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# The Scientific Approach to Buddhism & The Appeal of Buddhism

## Two Essays

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BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

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and

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# The Scientific Approach to Buddhism

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That position requires a little preliminary explanation. In the days when science was believed to hold the key to all the secrets of the universe, the materialistic interpretation of life held undisputed sway. The scientist, it was thought, had only to turn the key—in other words, open up the atom for investigation—and the basic principle of all material phenomena would be exposed. All life and thought-processes were believed to have a material origin and foundation, and there was no room for the supernatural concepts of religion. Everything was a mechanical process of cause and effect, with nothing beyond.

The evidence of physics, so far as it went, was overwhelming; it was supported by the findings of astronomy, psychology and Darwinian evolution. Scientists believed that they understood the nature of atomic processes so well that, if the relative position, direction and force of all atomic units in the universe

at any given moment were known, every future event in space and time could be accurately predicted. It was only a question of obtaining the data.

In course of time the key was turned; the construction of the atom was analysed, but it was found to resolve itself into energy, a process of transmutation from one form of radiation into another, a continual cycle of arising and passing away of electronic particles. With the discovery of quantum mechanics, another modification entered into the accepted scheme of rigid causality. It was found that although the law of predictability held true of large numbers of atomic particles it was not valid for individual atoms. The law of deterministic causality was not absolute; it could only be applied statistically or quantitatively where large groups of atoms were being dealt with. This new concept opened the way for what is called the "uncertainty principle."

From a philosophic viewpoint, which is, strictly speaking, no concern of the pure scientist who is only engaged in the investigation of phenomena, not its implications, this "uncertainty principle" made room for the idea of free-will, which had necessarily been absent from the idea of an universe entirely determined by causal principles that admitted of no variation.

With the changeover from a static to a dynamic concept of matter, the scientist did not alter his materialistic theory because science by its nature has to assume the substance or reality of the material with which it is working; but a radical change took place in the attitude towards knowledge itself. Man, and the working of his mind, is a part of the universe, and his examination of its phenomena is like a person looking into the working of his own brain. He is looking at that with which he is himself identified; he cannot get outside and view it objectively. The picture of the universe presented through his senses is quite different from the picture given by physics; where his senses tell him there is solidity, form and substance, physics tells him there is nothing but a collocation of forces in a perpetual state of flux, of momentary arising and decay; and, moreover, that "solid" forms are really nothing but *events* in the space-time continuum, and that the so-called material object is itself mostly space. There is no such thing as a "solid" as we understand the term; it is merely a convention of speech based upon the deceptive data provided by the senses.

Our senses, however, are the only possible means of contact with events outside ourselves, and the data of physics, similarly, have to reach us through these senses. So the problem arises, can we ever be certain

that the picture presented by physics is a true one? This picture, it must be remembered, is a purely theoretical one; it is a matter largely of mathematical formulae, from which the mind has to make up whatever imaginative approximation it can. The universe of physics is an entirely mental concept; we cannot make up any picture of the space-time manifold of Einstein, so we have to rely upon the evidence of mathematics, which reveals a new dimension entirely outside the range of our normal experience. But the physicist has come to distrust even the working of his own mind, since it is itself a part of this quite illusory fabrication; and so he has been forced to ask himself the revolutionary question, "If physics is true, is it possible for us to know that it is true?" The whole subject-object relationship is thus brought into question. When the mind registers the impression which we call "seeing an object," can we be certain that the object seen really exists outside ourselves, or that there is any event taking place in space-time that bears the slightest resemblance to what we think we see? Science can give us no assurance on this point.

The scientific view of the phenomenal universe has reached this stage, and does not seem capable of going beyond it. To view the picture in its completeness, a mind is required that is not itself involved in the

phenomenal process, a transcendental mind that is outside the realm of causality and the subject-object relationship. It must "know some things other than physics."

