

The Science of Mind as Humanistic Spirituality

by Rev. Arthur W. Chang

We take truth wherever we find it and we make it our own to the extent we understand it. -Ernest Holmes

Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy. -Rabbi Abraham Heschel

Every day is a good day. -Zen Mystic

Ever since 9/11, I have felt the gentle hand of love nudging me towards re-centering myself in a spirituality that is clearly less absolutist and more humanistic in emphasis. By absolutist I mean the kind of religious position that tends to make everything black and white, good and evil, and religious life so otherworldly that little value is placed upon this earthly experience. 9/11, like a surprise punch to the gut, terrorized my attention with the painful awareness of how a spiritual absolutist belief may lead us to coldly, and premeditatively, kill others for God and for the promise of an eternal reward in the hereafter. Although this may merely be an aberrant inclination of spiritual absolutism, I have reacted with distaste for the whole thing as if to food-poisoning towards a once enjoyable meal. The whole thing has lost what little appeal it had to me, and I now consider it a blight on the sacred fruit of Creation.

As I attempt to cut away the undergrowth of this new path to me, I feel the anticipation of one setting off towards some new unexplored territory in the great rain forest of consciousness, but I am encouraged by the new creatures with astounding colors, forms and sounds that startle normalcy into awe and wonder of the amazing artistry of God. I find refreshment in these images and in the forest's incessant rain and once again, with my mind turned away in metanoia, in conversion from the images of 9/11, I can see more clearly the light of sacredness emanating from life as it is, all of it, all creatures and the ecology that supports us all.

Experiencing the cosmology of the spiritual absolutist can, at times, put us all in the frightening shadow of the Almighty. Better it is that we see the light of the shining face of God in all things. As the Avatamsaka Sutra says, "Jewels on Indra's net reflect each other endlessly." This is what humanistic spirituality encourages us to see; this is the light of a Process Spirituality, where the universe advances through novelty, as Alfred North Whitehead describes evolution.

The Way of Magnified Power

Ernest Holmes, the founder of Religious Science and its spiritual philosophy-the Science of Mind-believes that every individual is seeking to be happy and to fulfill his life. As a practical spiritual philosophy, the purpose of the Science of Mind is to help people to see how a knowledge and application of spiritual principles can make our dreams become attainable goals. Because the Science of Mind is fundamentally helping humans to evolve their highest spiritual vision, it is humanistic spirituality. However, humanistic spirituality goes still further; it also helps humans to work ecologically and spiritually in terms of their greatest Wholeness or the Holiness in everyday life.

The Science of Mind is the way of magnified spiritual Power built upon the understanding of the sacred Trinity of consciousness: Cosmic Intelligence, Boundless Energy and Unconditional Love. This Trinity is back of all creative action and shows up most clearly in any Spirit-centered-action in human affairs.

The first aspect of this miracle-creating Trinity, unlimited Intelligence, will inform our life's mission at any level, instantly. In the spirit of Emerson's "There is no great or small for the mind that maketh all," no vision of ours is too large, nor is any detail of our lives too small for this unlimited Intelligence to participate. The scriptures symbolize this Cosmic Intelligence as the heaven-opening experience of Jesus at the Jordan when baptized by John. As it sets Jesus on his right track to accomplish his life's mission, so it does us.

The second aspect of the Trinity is boundless creative Energy. Like Moses leading the Israelites from bondage to freedom, when we encounter this Energy in its pure form, it executes our highest vision and our deepest desires. Moses, in thinking of his personal inadequacies, the impure forms that this creative energy may take, makes five different excuses to God as to why he should not be the one for this mission, but spiritual Intelligence assured him that the energy or power would be within him to accomplish this impossible mission, and so it is with us. Another feature of the Moses story of the use of boundless creative energy is that this energy always exists for freedom. However, this great power needs our conscious or intelligent recognition of it, our embodiment, if it is to be available to us for performing miracle-transforming feats.

The third aspect of the trinity is evoked when we are in tune with Infinite Love, because Love holds our thoughts and actions in the context of Divine Order and Harmony in a world that is, in its deepest reality, spiritually perfect, whole and complete. When love governs our creative actions, consciousness within us can rise up to astonishing levels, like the great prophets of old, or like the contemporary ones, such as Gandhi or King whose non-violent actions of love achieved social justice for their communities. Thus, our spirit-flavored actions are blessing-raining ones as well. Such actions fit the prescription of the Book of Genesis that tells us that all of God's creative actions were both good and blessed for the unfolding evolution of all creation. And so will our

actions be when we work from the holiness of Love. Rabbi Abraham Heschel captures this spirit in saying, "Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy," and so does an insightful Zen master, who probably never read Genesis, but declares, "Every day is a good day!" Indeed every day is a good day to be happy and fulfilled despite the comings and goings of life.

