

Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work

Part 3 of 15

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We turn now to a consideration of the sixth postulate. This is in the following form: the All is not completely determinate, but is a complex of determinate-indeterminate.

It is said that Laplace, the scientist who continued the work of Sir Isaac Newton, once said that given a complete knowledge of the position and state of every atom in the universe, he could predict every future event in the history of the cosmos including that of all living creatures. This is an expression of the principle of *absolute determinism*; and, in general, this was the standpoint taken by physics and science in general during the nineteenth century. But we may note another statement made by Dr. Milikin, the founder of the California Institute of Technology, in a volume of the *Smithsonian Institute Reports*. In this paper, he tells of a lecture he once heard when he was a student in Germany in 1895. This lecture was given by a prominent German physicist of that time. In the lecture the physicist outlined all of the discoveries that had been made in the field of physics up to that time and he said that every important physical discovery had been made and that in the future there would remain only refinement of measurement—in fact, measurement down to the sixth decimal. But Milikin noted that it was only one year later that Roentgen made his discover of the x-ray, and soon thereafter, Becquerel placed a piece of uranium ore upon a sensitive paper in a dark closet, and in time it photographed itself. And these were physical events that were totally unpredictable by the knowledge of physics which existed prior to that time. Instead of being merely a refinement on the order of six decimals, it was a radically new discovery which initiated the subatomic physics of the twentieth century which has brought about a revolution in our scientific thought.

The result of that revolution is this: that we do not have a knowledge that can define the future of any entity in the physical universe; that instead, our laws of physics, and therefore, more emphatically, the laws of all nature in all forms, is not absolutely determinant in detail, but only in mass effects. This has resulted in the statement enunciated by Norbert Wiener, that our physical laws are not definitive, but are statistical; that what we know is rather in the form of a probability curve so that we have something definitive concerning mass results, but not absolutely definitive; that, in fact, it's only probable that a certain effect that is expected and usual will actually happen. In fact, it is pointed out that it is only highly probable that if a kettle of water is placed upon a fire at sea level it will boil at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, but not certain. We know that when an atom of radium breaks down it produces two other atoms of lower atomic weight and a flash of radiation, but we do not know when a particular atom will go through this transformation. We only know that in the mass of innumerable such atoms, a certain percentage will go through this transformation in a given time, and we know that we can calculate the half-life of the atom of radium, then we would know after that only

how long the half-life of the remains would be, and so on. This involves a different conception concerning the nature of matter than we ever had had before.

Now, if laws are statistical, then it implies that we have knowledge of what proceeds in the case of a great number of given entities, but not what will happen with respect to a specific entity. Nonetheless, there is a principle of order in this and it is so reliable that a sound business can be built upon a basis of actuary calculation, as in the case of insurance companies, where there is no knowledge of what will happen to individual entities in it. This means we cannot predict, theoretically, the future position or state of every entity in the universe, yet we have a law that governs the masses of such entities. Out of this, then, there has grown the *principle of uncertainty*. What this implies is that not all in this universe is determinate; there is also a principle of indetermination—determinateness in connection with masses, indeterminateness in connection with individuals. Much follows from this and that which is of most importance to us is involved in the seventh postulate dependent upon this one.

The seventh postulate is: at least man has a range of freedom which becomes greater as he evolves, and with a subordinate statement under this to the effect that, therefore, he is a responsible moral being.

Before proceeding with the discussion of the seventh postulate, I wish to introduce a rather long parenthetical statement that properly belongs in connection with the discussion of reincarnation. This is a thought that came to me subsequent to that discussion; and so when this tape is transcribed, this statement should be transferred to the discussion on reincarnation.¹

The pattern of reincarnation which we discussed heretofore is only one among several possibilities. We have even heard the statement made that there is 1000 ways in which reincarnation can happen. But here I wish to discuss one that is of particular importance, namely, the *tulku* form of incarnation. And before we can deal with this specific form, it is necessary to have some view of the total meaning of *tulku*. The term is Tibetan in origin and it implies the power of certain well evolved entities to enter into other entities who are living in this world and either communicate through them or occupy a more or less persistent life within them for either a period of years or, conceivable, for the whole lifetime. The outstanding instance of this is said to be the incarnation of the Dalai and Tashi Lamas, whereby, when a given entity who has occupied the position of one of these lamas passes in, another entity is born which is occupied by *tulku* methods by the same entity that died. But this is a technical subject and some elaboration of it is necessary. And incidentally, this is a matter of very considerable importance to us.