So far, science has helped us, in its own way, to understand the Buddhist principles of *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā*, for the account it gives of the universe is completely in accord with Buddhist philosophy. The process of universal flux and the inherent substancelessness of matter is a fundamental of Buddhism. More than that, the process has actually been observed in the course of Buddhist meditation; the atomic constituents have been seen and felt, and the *dukkha* of their arising and passing away has made itself known to the mind which has stopped identifying the process with what we call "self," the illusion of *sakkāya diṭṭhi.*The supramundane knowledge of Buddhism begins where science leaves us, but because Buddhism is based upon direct perception of ultimate truth, it is only natural that the discoveries of science should confirm it as they are doing today.

The whole process of the deceptive arising and passing way of phenomena may be comprehended in the word *maya*. This word is usually translated as "illusion" but that is not entirely correct. The sphere of *maya* is that of *relative reality;* that is, it is real on its

own level, but not real in any absolute sense. To the consciousness functioning on the same level, or at the same vibrational frequency, a solid is a solid exactly as it appears through the five doors of the senses. But to a consciousness operating on a different level, the solid would be seen in a different way; it would appear as physics tells us it is, a collection of atomic particles in continual movement. The "solid" object would be seen as predominantly space, with the atomic constituents widely separated, like the stars in the night sky, and only held in place by the electronic forces of attraction and repulsion, in just the same way that the planetary systems of the universe are held together. From another level it would be seen simply as the operation of a law, and from yet another plane of consciousness it would be found to be non-existent; there could be only the void, or *asaṅkhata-dhamma*. That plane would be outside the sphere of causality, a state unthinkable to the ordinary mind, which depends upon events in space-time for its consciousness, and we may consider it to be equivalent to the ultimate state of Nibbāna, in which there is neither coming-to-be nor passing away. The space-time continuum of phenomenal perception would be transcended and the timeless, unconditioned state would then be reached.

These ascending levels of consciousness in which

the solid object is seen in different aspects, each one more immaterial than the one proceeding it, may be likened to the four *brahma-vihāras*, where the consciousness is freed from the illusion of gross matter, and perceives instead the law that governs it, coming to know ultimately that "matter" is only the expression of that law, appearing in different aspects on the various planes of cognition. To the *kāmāvacara citta* (sense-sphere consciousness), form, or *rūpa*, appears solid and on that level it is what it appears; but to the consciousness which sees it in the light of Dhamma the law of cause and effect becomes apparent, and in the place of *rūpa* the three characteristics of becoming, *anicca, dukkha, anattā* (impermanence, suffering, not-self), are recognised.

There are indications that man has reached the end of his development on the intellectual plane; he has come to rock-bottom in the analysis of physical phenomena, yet still its ultimate secret eludes him. There is more beyond, which mind is not capable of exploring, because the circle of causality in which it moves has been completed. The next state of development must lie in a different dimension. Enough has happened to bring about a complete re-orientation of all our ideas concerning man and his place in the cosmic pattern, and this represents a great advance on both the animistic and materialist views

that prevailed formerly. Like everything else, reason revolves in a circle, bounded by the limitations of conceptual thinking, and the point around which it rotates is the difficulty of distinguishing the process that is being examined from the "self" that is examining it. This is the fundamental obstacle, *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* (personality-belief), because in reality there is no "self" apart from the process. In the modern view there is no such thing as "I;" the word is merely a grammatical convention. Everything we know now about the process of thought can be expressed without the use of the word. We have this also on the authority of Bertrand Russell and others. The discoveries of physics have their counterpart in psychology. In analysing the mental processes a great deal of concealed activity has been brought to light, and definite causal relationships have been traced between the conscious and unconscious strata of the mind. The unconscious, in which is stored the accumulated experience of the individual, supplies the tendencies that motivate the conscious activities. Thus it may be identified with the *bhavaṅga*, or life-continuum, which takes the place of any connecting entity between one phase of consciousness and the next. Professor William James was the first psychologist to formulate the theory of point-moments of consciousness. He demonstrated that these point-moments come into

being and pass away again in rapid succession, thus giving the impression of a continuous entity, whereas they are, in reality only infinitesimal units of a series, each existing for a fraction of a split-second, and then passing away to make room for its successor. They are, in fact, like the thousands of static pictures on a reel of film, which, when run through a projector, produce the illusion of a single moving picture. Furthermore, we are only conscious of each one in the moment of its passing away; for this reason they are sometimes called death spots, and the resultant consciousness is dependent upon memory.