The Best Wisdom of the World

As a teaching, the Science of Mind draws upon the best wisdom of the world: past, present, and so too in the future. For we realize that wisdom, the cream of learning, comes mainly to those who gladly participate in the process of living while contemplating Life's great precepts, which are the gifts of the spiritually enlightened ones. How else can any being with our astonishing creative power, to choose and to do, survive our own capacities to create (or destroy) if we do not learn to do so wisely? The secret of this wisdom lies in our willingness to bring Power and Intelligence under the roof of Love, or as was the case of Moses, into the Tent of Meeting, where he worked things out with God-"for God is love," as the Epistle of John reminds us.

And so it is that our harmonious use of spiritual power requires us to bring Intelligence and creative Energy into accord, evoking a mystic marriage through Love, otherwise known as Unity or Wholeness. At the local level, Love calls us to action for ourselves but even with that same beckoning gesture, calls us simultaneously to global action as well. The first call to self-responsibility is usually obvious like the skin on our faces, but the second call to greater wholeness is revealed only to the eye that is opening up to its greater spiritual mystery. Here we see that we indeed have a responsibility to ourselves but in the context of our responsibility to others who make up the greater whole. Living is no spectator affair. We, the regular folks, will not be permitted to sit everlastingly on some sacred mountain top or in a spiritual cloister. Astronomer John Wheeler says "We are living in a participatory universe," and at some level, life is process and we must participate.

To see life as process means that in every new epoch, individuals and communities must reengage the spiritual messages handed down from previous generations, to scrub through the crud and corrosion of dogma and superstition, and down to the original radiant truth, as one scrubs an old house to bring back glimpses of its original freshness and shining aliveness. To be spiritually mature people, spiritual knowledge demands from us not just acquiescence, or obedience, but process-a kind of Jacobean struggle with the angel before enlightenment from God graces us. For by some angelic alchemy we have to become the spiritually chosen ones, though not by acclamation of an external deity, but through personal acceptance that recognizes that "the kingdom of heaven is (already) in us." Otherwise, the heaven of infinite possibilities may become, in this field of pairs of opposites, a hell of limitation, where one group may be told by another that they cannot have access to

education or must wear burquas, clothing that, in this choice-less instance, covers up not only their bodies but their shining spirit as well.

Gaia the Great Mother

The ancient Greeks called the Earth on which we live, Gaia. The name conveys a sense of the Great Mother-Goddess, compassionate and permissive to us, her children. Nonetheless, we will soon experience the Great Mother's impersonal wrath when we behave like cosmic misfits, as we will without compassionate action towards each other, and as a consequence wind up feeling like undesirable tenants on Earth if we do not quickly strive to understand the Spiritual Principle or the Law of Wholeness governing all right relationships within the world. For Spiritual Principles in an evolving universe are not only short-term and present-concerned; they are, at once, long-term and future-oriented. The four seasons of the year hint at the cosmic Law of Circulation, and in so doing teach us of the need to recycle energy so that both present and future benefit by this great creative turning. Similarly, humans cannot give in to short-term toxic irresponsibility that values immediate gains to the detriment of the long-term disruption of this life-sustaining and evolving cycle. In the natural cycle, love takes on the face of wholeness or unity.

In an evolving universe we humans must continue to grow into greater cosmological awareness because culpable ignorance, ignorance of the law, is no excuse from its effects. Although we are here to fulfill our desires and bring our dreams into being, divine necessities and responsibilities call us to do so in spiritually mature ways that embrace the great commandments to love God (Wholeness and Unity) and to love our neighbors as ourselves-respecting the need to coexist with others. Furthermore, the assignment of Adam as the steward of the Garden of Eden, intimates the third great commandment, and that is "Thou shalt love thy ecology as thyself," for all life-forms have a stake in the Earth's health and creative power to renew itself that humans must learn to honor, for we shall ignore it at our peril.

In regard to disseminating information, the Science of Mind, like a spiritual internet system, is intensely interested in providing ready access to the best spiritual insights for individuals and communities throughout the world. It is responsive to the belief that people can enhance their lives by learning from and respecting each other's spiritual insights, and by avoiding, as much as possible, the friction of cultural dogmas. Too often religious positions are treated like politicians' pork belly schemes that are intended as rewards for their local constituents without regard for the principle of wholeness that underlies all true spiritual insights. An example of a pork belly approach is, "There is only one right way and we have it."

The Science of Mind's objective is to provide as pure a spiritual service as is possible to all who desire to improve their lives. To do so, the Science of Mind

must first recognize that an omnipresent God must be both equally and fully present everywhere at all times. Anyone and any people then can be a revealer of truth, and that God's chosen people are those who awaken to the mystery of Spirit within them and in the world. Thus, the Science of Mind respects the source of all spiritual and mental wisdom, and attempts to make spiritual information available without the distortions of cultural filters; like pilots flying through fog and darkness by means of their instruments, only what is necessary to navigate the world of sometimes confusing ideas is provided. Thus, Ernest Holmes says, "We take truth wherever we find it and we make it our own to the extent we understand it."

The spiritual principles taught by the Science of Mind are intended to serve, support and supplement individuals in every field of endeavor, business, home, science, health, and relationship. In the specific areas of spiritual growth, the Science of Mind will introduce and encourage our sense of mystical oneness, stimulate intellectual exploration and provide applications designed to change lives for the better. [To be continued.]