We'll have to consider the fact that man is not a simple entity, but a compound of several principles. The view of these principles varies with different philosophers or different schools. They are not always the same. I will give an example of two or three of the different views of the organization of the principles.

¹ As Wolff requested, the following statement on reincarnation has been inserted into the discussion in the audio recording "Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work," part 2.

We have that which in our own day was presented by Sri Aurobindo, which produces a rather complex picture, that the total entity of man has this from the bottom up: that there are at least two subconscious zones below the ordinary consciousness here; that on the level of the ordinary consciousness here, there are three divisions—body, life, and mind; that in the case of each of these three, there is that form of consciousness which stands before or outward or outside our consciousness—the view with which we are commonly familiar, the external world view—but that behind this there is a subliminal consciousness, so that we would have an outer consciousness of the body and a subtle, subliminal consciousness of the body, a outer consciousness of the vital and an inner, subliminal consciousness of the vital, and an outer consciousness of the mind and a subtle, subliminal consciousness of the mind. The subliminal portion and the outer portion are viewed as on the same level. But then above the intellectual mind, there is this hierarchy of steps: higher mind, which is viewed as over the head; above that, illuminative mind; still above that, the principle of intuition on its own level, from which it is precipitated more or less in an impure form down through the outer consciousness; and above the intuition is “overmind,” which is the consciousness that directs the operation of the whole cosmos and which produces massive cognition where a complex of cognitions are produced at the same time that may in part stand in logical connection, but may in part stand in other connections that are non logical; then above this, in the higher hemisphere, there is the “supermind,” which in its turn has different stages—this is viewed as the executive principle of *Satchitananda*, and is a mode of consciousness pretty well beyond our power of imagining what it would be; then finally above this lies *ananda*, *chit*, and *sat*—the being which as a whole is called *Satchitananda*, the ultimate Divine in his system.

In Theosophical literature, we have at least three different systems presented. The principle one of these, the one most commonly known and employed, is a system that first appeared in *Esoteric Buddhism* written by Sinnett and based upon the material given in *The Mahatma Letters*. This is sevenfold in character and simply stated is as follows, in this case proceeding from the highest principle down: at the top, *Atman*, then *Buddhi*, then higher *Manas*—frequently called the upper triad; and below this, a quaternary consisting of *Kama Manas*, *Kama Rupa*, *Linga Sharira*, frequently called the astral body, and the gross physical, or *Sthula Sharira*. There is a variant of this to be found in a more esoteric statement in which the *auric egg* replaces the *Atman*, the *Atman* being viewed as not a principle but as standing above the septenary organization.

And finally, we have the organization given in the Taraka yoga system. This also is to be found in *The Secret Doctrine* and is discussed there at some length and is the system that is of most importance for our understanding of this particular form of incarnation known as *tulku*. It consists of four elements: first *Atman*, above three *Upadhis*. The three *Upadhis* are *Karanopadhi*, corresponding to *Buddhi* in the system of *Esoteric Buddhism*; second, *Sukshmopadhi*, consisting of *Kama Manas*, *Kama Rupa*, and higher *Manas*; and finally, *Sthulopadhi*, consisting of *Prana*, or the life principle, *Linga Sharira*, and the gross physical.²

² See H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Press, 1893), 181, for the schema to which Wolff is referring.