These point-moments arise in obedience to the law of causality, each having its causal genesis in the one preceding it, but there is no other connection between them. Everywhere in psychology we come upon these causal processes and the continual state of flux in thoughts, mental impressions and cognition, but nowhere can we detect any permanent entity linking the succession of events together. Again, as in physics, we find only causal relationships, and the Abhidhamma analysis holds good throughout.

Freud went so far as to maintain that every overt act of the conscious mind is instigated by an antecedent cause and no thought can arise spontaneously. This he demonstrated in his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. When the cause could not be found in the conscious

mind he sought it in the unconscious. His researches led him to the theory that most so-called accidents were the result of a subconscious wish—that they were in fact, engineered by the subconscious mind for reasons of its own. The theory has been disputed by later investigators, but Freud collected a formidable mass of evidence in support of it.

From the Buddhist point of view it appears to be at least a partial truth. In as much as the unconscious stratum of the mind carries the tendencies and predispositions of the individual, which are his accumulated *kammic* influences, it is the activity of that portion of the mind which determines the experiences and events of his life. It is not that the unconscious mind wills the events, because it has the nature only of *bhavaṅga*, a current directed by past habitual thoughts, and lacks the quality of volition, which is a characteristic of the conscious mind; but events such as "accidents" are certainly determined by the unconscious mind in the discharge of its mechanical function of projecting those situations that constitute the individual's experience, in accordance with his *kamma. "Mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā; manoseṭṭhā, manomayā* —all phenomena arise from mind; mind is the chief, they are all mind-made." Freud's error was merely that he mistook a partially-understood causal process in the subconscious mind for an act of volition.

That is why his theory has never been completely proved, despite the high percentage of successes in his experiments. It is another instance of science approaching Buddhism, but lacking the key that will unlock the last door.

The materialist affirms that mind and mental conditions have a material basis; the idealist, on the contrary, claims that matter exists only by virtue of mind. The evidence adduced by the materialist is that the mind is only a product of the brain, which is a material substance. Physical objects existing in space are contacted through the nerve-channels leading from eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin-surface. The resulting sensation depends upon the existence of the brain, a complex material nerve-centre with its own particular function of collecting and correlating the data thus received. If the brain is damaged it operates imperfectly; if it is destroyed it ceases to function altogether. The mind, then, is considered to be a causal process depending entirely on material factors.

The reasonableness of this point of view cannot be denied, but it does not account for all the facts. If the process is strictly a mechanical one, determined by physical causes which can be traced back to a material origin and obeying a rigid causal law, there is no room for the exercise of free-will. Evolution then becomes a predestined automatic process in which there is no

freedom of choice between possible alternatives. Yet even biological evolution demands such a choice, since the production of specialised types is usually attributed to natural selection. Those types, such as the mastodon, brontosaurus, pterodactyl and other extinct species, which made a choice of development that suited them to a particular environment, disappeared when that environment changed; they had over-specialised and could not readapt themselves. There is nothing automatic about the evolution of species; it is conducted on a system of trial and error, and shows at least as many failures as successes. There are some who consider that man himself must be numbered among the failures, since he shows a tendency towards self-destruction, due to the fact that his spiritual evolution has not kept abreast of his increasing mastery of physical forces. H. G. Wells, who saw in the Buddhist King Asoka the highest development of civilised rulership over two thousand years ago, was firmly convinced that, far from progressing, man as a spiritual being had deteriorated since that time, and would ultimately destroy himself.

