

## **An Eternal Democracy?**

This proposed book of essays on metaphysics will present, among other ideas, my arguments about why certain theories of life are believed in, and which theories come closest to being a rational explanation. Each main theory's strengths and weaknesses, and its advantages and disadvantages in satisfying human desires, will be addressed. Which facts undercut its probability, and which events, if they were to occur, would undercut its probability, will also be described.

The four main theories are:

- 1) That an Eternal Absolute Supreme Being exists who is the only Creator and whose omnipotent will is inviolable. Complete predestination, no free will for individuals.

Examples of theories that come close: Calvinistic Christianity, some versions of Indian philosophy that stress Maya, some mystical traditions within the major religions.

- 2) That life is purely an accident of chance, caused by the random motions of matter. Completely materialistic explanation. No real free will for individuals, as individual minds are only temporary side effects of evolutionary hormonal, genetic and/or neural fluctuations.

Example of theory that comes close: basic assumptions of modern science.

- 3) That the material universe is eternal, and that life was organized for us by an eternal, very superior, but not perfect, being, who did not create the universe, since that is also eternal, but merely reorganized it to conform to his desire to create other lives. Free will for individuals, who are a temporary creation (but whose existence may last longer than one human life).

Example of theory that comes close: Plato's Demiurge theory.

- 4) That the material universe is eternal (always existing in the continual present), that there was no creation, that matter is continually being reorganized based upon the laws of physics and the decisions of individual minds, that decillions of individual minds are also eternal, that the confusion and chaos in our lives is due to the conflicts among so many wills trying to fulfill their inadequately considered desires, and that the underlying order and beauty of life is found in its inviolable principles. Free will for individuals (within the confines of what is actually possible).

Example of theory: An Eternal Democracy

# **Basic Principles of An Eternal Democracy**

[written in 1993]

Presenting any theory that is based on analysis (rather than intuition) without its arguments is like painting a tree in winter. It may be easier to see the structure, yet remain unconvincing if the claim is that the tree is beautiful. This brief presentation of principles is not designed to convince.

## **Metaphysics**

The Universe is composed of matter and mind.

Matter is composed of indestructible, indivisible atoms which basically are in continual motion with respect to each other. Matter may be perceived as energy or as mass, and that perception depends on the velocity of matter relative to the perceiver. Energy is matter moving at a high velocity relative to the mass of the perceiver (often assumed to be at rest, which is just a convenient assumption, as all reference frameworks are relative). If one could assume the perspective of such energy, such energy would appear to be mass and the mass of the perceiver would appear to be energy. Intermediate states where conglomerations of atoms appear to have some mass and some energy are due to those conglomerations having a relative velocity greater than zero but less than the speed of light.

The relatively recent scientific conclusion that molecules are comprised of classical atoms, followed by the realization that those atoms are not indestructible, appeared to overthrow Democritus's atomic theory. Actually, that was just a misidentification. The classical atom is undoubtedly smaller than quarks and photons and will never be "seen", since one must bounce something off an object to see it. Even bouncing one atom off another will not produce a picture of any detail. Detail and clarity come from using sources of information far tinier than the object being investigated. Since nothing is smaller than the atom, we will never "see" it. But its existence can be deduced and some of its characteristics calculated based on how larger conglomerations of atoms behave.

Atoms are discrete. There must be far in excess of decillions of them, but the number must be specific, since atoms are indestructible, never created and never destroyed.

Each mind is an individual will, a decision-maker free to make decisions of any kind, but constrained by the characteristics of matter and mind in its ability to have an impact on other minds and the material world. The personality of each mind is the complex intellectual and emotional projection of that mind's conclusions (rarely conscious) about the nature of life, as revealed by its desires, attitudes, emotions, priorities and motivations.

As long as the law of entropy appears to be valid it is logical to assume that at least one mind, and far more probably, each mind, is indestructible, since mind is the cause of complex reorganizations

of matter. At least our minuscule portion of the Universe demonstrates that a counter force to entropy is highly active. That counter force is the free will of each individual mind. Since, after an eternity of change, entropy has still not reduced the material Universe to total disorder, mind must be co-eternal with matter.

There may well be far in excess of decillions of such minds, but whatever the number, the number must be specific, since each mind is probably indestructible, never created and never destroyed.

The Universe is an eternal democracy, with eternal minds exercising their free wills within the constraints of the characteristics of mind (such as the unavoidable pursuit of happiness) and matter (such as the law of gravity). The characteristics of matter are often manipulated by those minds in their constant and sometimes successful attempts to reorganize matter more to their liking.

