

GENESIS OF BEING

By John O. Sangster

When studying the illuminating teachings of the Lord Buddha, it is essential that we should have a clear understanding of the term 'Void' which occurs in the scriptures. The literal meaning of the word is given as 'emptiness', but it is elementary knowledge that there could never be an absolute state of voidness because nothing and no one could then exist. Properly interpreted, it could describe the sphere of existence in Nirvana following the final birth and physical death of the human being which has finished with its cycle of phenomenal lives in Samsara: a sphere where there is neither space, time, nor physical substance.

To equate voidness with nothingness would be absurd, but it makes sense to make the distinction between the latter term and '**no thing**'. Simple logic informs us that nothing can originate from nothing. Furthermore, it should be obvious that nothing can exist without there being a generative Principle of being, or in other words a Something from which issues the potentials of all forms of life and states of being. Let us list the ascertainable factors of being. There is Mind which can originate concepts of being; Desire which can give rise to creative thoughts and feelings of being; Will, which is the operative power to achieve purposes of being. Coincidental to and arising from these generative factors, there comes Consciousness of being. Surely, too, there is the quintessence of joy of real being; not sentimentalism or emotionalism, of course, but perfect bliss. Then, too, there is communion of being; the 'parts' communicate with the Whole and vice-versa. Such communication is wordless; it consists of those qualities of being which are highest and purest expressed as loving offerings. Until Nirvana is attained, these powers, or expressions of being would appear as disparate factors to the ordinary person, but in the highest state of Whole Being they become blended, or fused into one qualitative expression of being. For the Whole is a unity of everything which pertains to actual existence.

Man appears to differ from all other sentient creatures by his state of consciousness, his development of environmental-intelligence and skills, and his power of forming abstract concepts. The theory of evolution does not altogether satisfactorily explain his origin as an unspecialised specie. Ancient histories refer to the possible pre-existence of highly developed civilizations the factual evidence of which could have been obliterated by the destruction wrought by the ice-ages and by various kinds of planetary convulsions. Comparing man to other creatures, his relatively higher state of consciousness is

to be explained only by his being in existence for a far longer period than is supposed by the evolutionists, or alternatively, that sometime in the earth's remote past there occurred a special influx of more highly developed soul-beings from some other sphere of existence in the universe, and which became embodied in the children that were born to a more primitive type of human being existing at that time. A hint of this is given in the Jewish Old Testament.

Even so, the human mind is still in its infancy when it comes to penetrating the mystery of consciousness, or even the nature and range of sentiency. Many years ago, an Indian scientist, Dr. Chandra Bose, proved that plants have some kind of nervous system. But quite recently, American scientists made the amazing discovery that plants have feelings, such as an appreciation of good intentions in human beings towards them, and fear of any intended cruelty. Such feelings were not only shown in the changed condition of plants undergoing tests, but were also electronically recorded. I have personally noted that some plants and insects appear to have an intelligence that goes beyond mere enseeded-genetics. For in some instances they quite evidently made a choice of action when confronted by a problem and then acted resourcefully. Yogins have also demonstrated that plants can respond to a concentrated thought by a phenomenally rapid acceleration of their growth.

The related subjects of consciousness and beingness should be examined very thoroughly in the light of present-day knowledge, and especially as they refer to the term 'Dukkha'. The Buddha very honestly told the Bhikkhus to think things out for themselves and not to merely rely on what he had said. In the first place, consciousness is not a form of energy; it is that state of awareness which is ever present and which always equates with one's particular concept of being. It is the means of spiritual ascertainment, and it can be likened to the lens of a camera: the states of being and the percepts upon which it is focused may all be changing, and are therefore impermanent, but as the **power** of awareness it is decidedly permanent and forever an intrinsic part of one's **imperishable** being. In terms of man's intimate relationship with that which is universal and eternal, it is necessary to distinguish between that which is changeful in its thoughts, actions and attitudes, and that central core, or essence of being which carries the fruits of its karma through to its next life. That being, spiritually considered, may live rightly or wrongly, but its essence is as imperishable as the Universal Source from which it sprang. We have no knowledge of what happens to its sense of individuality in that sphere of existence which follows on from Nirvana. To my mind, to be 'one with', or in unity with the Absolute Source of Being, may not mean that one's being then immediately equates in all respects with the Source.