The idea of a steady progress in evolution has been discarded by science, and present theories are more in accordance with what we know of evolution as it applies to the individual. That evolution requires freedom of choice between the alternatives of right

and wrong actions. There is progress or regression, according to whether the kamma tends towards good or bad, and the entire concept of kamma is based upon free-will. It is not, as it is sometimes misinterpreted, a fatalistic doctrine. Previous kamma determines the experiences and situations that have to be faced in life, but it is the characteristic tendencies of the individual, which are the product of accumulated acts of volition, that determine how he will deal with those situations when they arise. There is no such thing as an accident in natural law, but the "uncertainty principle" which we discovered in physics allows for the operation of unknown causes, as in the unpredictable behaviour of individual atoms. In the case of an individual, for instance, it may be possible to predict fairly accurately how the person will behave in a given situation when his characteristic tendencies are known, but we cannot guarantee absolute certainty. An honest man may, under pressure of circumstances, or because of some latent *kammic* tendency, act dishonestly, or a brave man become a coward, and vice versa. This explains the inconsistencies and frequent contradictions of human nature; we can never be absolutely certain that the person we think we know so well will always act strictly "in character." Personality is a fluid structure, altering momentarily, and only guided by certain broad principles which represent the *saṅkhāra* -

accumulated tendencies or habit-formations.

Concerning these habit-formations, it may be said that Buddhism is the only system that gives them their due place of importance in the scheme of personal evolution. It is by habit-formations that we are told to eliminate bad tendencies and promote the good ones, thus moulding our own psychology through accumulated acts of strenuous effort, as indicated by the fourfold Right Effort, which is one of the thirty-seven principles of *bodhi*. Now, habit-formation and the association of ideas are closely linked, as modern psychology has proved. In his experiments on conditioned reflexes, Pavlov established the relationship between associated ideas and physical reactions. The dogs he used in his researches were taught to associate the sound of a bell, or some other noise, with the idea of food. When they heard that particular sound, the dog showed the same reactions as though they were seeing or smelling food. Their mouths watered, and they gave other signs of pleasure which proved that the sound and the idea of food had become firmly associated in their minds. The mind of a dog is a very simple thing compared with that of a human being, which makes it easier to trace its sequence of events and their physical consequences. It works almost entirely on this system of conditioned reflexes. The reasoning faculty is rudimentary; and as

we descend in the scale of living organisms we find that they become more and more instinctive or mechanical. A termite, for instance, is little more than a mechanical unit controlled by a mind outside itself. Recent experiments with colonies of termites have shown that the directive is the queen-termite, and that the termite-nest must be considered as a single animal, with its brain and nerve-centre situated in the queen. If the queen is destroyed, the termites become confused, running frantically in all directions, and the orderly system of the nest is utterly broken up. The individual termite, therefore, is not a complete organism in itself, but only a part of the whole. They are, as it were, limbs of the main body, detached from it, but functioning in all ways like the limbs of a single animal. It is believed that they are directed by a kind of radar emitted by the queen-termite. When the queen is killed or injured it is as though the brain of the animal were damaged; the limbs move without co-ordination like those of a man who is insane. But the brain of the organism, the queen-termite, is a strictly limited mechanism; it performs the functions required of it for the survival of the termite-nest, according to inherent tendencies transmitted from one generation of queens to another. Within the limits of its requirements it is a perfect organism, but it has no possibility of further development. Why is this? We

can only assume that, having reached its limited evolutionary objective, it no longer has to exercise any choice between possible alternatives; it has surrendered the faculty of free-will and has become a set automaton. It represents one of the levels of consciousness dominated entirely by kamma, in which the results of previous conditions are worked out without any opportunity for using them to advantage, and may be considered the type of consciousness characteristic of all the four *apaya* planes (worlds of misery) in varying degrees. The question is dealt with in the section on the classification of individuals ( *puggala-bhedo*) in the *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha* (Ch. IV).