Time is just our arbitrary measurement of the continuum of change (the atoms move relative to each other continuously so there is no period of time short enough in duration that not a single motion in the entire Universe could have taken place during that period). Every atom and every mind exists only in the continual present. An analysis of the present reveals clues as to previous states of the atoms (such as fossils and blue-shifted starlight) and the minds (such as obsessions and fears), and even some ability to predict their future locations and actions in a continually reorganizing Universe, but the past and the future do not exist as states where matter or mind exist. Existence is always in the continual present. Neither the creation nor the destruction of atoms or minds takes place, just the reorganization of atoms and the rearrangement of desires, attitudes, emotions, priorities and motivations.

Eternity can be understood more easily as a continual present, since previous stages of reorganization can extend indefinitely into the past and be predicted to extend indefinitely into the future. The question "how did I arrive here in the present if there is an eternal past?" is answerable in that one is always in the present. The distance metaphor we use for indicating the past is misleading, as it implies an impossibly long journey. There is no journey to be made. One can never leave the continual present, as that is all that exists. Each mind, and each atom, has always existed in the continual present and will continue to exist in the continual present forever.

### **Psychology**

Each mind experiences life actively (thought) and passively (emotion). The desires of each mind are designed to produce in that mind the emotion of happiness, and do so when fulfilled (and cause unhappiness when unfulfilled). Happiness is the emotion caused by the fulfillment of a desire. However, that is not the end of the story. The motives for any desire (usually numerous and often conflicting) are actually the real desires the mind seeks to fulfill and the quality of the happiness produced by fulfilling a desire is directly related to the quality of the desire (including the quality of the motives for the desire --- both those that get fulfilled and those that do not).

The quality of desires can be divided into seven basic categories:

- 1) The Desire to be Happy, as it is the basis of all other desires. Not being aware of that fact obscures the whole process of experiencing happiness. Continuous fulfillment of this desire is possible.
- 2) The Desire to Try to Understand Life Better, as it is crucial to understanding how to be happy, how to fulfill desires and which desires to choose to fulfill. In addition, this desire is within the complete control of the desirer to fulfill and is continuously fulfillable.
- 3) Other Desires Within the Control of the Desirer to Fulfill. Other desires which are fulfilled within the mind of the desirer fall in this category, as no other mind, nor the laws of matter, can prevent their fulfillment. Continuous fulfillment of these desires is possible. Example: the desire to love other minds.
- 4) All Material Desires. These are basically neutral desires that usually serve as window dressing for complex motivations from other categories of desire. The quality of these desires is derived from that neutrality and from the fact that material desires can only be temporarily fulfilled and are often temporarily unfulfilled. Continuous fulfillment of these desires is not possible.
- 5) Desires Whose Fulfillment is Dependent on Other Minds. Some very interesting desires fall into this category, but continuous fulfillment of these desires is not possible and fulfillment of these desires is completely dependent on the cooperation of another mind. Example: the desire to be loved by someone.
- 6) Desires Whose Fulfillment Destroys the Possibility of Fulfilling Higher Quality Desires. Most self-destructive desires fall into this category. They usually are the result of conflicting desires which, of course, cannot be simultaneously fulfilled. Almost all such desires are dependent on the cooperation of another mind.
- 7) Impossible Desires. Any desire which is impossible to fulfill is worse than worthless in the pursuit of happiness.

The conclusion reached from such categorization is that a successful pursuit of happiness, and a minimization of suffering, both depend on intelligent desiring, which includes placing your highest priorities on desires from categories 1, 2 and 3 (which can produce a cushion of continual happiness), desiring contingently any desires from categories 4 and 5 (examples: a) if matter cooperates or can be manipulated to cooperate, I desire to visit the moon, and b) if my brother finds me lovable, I desire to be loved by him) and avoiding desires from categories 6 and especially 7. Avoiding conflicting desires (and especially conflicting motives) is also important. Retaining the perspective that all of your decisions concerning what to desire exist for the purpose of producing happiness helps to eliminate a less favored desire which conflicts with the favored desire.

Using this framework, the patterns in human behavior and emotions can be explained. This is a more detailed explanation of the basic observation by Socrates that people do not perceive what is in their own self-interest due to a lack of perspective (on what is near and what is far in the analogy used in Plato's Dialogues).

*Note from 1996:* in my future explanations the division of desires I expect to use is slightly different, in order to clarify which factors create the differences in quality among our desires. The six categories I now use are Independent Productive Desires (categories 1, 2 & 3 here), Dependent Productive Desires (category 5 here), Dependent Neutral Desires (category 4 here), Dependent Destructive Desires (part of category 6 here), Independent Destructive Desires (part of category 6 here) and Impossible Desires (category 7 here).