One might raise the question, which of these systems is the true one? We conceive that they all may be sound, that the difference is due to a difference in approach to the total problem, a difference of viewpoint, perspective, or base of reference, or a way of viewing the total organization of man with respect to varying purposes. There will thus be no effort here to say that one is valid while the others are not; and it is not always possible, as Sri Aurobindo has noted, to develop a clear correspondence between different parts of the different systems.

Now, our concern in connection with *tulku* incarnation is most particularly oriented to the Taraka yoga system. It is said that this one which has three principles and *Atman* above represents a form corresponding to the possibility of an adept to divide himself into three parts and function in those three parts separate from each other but upon different planes of being; whereas, it is said that it would be impossible to divide himself into seven parts and remain alive.

Now, the *Karanopadhi*, corresponding to *Buddhi*, is sometimes called the causal body. What do we mean by *Buddhi*? In *The Secret Doctrine* we find it referred to as the *spiritual soul*. But if we look up the word in a Sanskrit dictionary, it is translated *intellect*. And Sri Aurobindo follows this practice in his chapter “On the Methods of the Vedanta” in the *Life Divine* and identifies it with the *pure reason*. But a distinction must be made between the principle of intellect or reason here and some of its lower manifestations which we in our present world call the intellect. This is a principle which carries the power of discrimination, discriminative thought, that which Shankara called the crest jewel, and is the principle to which he attached greatest importance.

The *Sukshmopadhi*, consisting of higher *Manas*, lower *Manas*, and *Kama Rupa*, comes within the range of our ordinary thinking. *Kama Manas* may be identified with that form of thinking which has been called *wishful thinking*, for *Kama* means desire. It is the crude form of thinking in which all people engage and is not primarily oriented to truth, but to how one may get something which he desires. It is the kind of thinking that underlies our business activities, our social activities, and our day to day activities. It is a common function with which we are all familiar, but is not oriented to truth, whatever that truth may be. This is the function of the pure reason, or the *Buddhi*, or the principle of discrimination.

One question may arise here. How does the principle of *Kama*, *Kama Rupa*, come to be classed in this, for *Kama Rupa* is the most fallen of all our principles—the basis of lusts of all sort, the sheer raw moralless animalistic principle of craving? But an answer to this problem is to be found in the *Theosophical Glossary* under the head of *Kama Deva*, where it is pointed out that in its redeemed or exalted form, it is the basis of compassion—a side of it that does not manifest in this humanity as much as we would desire. Fallen *Kama* is really the basis of all war; but the exalted side of *Kama*, that which is compassion, is the basis for human brotherhood, the very force of forces that would destroy the relationship of war, adversaryism, and competition.

The lowest principle, the one that involves *Prana*, *Linga Sharira*, and the gross physical body, is that which is necessary for the existence of a visible entity here. This is cut off at death, the other two *Upadhis* remain.

In the so-called third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* which appears as part of the third edition of *The Secret Doctrine*, there is a section called “The Mystery of Buddha”

consisting of some eleven chapters, and in here we have some of the most valuable material to be found in the whole of Theosophical literature, and it bears upon this special form of incarnation known as *tulku* incarnation.³ It is there said that when the Blessed One looked upon the results of his work which had aroused the opposition of the *Brahman* community and led to their persecution of his disciples, he said they have sinned, but I am the cause of their sinning and therefore I shall come to them. His compassion was so large that it included not only those who suffered from that persecution, but those who were responsible for the persecution as well. And then it is said that he appeared as Shankara, a *Brahman*, in which he came solely to the *Brahmans* and made perhaps the most effective formulation of the philosophy that we have ever had.