There is an approximation to this automatic type of consciousness to be found even in some human beings, and the termite may be taken as a warning to those who sacrifice their independence of thought to become slaves to authority and tradition; they give themselves a termite-consciousness, and if they re-manifest as termites, it is their own choice. To deliver oneself up to authoritarianism is an easy and comfortable way out of the hazard and pain of having to make an independent choice. But man is a free agent, and to be born a human being is a tremendous responsibility. Having earned that responsibility we should not lightly throw it away. By showing us exactly where we stand in relation to the universe

around and within us, Buddhism gives us a clear insight into the divine potentialities of our nature; it is the most emphatic assertion of man's freedom to choose his own destiny.

The Western philosopher of today is bewildered by the confusion into which his speculations have led him. He sees a universe of amoral forces with no fixed centre, a changing phantasmagoria in which all is shadow but no substance, and he is obsessed by the futility of what he sees. His intellectual position has been fairly defined as one of "heroic despair." Discovering no ground for belief in moral values he has come to question whether they have any absolute meaning or whether they are, after all, only products of mankind's collective imagination. Life, for him, has become "a tale told by an idiot; full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Abstract ideas, such as those of justice, benevolence, wisdom and truth, seem to him only relative qualities, dictated by circumstances and differing from age to age. So ethical standards tend to give way to the demands of expediency.

Only Buddhism can provide the missing element of higher knowledge—the "something other than physics"—which causes all the other elements to fall into place and form a complete and intelligible picture. Seeing the world as the Buddha taught us to see it, we can weigh its values according to the highest

standards known to us. And in the process of weighing and assessing, Buddhism encourages us to analyse all the factors of experience, not to hedge ourselves about with dogmas, or cling to preconceived ideas. The Buddha himself was the first religious teacher in this world-cycle to apply strictly scientific methods to the analysis of our own being and the cosmic phenomena in which we are entangled, and his voice speaks to us as clearly today as ever it did 2500 years ago. It speaks to us, not only through his teaching preserved over the centuries, but through the discoveries of modern science also. The teachings, as we have them, may contain something added by later interpreters, but the central truths the Buddha taught are sufficient in themselves to give us the vital clue that has eluded present-day thinkers. When we add their discoveries to the doctrines of Buddhism we find that the whole makes a complete pattern, so far as our rational minds are capable of appreciating it. The remainder we must find for ourselves on the higher planes of Buddhist *jhāna*.

At present it may look as though man has only searched out the secrets of the universe in order to destroy himself with the power he has acquired; and of that there is certainly a danger. But I believe that a change in outlook is beginning to dawn, and that science itself, having destroyed the basis of much

wrong thinking, is drawing us ever nearer to the realisation of the truth proclaimed by the Enlightened One. This is what I mean by "the scientific approach to Buddhism;" without being aware of it, the modern scientist and philosopher are being propelled irresistibly in the direction of Buddhism. Their uncertainties and doubts are spiritual "growing pains;" but a time will come quickly when they will realise that, although they have had to reject everything on which their ordinary religious and moral beliefs are founded, there is a higher religion—one based upon systematic investigation and the sincere search for truth—which will restore their lost faith in the universal principles of justice, truth and compassion. Those who now believe that man has come to the end of his tether will then see the opening up of vistas into the future that they only dimly suspect, and will recognise, beyond it all, the final goal of complete emancipation from the fetters of ignorance and delusion.

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# The Appeal of

# Buddhism

In the *Buddhist Forum* of Radio Ceylon on June 1st 1958, four self-converted Buddhists were asked to speak on the subject of "What appeals to me most in Buddhism." The following is the reply given by Anāgārika Sugatānanda (Francis Story).

From The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. 4 (1958)

It was many years ago that I became a Buddhist and I was quite young, between 14 and 16, but I remember that it was first of all the two facts of rebirth and *kamma* which convinced me of the truth of the Dhamma. I say "facts" because even among many non-Buddhists rebirth is now well on the way to being a proven truth, and once it is accepted the reality of *kamma* must be accepted with it. In the first place, these two doctrines explain everything in life which is otherwise inexplicable. They explain the seeming injustices with which life abounds, and which no earthly power can remedy. They explain, too, the apparent futility and lack of a satisfactory pattern in the individual human life which, taken as one life out of a measureless eternity is obviously quite pointless,

full of unresolved problems and incomplete designs. Take, for instance, a recent and much publicised example of what appears to be a cruel freak of chance —the tragically brief life of a child, Red Skelton's son, whom neither human science nor divine mercy could save. There are, and always have been, countless millions of such cases, besides the untold numbers of blind, deaf and dumb, deformed, mentally deficient and diseased human beings whose pitiful condition is not due to any fault of theirs in this present life, nor to any remediable defect in the organisation of human society.