When one pauses to reflect upon the stupendous immensity of that obviously planned creation which we term the Galactic Cosmos, and then in turn take note

of our planet's long and present history of barbarous cruelty, hatreds, injustices, political deception, economic exploitation, spoliation, pollution, selfish greed, irreverence for life and lack of real love in most human relationships, one doubts very much whether the human species is anything more than the lowest and most elementary type of planetary beings: and is forgiven for speculating upon the possibility that there could be innumerable higher states of being between ourselves and that absolute perfection of powerful Being which en seeds us with ideals, and which ever draws whatever is the Goodness of life towards It like a magnet. I would be so bold as to say that many tens of thousands of steps have to be taken after the termination of our planetary existence before one could be in a position to conjecture at what point of life's eternal journey the state of individuality merges with that which indivisibly universal.

The leading question in this subject concerns the 'how' and the 'why' of a human being, or of anything else. When we look at what we call Nature, we see Life manifesting itself in a great variety of shapes and designs which have environmental significance, but which most probably hold other significances of spiritual importance to the creature or plant concerned. Our senses pick up their vibrating appearances as percepts which then become transformed in our mind into various concepts, or ideas of being; into mental constructs. This leaves us to conclude that if the shaped form or body is taken away, the reality of any particular idea of being would still remain lodged within the mind or consciousness of its creative Source. As thus viewed from our angle of human conception, the process of life would appear to be an impregnation of particular ideas-of-being which are indestructible, potentially progressive, and which have the power to become clothed with their requisite environmental shape and substance. This concept has received substantiation by the fairly recent scientific discovery, electronically verified, that every particular thing on earth is surrounded by what is termed a 'Force-field' which holds within it the archetypal design that causes the cell-structure that issues from a seed to assume the right shape for the body in formation. This is true even of the human foetus while still in the womb, and of every star and planet.

The basic structure of the Cosmos is therefore invisible to our senses, and is far more real and stable than the material substances which come into being through atomic association, and which condense into various shapes and patterns within their respective Force-fields. It is the inherent, rigid stability of the latter which supports great masses in their proper position. Our solar universe is conditioned by the life-cycles of everything material which exists within its system. Each form must undergo a coming-into-being, degeneration and decay, and reformation into other patterns of matter. All matter conforms to two poles of causation; the positive and the negative, and which is reflected as male and female in the sexes; they complement each other. Thus, as the

qualities of Absolute Being seep through to the periphery of life as found in our universe, they become transformed and governed by the Principle of Duality. Were it not so, nothing could be received from the Source of Life without there being a negative point of reception. Likewise, nothing could be given, or surrendered to the Source unless there was the positive force of will – spiritually orientated.

The operation of the principle of duality is therefore reflected in the dual states of consciousness; objective, or environmental consciousness, and sub-consciousness. That which I termed super-consciousness is an escape from duality. The sub-conscious, being negative, forms the sphere of reception of all ideation and all feeling states; it is thus the actual repository of memory. Although the objective mind may sometimes have difficulty in recalling whatever is stored there, every impression made upon the sub-conscious is eternally engraved, and this includes those that originate from percepts. Perfect recollection of anything from memory depends upon the strength of the impression made at the time, and this latter depends in turn upon the attentiveness given to whatever we are concerned with. The memory power of the subconscious can be likened to an ever-open cine-camera lens, and this explains why in the dream-state, without eyes shut, we are enabled to clothe the theme of a dream with every required percept. The subconscious is entirely impersonal; it will respond to us in exactly the same terms that we make our feelingly-expressed – habitual – mental impressions upon it. It will thus add to our power to achieve perfection or success or, conversely, it will confirm and protract our weaknesses; including the state of our health. It acts upon the principle that all strongly-felt concepts tend to become externalised materially or psychologically.