Now, it is said in this volume to which I've referred that with the equipment of the *Brahman* mind, for the child Shankara was a *Brahman*, he was better able to formulate himself than he had been in his own natural body, which was that of a *Kshatriya*, and the result is the written work in ample proportions that have come down to us from the pen of Shankara. But Shankara was a compound of two entities: a *Brahman* child having the outer principles that belonged to him, and also said that the higher self was that of Shankara, but that an intermediate principle in his constitution was the corresponding intermediate principle of the Blessed One himself and that the wisdom that proceeded through him was that of the Blessed One. The intermediate principle that was indigenous to Shankara was withdrawn, and we are told that this withdrawn principle is held in a state, not of cold storage, but in a state of a kind of life in entities that are qualified to support such principles temporarily until they return to their proper owner. The period of Shankara's work, of which it was said that it was destined for him, occupied thirty-two years and then the *tulku* withdrew—the *tulku* meaning the intermediate principle of the Buddha—and Shankara's own indigenous principle was returned to him. But this, obviously, involved a sudden drop in the level of consciousness of the entity known as Shankara, for his own intermediate principle was not privy to the wisdom that had been flowing through Shankara for those thirty-two years. We have been told that if he had had the patience to wait, that all of the wisdom that flowed through him would have become his as the right of his own proper person; but, according to sources that are said to come from the Tibetan, that he disappeared into a cave and has not been seen since. And the implication is that he in effect committed suicide, therefore invoking *karma*, which, again from Tibetan sources, is said to be death by violence at the same age in a subsequent incarnation. The age was thirty-three, and the hint is strong that this subsequent incarnation that met precisely those conditions was that of the Christ himself.

It is clear from what has been said that in a *tulku* incarnation we do not have one single entity, but two. To make this clear, I have used the expression of a *senior* and *junior* partner in the combination: that the entity in Shankara that supplied the outer vehicle, and it is said also the higher self, was the junior partner, and that the wisdom carried in the intermediate principle was that of the Blessed One. Now, this is obviously a very important type of incarnation, one which can occur only in the case of those of adept power, and probably even high adept power. But incarnations of this sort may well be the most important for the good of this humanity of all incarnations.

³ Ibid., vol. 3, 376.

This closes our parenthetical statement which properly belongs to the discussion of reincarnation. Let us now proceed with the elucidation of the principle of freedom, which is a highly important part of the nature of man.

In *The Mahatma Letters* it is stated that man is the only being in nature who is truly free and he is free because of his principle of reason; in other words, free because of the action of *Buddhi*. None of the entities below man, the rocks, the plants, and the animals, are truly free. They are ruled by their nature and they are truly irresponsible in the moral sense. But man, being in some measure free, becomes the first being that has moral responsibility, and this is perhaps his greatest ornament. It is that which makes him more valuable than the creatures which stand below him in the scale of evolution. But while it makes him more precious, it also opens the door to the possibility of his descent to depths. He has before him, because of his freedom, the possibility of achieving merit, even great merit and great honor, but also the possibility of falling very low indeed—and responsible for his fall. There are those who would like to free human beings from the quality of responsibility. This would be a great disservice. Man is dignified when he accepts responsibility and he becomes a mere thing if he thinks of himself as merely a mass of conditioned reflexes, a victim of circumstance. No, man cannot be excused in this way. As a reasoning being, he is responsible; and if he uses his responsibility with wisdom, he may rise to heights. If he fails so to use it, he may drop to depths lower than that possible to the creatures that stand below him in the scale of evolution.⁴

The question has arisen as to why we refer so much to mathematics in our writings and tapes, and as it seems important to give a significant and definitive answer to this question, we will introduce at this time another parenthetical statement.

There is indeed a definite reason why mathematics is used so much. Specifically, I am referring to pure mathematics rather than applied mathematics, the latter being an instrument employed in connection with mundane problems of numerous sorts. But pure mathematics is essentially of a different sort. It is the root from which applied mathematics is derived, but it is not a product of application. If one makes a study of the two disciplines or orientations represented by metaphysics and mathematics, certain important facts emerge. I shall start with a proposition that is really a conclusion and then proceed to a consideration of the grounds for that conclusion. The proposition is this: that mathematics and metaphysics are two branches of essentially the same domain, that their source is not in experience, but precedes experience. Experience, no doubt, is the occasion which awakens the interest in metaphysical and mathematical problems, but experience is not the source of metaphysical and mathematical knowledge. This point is very important.

