare tree branches, the browned out trails, and lonely vistas. You see the intense love between man and nature and wonder why. We can say that nature being the source of human life, attracts the two, like the relationship between a mother and child. But there is something more. Man sees in nature not only his source but also his solace. Solace comes from nature's loftiness in principledness, beauty, and selflessness.

We will never know why nature created human life. To what end? It may well be what many think to be just an accident. But that explanation in no way mitigates the drama of human life: choices to make, the call of the soul, the search of the absolute, and suffering. Humans have so much potential and yet they must undergo so much suffering. Religion, philosophy, art, and science have tried hard to unscramble the mystery of human mental existence and yet it persists. We are supported by a physical system but yet are endowed and guided by a transcendent mental architecture.

The search for happiness is a natural human urge. It is because nature did not make human beings *naturally* happy. It is because our *natural* physical-mental existence is at variance with the world we are forced to live in. That is, if a human being were left in a setting of nature, like that of plains, mountains, and lakes,

with a minimal contact with the world of urbanity, commerce, and politics there would be higher chances of him being happy than otherwise. That is, the urban existence of man is in direct violation of his inner setup.

In pursuit of happiness should a human being follow his desires, his philosophical leanings, love for another human being, etc.? But none of them is a guarantee of acquiring happiness. Happiness has to be idea-based. That is, it should be connected to ideas, like the ideas of freedom of man, uniqueness of the individual, and the brotherhood of mankind; on the notion that there exists beauty in both physical and mental spheres of human beings; that human life is an extraordinarily precious gift of nature, which billions of years have taken to build, etc. Happiness solely based on physical pleasures, material richness, power over human beings, etc. is fragile and ultimately ersatz. There has to be inner solemnity, a poetry, a respect for human life in order for it to give us happiness. Happiness consists of ordinary experiences but which have been interpreted by special knowledge of life.

In a way happiness is a way of looking at life. How we look at something is shaped by our ideas of about looking and the thing we are looking at. So, the ideas are the bedrock of human existence, including the scope of its happiness. But to be rich in ideas one has to read and think a lot, which the age of technology does not give us much latitude for. Living moment to moment, seeking excitement; which we consider the mantra of our existence, we have choked the fragile plant of reflection in us, which is the bedrock of happiness. So, for modern man happiness has become more difficult to achieve than it was for the ancient man.

Suffern, New York, Dec. 16, 2016

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