The subconscious appears to have a deep affinity with our soul-being, and in some quarters it is believed that it is the sphere of consciousness from which the soul phase of being initially emerges to become individualised. Certain it is, that the subconscious, with its indelible scroll of memories, adheres to the soul through life and life until the soul-phase of being becomes transmuted and utterly spiritualised. All sentient creatures are animated by the soul-phase of being, and aided in their environmental strivings by the memories bequeathed to them by the subconscious, and which becomes reflected in instinctual, behavioural responses to experiences. In terms of duality, the being of man is suspended between the positive Force-field and the negative Subconscious.

There are two other factors which enter into the scheme of duality: Will, which is the power to implement, or carry through any chosen course of action, as well as being the power to live, or to overcome difficulties. It is essentially positive, and would appear to be linked to that inner, creative cause of being which we have referred to as an ‘Idea-of-being’. It is very frequently in opposition to the

second factor, Design-power, which, emanating from the soul, is negative. The soul is essentially the feeling-state of being, which with its innate Desire-power, is ever reaching out to be loved, to possess the object of its desire, and to enter into that which complements it, as well as to consummate its own power of love. In its lower state, as in the creature world, it has but an elementary degree of consciousness of being. In the human species, the soul uses the objective mind to deepen its understanding of the significances of its experiences to expand its consciousness of being, and to explore the reality of the total state of being. Feeling-power, which gives rise to desire, is the most powerful motivating force in the whole of our being. It is when we feel most deeply for something that we become really, and originally creative. For it is then that we love what we are doing, and doing what we love. It is evident that some people, because of the nature of their response to experiences in previous lives, are born with more developed feeling-states than others. This is particularly true of most women. But like everything else, it is a state which can be put to use wisely or unwisely. It was those people who had raised their feeling-state of love to the nth degree, who made the greatest and most lasting impact upon the people of all times – as was so with Buddha, the Compassionate; the all-loving Christ, and the passionate Prophets.

When a person concentrates too thoroughly upon the development of the objective-mind, the feelings – denied their natural part in creativity, becomes partially atrophied. Such a person can become very clever in his field of endeavour, but the resulting aridity of personality would dry up the full savour of human relationships, and of life in general. The mind is then reduced to being a methodological, analytical technique.

When the Buddha asserted that there is no permanent and unchanging self, he was of course referring to the worldly, self-created personality. And when the soul-being (which in itself is nameless, sexless and devoid of all human divisive distinctions of race, religion and social status) emerges again from the spirit world into a new body, it is solely composed of the sum of its accrued qualities and developed powers of being. All traces of its former personality-self then lie deeply concealed within the subconscious records, but the Buddha himself proved that former lives can be recollected under trance conditions. Thus, except for its inner cognisance of qualities, powers and concepts, the soul arrives new into the world as a complete blank in terms of worldly identity; it has no consciousness whatsoever of the world in general, and of itself as a personality-self. The latter is gradually built-up as the body grows to maturity, and in accordance with its changing states of consciousness that derive from its environmental experiences.

We are born into a world of mass opinions, mass prejudices and other differences derived from religious, educational, social, political, national and

racial institutions. This is why society itself makes little, if any progress, and because each person seeks to externalise his own problems by blaming others, and by looking for collective solutions. Rare is the individual who genuinely thinks for himself, and who knows why he thinks what he does; who is just not living as a replica of borrowed attitudes and opinions, and who is not given to supposing that it is “the others” who are guilty of the world’s injustice. Such a self-disciplined individual becomes autonomous. The struggle between the opposites can never be reconciled in society. They can only be resolved by each individual facing up to the oppositions within himself. Only by truly understanding oneself can we come to really understand others.

The Buddha’s enlightened state of consciousness penetrated through to these social shams which produces sham individuals, and which makes a mockery of the fundamental purpose of life. In his compassion for suffering humanity, he created his historic Dhamma of liberty. It enables us to free ourselves from all that which is unreal and harmful by providing the means to develop our own spiritual strength; to attain to consciousness of real being.

Because of the origin of our inner being from that Source which is absolutely perfect, the potential for all that is highest already exists within us. The individual who makes it the fundamental basis of his being no longer identifies himself as a worldly personality, for he has achieved a reunion of like-with-like. From being formerly compounded of ever-changing and ever-dying factors of being, one is then intrinsically all that which is deathless.