We may think of metaphysics as consisting of that interest and knowledge which transcends the time-bound world and the stream of awareness which plays within time, but it is not at all dependent upon time or sense perception for its substantial actuality. Metaphysics by itself, in its purity, in isolation from form, is the pure substantial or essential knowledge, formless in its purity, that it gives essential meaning which answers the most fundamental questions that are aroused by the experience of empiric life. But in its purity, it is formless. Mathematics, on the other hand, is the principle of pure form in

⁴ See the audio recording “On the Nature of Space, Dynamism, and Free Will,” part 2, for a more detailed discussion of determinism versus freedom.

isolation from empiric actuality or the sensuous presentments here in external life. But by itself, it is form without meaning. These two, thus, stand as two sides of an ultimate whole. By bringing them together we have the combination of essential, saving meaning and formal power to express and manifest, including the power to become thinkable.

Now, we can see that the most important concern of man is the resolution of his ultimate metaphysical questions; that, in contrast, all of his merely empiric problems are only of transitory interest dealing with the concerns of the here and now in a transitory domain, but offering no resolution to ultimate problems such as: is there a purpose underlying empiric process; is there a meaning in that which we experience that has persistent value; is there a resolution of the problem of suffering which is so much a part of the empiric life? These questions, among others, are the important questions, and if one has not found an essential resolution of them by the hour of death, that life has failed in its most important respect of all. Apart from the Transcendental, life here is a meaningless process leading nowhere.

All metaphysical thinking which is not disciplined by trained mathematical thinking is only a muddied kind of thought, a kind of wishful thinking that provides no reliable security. But on the other hand, mathematical thought divorced from a metaphysical orientation is no more than empty form; and today, most of pure mathematical discipline is such an empty form. But by the marriage of the two, we combine metaphysical substance with dependable form.

If we were to employ the symbolism of the sexes, which is so often done, to express the difference between pure metaphysics and pure mathematics, we would find that pure metaphysics is masculine because it expresses the essence and pure mathematics is feminine because it expresses the form. And I must admit that in this sense, I am a great lover of the feminine, but this is all freed from all the complications introduced by the biological.

To illustrate this point, I shall tell a story that goes back to Stanford days. Searching among the mathematical texts that were in the library, I found a book said to be of East Indian origin on a mathematical subject, and I was at once intrigued. But, as I read the problems that were presented there, my eyes bulged out when I saw these words: tell me, beautiful lady with blue eyes, what is the answer to this problem? And then it proceeded to formulate the problem. Yes, indeed, mathematics is a beautiful lady with blue eyes; and those here should not object to her being brought forth in our discourses. Yes, this was an interesting experience. The problem involved what we would call a rather primitive level in the degree of abstraction that had then been reached. The book was said to be of about the time of Buddha. It was not yet algebra; it was rather pre-algebraic. Authentic algebra was discovered and developed by the Arabian culture. It was what to us would seem extremely concrete; the degree of abstraction was minimal. But, nonetheless, it may have been the work of genius, for usually the first steps in a new discipline are most demanding of the skill of genius.

Now, as to confirming evidence with respect to the interrelationship between pure metaphysics and pure mathematics, I shall refer to a statement which is found in the "Introduction" to the *Critique of Pure Reason* of Immanuel Kant. Immanuel Kant, in that portion of his introduction, notes this: that all of the arguments so destructive of the possibility of metaphysics that were brought forth by David Hume were equally destructive of the possibility of pure mathematics—the two being so intimately connected

that the argument which destroyed one, destroyed the other. Of course, at that time mathematics had revealed its power so abundantly, that even David Hume could not draw the conclusion that it was impossible.

Yesterday, I had further thoughts to be developed at this time, but this morning they are vanished; and so we will close the parenthesis for the present, and if those thoughts return, I shall then proceed with another parenthesis.