Materialists may say what they will, but we now know enough of the limitations of science to realise that it will never be able entirely to abolish these evils. At the same time we can no longer derive comfort from religions that science has discredited. While we know that material progress will never succeed in abolishing suffering, it is equally futile to suppose that some special compensation for unmerited misfortune awaits the victims in a future life irrespective of any moral issues that are involved.

The sense of justice, which was very strong in me, demanded a reason for these things and an intelligible purpose behind them. I could not accept the theory that there is a "divine justice" which is different from human concepts of justice, for both the word and the

idea can only mean what we take them to mean by human standards. If conditions are not just in the human sense they are not just at all: there cannot be two different meanings to the word. The "justice of God" is an invention of theologians, the last refuge of unreason.

But right at the beginning Buddhism gave me the justice and the purpose which I had been seeking. I found them both in the doctrine of *kamma* and rebirth. Through them I was at last able to understand the otherwise senseless agglomeration of misery, futility and blind insensate cruelty which forms most of the picture human life presents to a thinking person. Those who know something about the subject may say, "Yes, but Buddhism is not alone in teaching kamma and rebirth; Hinduism has it also." That is true; but Buddhism is alone in presenting rebirth as a scientific principle. When I say "scientific" I mean that it is a principle which is in accordance with other universal laws which can be understood scientifically and even investigated by scientific methods. The principle of change and serial continuity is one that runs throughout nature; all scientific principles are based on it. In Buddhism it is the principle of *anattā* which lifts the concept of rebirth from the level of primitive animism to one on which it becomes acceptable to the scientifically-trained mind. *Anattā*

means “non-soul”, “non-ego” and “non-self;” it is the denial of any abiding or constant and unchanging element in the life-process. Buddhism does not point to a “soul” that transmigrates; it points to a continuum of cause and effect that is exactly analogous to the processes of physics. The personality of one life is the result of the actions of the preceding current of existences, in precisely the same way that any physical phenomenon at any given moment is the end-result of an infinite series of events of the same order that have led up to it.

When I came to understand this thoroughly, which I did by pondering the profound doctrine of *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination), I realised that the Buddha-dhamma is a complete revelation of a dynamic cosmic order. It is complete scientifically because it accounts not only for human life but for the life of all sentient beings from lowest to highest; and complete morally because it includes all these forms of life in the one moral order. Nothing is left out; nothing is unaccounted for in this all-embracing system. If we should find sentient beings on other planets in the remotest of the galactic systems, we should find them subject to the same laws of being as ourselves. They might be physically quite different from any form of life on this earth, their bodies composed of different chemical combinations, and they might be far superior

to ourselves or far below us, yet still they must consist of the same five *khandha* aggregates, because these are the basic elements of all sentient existence. They must also come into being as the result of past *kamma,* and pass away again just as we do. *Anicca, dukkha* and *anattā* are universal principles; and this being so, the Four Noble Truths must also be valid wherever life exists. There is no need for a special creation or a special plan of salvation for the inhabitants of this planet or any other. Buddhism teaches a cosmic law that obtains everywhere; hence the same moral law of spiritual evolution must prevail everywhere. Cosmic law and moral order in Buddhism are related to one another as they are not in any other religious system.