## **Theology**

The existence of an Absolute, Perfect Mind is logically impossible, as a mind necessarily experiences change, since thinking and feeling are processes. In addition, no state of being or mind can possess or experience a perfect expression of Love, Happiness or any other Eternal Idea, since there is no such thing as a perfect expression of such emotions. However, while this theoretical God cannot exist, it seems serenely safe to assume that many individual minds express more intelligence and more virtue than any human being has ever expressed. It is even possible that at least some of these minds are fond of different human tribes, or even of the whole human race. Some may even have character flaws sufficient for them to be similar to Jehovah, Krishna, Zeus and other gods. However, any such mind who has even the faintest inkling of how a knowledge of the Eternal Ideas can be put to good use in the pursuit of happiness would never seek worship from humans, nor use fear or other counterproductive emotions to motivate the pursuit of more virtue. Any theory of life which promotes such negative motivations necessarily reveals that its promoter lacks understanding of the eternal patterns governing each mind's pursuit of happiness.

## **Background of Theory**

My theory is a modification of Plato's Eternal Ideas theory, inspired by a digression from my analysis of Vedanta philosophy. While using some of Plato's arguments to review discrepancies in Vedanta theory, one conclusion became clear: that the idea of an Absolute, Perfect Mind is a combination of irreconcilable concepts, as all mental experiences are created by a process of change. In any case, whether or not it is logically provable that a Perfect Mind cannot exist, in the context of this new theory the desire to have a Perfect Mind loses its charm as a goal of desire. It appears that the dazzling beauty of the conception of the Absolute Good has been overwhelming the reality that neither possessing, nor merging or even hanging around with, a Perfect Mind is desirable.

What is desirable is to experience a high quality of the emotion happiness continuously:

necessarily a process that is of no use to the experiencer if it reaches stasis.

The process of constructing my revision of Plato's theory was mostly in eliminating concepts: for example, eliminating his concept of the Good showed that a different approach to defining the Eternal Ideas was required, as most of Plato's definitions, and attempts at definitions, depended on how the Eternal Ideas would be expressed under ideal circumstances. Instead, I sought the kind of definitions we are now used to: what elements does every expression of an Eternal Idea have in common?

Another decision was to drop the concept that every Idea had an opposite and that the tensions in this world were created by this coexistence of opposites. An analogy for my modification is that even though hot and cold can fruitfully be seen as opposites, they can also, even more fruitfully, be seen as varying degrees of one idea: temperature (the internal motion of an object). Hot and cold are relative concepts based upon an objective idea: each object has a certain amount of internal motion. Whether that is perceived by a mind as "hot" or "cold" will depend, basically, on the temperature of the perceiver. Our standards of hot and cold are based on our temperature of 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Experiments demonstrate that dipping your hand in cold water long enough will alter your perception of how "hot" lukewarm water is.

This model, of an objective standard that is perceived relatively by different perceivers, is the basis of how I conceive of the Eternal Ideas --- that is, of the patterns of order in our mental experience. Since I launched this theory from Plato's theory, I often used the term Eternal Ideas to describe these concepts, but they are actually much closer to scientific concepts like the law of gravity. The difference in understanding between noticing that matter attracts other matter and describing that pattern of behavior as an attraction directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them is quite a useful difference.

This approach to the Eternal Ideas also discards Plato's idea that this world is an imperfect copy of perfect Forms, and substitutes a set of patterns, or rules, governing mental behavior each of which, while allowing an extreme variety of applications, does have an objective standard (perceived relatively) that, when understood, is similar to suddenly discovering the rules of the game you have been playing rather badly for a long time.

Examples of this "bad play" are the various explanations of the Idea of Justice, which I also basically discard. Seemingly instinctually we rebel against the perceived injustices of life, but very few people think life is actually just without believing in some kind of mechanism over time for righting wrongs (such as the existence of heaven and hell, the law of karma, enacting legal punishments and similar concepts). The source of these speculations, I think, is the correlation between the quality of a person's happiness and the quality of that person's desires (given the patterns I describe). This correlation can certainly be seen as the untamperable-with inherent justice of life, but the question and the concept probably wouldn't even have arisen if all these other explanations of life's justice did not exist. The whole Idea of Justice may be useless, and even counterproductive, in creating more virtuous, happier individual lives and better-functioning human societies. But there it is. The perception that a direct correlation between virtue and pleasure, and vice and pain, does not exist, but should exist, seems

to be the source of what essentially amounts to an enthusiasm for revenge. The actual direct correlation, I contend, has been obscured by materialistic interpretations, but does exist within each mind.

However, even the best use of this Idea of Justice, the desire to create a just society, can be fruitfully replaced by restating the desire as the attempt to organize human society wisely. Such attempts are explored in the political applications of my theory.

Within one year after I had concluded that the concept of the Good had gotten in Plato's way, I had developed all these basic concepts by concentrating on the patterns of how a mind's emotions behave in relationship to that mind's thoughts and by eliminating these few other concepts from Plato's theory.