On this, the following morning, the thoughts have returned. They are connected with an important point brought out by Northrop in his [*The*] *Meeting of East and West*. In that volume, Northrop built a very convincing case for isolating the determinant orientation of the East and West. With convincing detail and logic, he presented the proposition that the predominant orientation of the East is to the *aesthetic component* in things. He presented it this way: that the view of our ordinary state could be called an orientation to the *determinate aesthetic component*, and that the transformation which we call Enlightenment, Realization, and Awakening, is achieved by an orientation to the *indeterminate aesthetic continuum*. In contrast, he built the case, in convincing form that the typical orientation of Western man is to the *theoretical component* in things, that he moves in his thinking towards the building of the *theoretic determinate continuum*. He did not add a further step as to a possible orientation analogous to the Oriental orientation to the indeterminate aesthetic continuum.

In analyzing this statement and considering certain facts that are true of the Orient, I feel that a certain modification of Northrop's statement is justified. As to the Mongoloid races of the East—the Japanese, the Chinese, the Mongolians proper, and the Tibetans, or at least the Mongolian portion of the Tibetan community—it would seem that Northrop's analysis is correct, for the cultures of these peoples is very advanced in the aesthetic field, and one finds this preeminent in the yoga that is known as *Zen*. But in the case of the East Indian, this is not so completely true. No doubt, the Indian culture is very strong in terms of the aesthetic component, but there are powerful thinkers representative of this culture, of which Sri Shankaracharya is outstanding; and as one reads the work of Shankara, one has a feeling that here is a mind which in another setting could have become a great mathematician. The theoretical component is evident here. It is also evident, but not so strongly so, in the case of Sri Aurobindo. I would say, from long brooding upon the work of Sri Aurobindo, that the orientation to the aesthetic component is stronger than the orientation to the theoretical component, though the theoretical component is well represented in his philosophy. This, then, would lead to a certain modification of Northrop's statement, and that is that what he discovered concerning the Orient is preeminently true of the Mongoloid races but not of the Indo-European race, which is said to have arisen in central Asia and that one branch of it went south and constituted the Aryan Indian portion of India's population, and another branch went westward and populated Europe; although there do seem to be small fragments of still more ancient races in some corners of Europe.

Now, the point that I'm coming to here is that the keynote, the dominant cultural interest, of races makes a difference in the form that *yogic* discipline would normally take. Now, the supreme expression, the most perfect expression, of the theoretical component in things is precisely that which is found in mathematics. I have not found any substantial development of the mathematical consciousness in the earlier Eastern

literature, although the beginnings of mathematical conceptions are to be found there, but not its elaborate and intensive development.

Now, I assume the correctness of the maxim often referred to by Dr. Carl G. Jung, that the right path with the wrong man leads to wrong results; that instead of taking over a path that was perfectly proper and effective with an Oriental culture, say, like that of the Mongoloid races, and transporting it to Western man, is bringing what was a right way for Eastern man to Western man where it becomes a wrong way.⁵ The genius of Western man arises with the classical culture of ancient Greece, and here we have the beginning of elaborate mathematical development. I would pick Pythagoras as the one individual who most strongly defines the Western cultural spirit, and he was a mathematician of outstanding importance, a philosopher, and a mystic. Here then, I maintain, we find the keynote of Western man. Spengler has shown that Western culture, the culture of which we are inheritors, had closer affinity to the classical culture than is to be found in any other cultural development so far as we know them. So that, in a certain sense, classical man and Western man continue the same essential emphasis, namely, the development of the theoretical component—that which makes science possible. Two factors are involved in science, the principle of observation and the principle of theory. Of these two, the differentiating factor is preeminently in theory, for the Orient had descriptive science, that which is based upon observation, but not a high development of theoretical science, which is the power that has made our conquest of practical knowledge possible. Therefore, in the effort to find a way that is appropriate to the genius of Western man, I find that the emphasis must lie upon the use of a mathematical discipline. This is the reason why I give so much attention to the mathematical factor.

Parenthesis closed.

⁵ Carl G. Jung, commentary to *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (New York: Causeway Books, 1975), 79: “An ancient adept has said: But if the wrong man uses the right means, the right means work in the wrong way.”