Another fact which struck me forcibly right at the beginning is that Buddhism does not condemn anybody to eternal hell just because he happens not to be a Buddhist. If a being goes to the regions of torment after death it is because his bad deeds have sent him there, not because he happens to believe in the wrong set of dogmas. The idea that anyone should be eternally damned simply because he does not go to a certain church and subscribe to its particular creed is repugnant to every right-thinking person. Moral retribution is a necessity, but this vicious doctrine of damnation for not believing in a certain god and the particular myths surrounding him has nothing

whatever to do with ethical principles. It is itself supremely immoral. It has probably been the cause of more harm in the world than any other single factor in history.

Furthermore, Buddhism does not postulate eternal punishment for temporal sins—that is, for misdeeds committed within the limiting framework of time. The Dhamma teaches that whatever suffering a man may bring upon himself is commensurate with the gravity of the evil action—neither more nor less. He may suffer through several lives because of some very heavy *akusala kamma* (evil action), but sometime that suffering must come to an end when the evil that has been generated has spent itself. The atrocious idea that a being may be made to suffer throughout eternity for the sins committed in one short lifetime does not exist in Buddhism. Neither does the equally unjust doctrine that he may wash out all his sins by formal acts of contrition or by faith in some one particular deity out of all the gods man has invented.

In Buddhism also, there is no personal judge who condemns, but only the working of an impersonal law that is like the law of gravitation. And this point is supremely important, because any judge in the act of judging would have to outrage either justice or mercy. He could not satisfy the demands of both at the same time. If he were inexorably just he could not be called

merciful: if he were merciful to sinners he could not be absolutely just. The two qualities are utterly incompatible. Buddhism shows that the natural law is just. It is for man to be merciful, and by the cultivation of *mettā, karuṇā, muditā* and *upekkhā* to make himself divine.

Lastly, the truth that rebirth and suffering are brought about by ignorance and craving conjointly is a conclusion that is fully supported by all we know concerning the life-urge as it works through human and animal psychology and in the processes of biological evolution. It supplies the missing factor which science needs to complete its picture of the evolution of living organisms. The motivating force behind the struggle for existence, for survival and development, is just this force of craving which the Buddha found to be at the root of *saṃsāric* rebirth. Because it is conjoined with ignorance it is a blind, groping force, yet it is this force which has been responsible for the development of complex organisms from simple beginnings. It is also the cause of the incessant round of rebirths in which beings alternately rise and fall in the scale of spiritual evolution.

Realising the nature of this twofold bondage of ignorance and craving we are fully justified in the rational faith that, as the Supreme Buddha taught, our

ultimate release, the attainment of the eternal, unchanging state of *Nibbāna*, is something that we can reach by eliminating all the factors of rebirth that are rooted in these two fundamental defects. *Nibbāna,* which the Buddha described as *asaṅkhata*—the unconditioned, *ajara*—the ageless, *dhuva*—the permanent and *amata*—the deathless, is the reality that lies outside the realms of the conditioned and illusory *saṃsāra,* and it may be reached only by extinguishing the fires of *lobha, dosa* and *moha*— greed, hatred and delusion.

So we see that *saddhā,* or faith, in Buddhism is firmly based on reason and experience. Ignorance is blind, but Buddhist faith has its eyes wide open and fixed upon reality. The Dhamma is *ehipassiko*— that which invites all to come and see for themselves. The Buddha was the only religious teacher who invited reasoned, critical analysis of his doctrine. The proof of its truth—and hence the conclusive proof of the Buddha's enlightenment as well—is to be found in the doctrine itself. Like any scientific discovery it can be tested empirically. Everyone can test and verify it for himself, both by reason and by direct insight. The Buddhist is given a charter of intellectual liberty.

These are just a few of the features which appealed to me when I first started studying Buddhism in my quest for truth. There were many others which

followed later; they came in due course as my own understanding and practice of the Dhamma made them manifest to me. As one investigates the Dhamma, new vistas are constantly opening up before one's vision; new aspects of the truth are continually unfolding and fresh beauties are being disclosed. When so much of moral beauty can be discerned by merely intellectual appreciation of the Dhamma, I leave it to you who are listening to imagine for yourselves the revelations that come with the practice of *vipassanā* or direct insight. There can be nothing in the entire range of human experience with which it may be compared.

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