

the veins a record of the moods and activities of the body. Arterial blood carries with it the will of the indwelling spiritual being which it distributes throughout the physical structure. The venous blood brings back to the heart the complete and entire account of every bodily process, and the superphysical factors which impinge upon the bodily process. It is thus through the blood that the ego is constantly aware, not of things sensed, which is the function of the nerves, but of things known and done, which is the ultimate factual record.

In substance, transfusion has no permanent results that are detrimental and does not violate any natural law. It is merely a matter of imposing a new magnetic pattern upon a medium which has been separated from a previous pattern. Blood is the particular symbol of a universal power, and like that power itself is adaptable to any emergency that arises in the evolution of consciousness. Consciousness is the master, blood the servant. It is consciousness in the blood that makes it "a most peculiar essence."



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- *This great discovery is either a challenge or an ultimatum delivered by nature. Consequences can be only as constructive or destructive as the level of consciousness of the people who use it.*

Karmic Consequences of the Atomic Bomb

THOSE who think things through are profoundly concerned with the challenge presented by this extraordinary discovery and the probable consequences. To meet such conditions arising in our world we must try to adopt the philosophical attitude and avoid unreasonable conclusions. In connection with the menace of the bomb, I think we can take some solace in the thoughts of Emerson. On one occasion during a world-end scare, (they arise periodically) someone in considerable panic approached Emerson and said, "Dr. Emerson, what will you do if the world ends?" Emerson thought for a moment and said, "Well, there is only one thing I can do, that is learn to get along without it."

The first thing we need in this problem is perspective. The whole subject is very close and imminent at the moment, and we should parallel the present crisis in terms of the experience of the past. That is the purpose of history. We study history not merely to learn about things that happened a long time ago, but to help us face present problems by means of the experience of other human beings who have in other times been confronted with similar problems. Problems may differ in magnitude, but essentially the same basic questions arise in every generation.

Searching backward in the perspective of history to find something that parallels the atomic bomb, probably the closest parallel we find is the discovery of gun powder, and the effect which that produced upon the way of life in the medieval world. Gun powder was brought to Europe from China. The Chinese did not develop it for military purposes, they developed it primarily for

magical processes. Gun powder was used by them for the purpose of frightening away demons, and also for the celebration of various events, much in the spirit of our Fourth of July celebration. Reaching Europe, gun powder was almost immediately adopted by the Occidental mind to the dominant problems of the time, which were military. This resulted in the gradual development of the cannon and musket. The oldest form of cannons were made of wood and bound around with wire. The charge of powder was small and conveniently shaped; rocks were the first missiles. Of course it was not long before the enthusiasm of the artilleryman caused him to overload his wooden cannon, and it was himself and not the enemy who was blown to smithereens.

The development of gun powder and the new type of fighting armament resulted in a tremendous change in the psychology of life. It ended knight errantry. It ended the entire theory of the noble warrior, who, well encased in steel armor, regarded war as an adventure, and enjoyed comparative personal protection when compared to that of the infantry troops and peasantry who had no such protection. The bullet was no respecter of nobility. Armor became useless, and with the disappearance of armor, there disappeared also the walled city. The medieval fortress was no longer necessary. With the development of gun powder we had the end of the feudal system. Gun powder permitted the peasant to destroy the nobility. It permitted the man without armor to meet on equal footing the man with armor.

This was the basic issue that eventually dominated modern warfare. It

was no longer a matter of individual bravery, nor a matter of the justice of the cause. As Napoleon observed, "God is on the side with the heaviest artillery." This brought a complete shift in the belief that in some way moral right bestowed physical prowess and the old challenge of combat for honor no longer existed; skill and weight of armor took the place of holy purpose. In the entire process of the development of modern warfare we have been confronted with the unfoldment of this psychology.

Another important crisis in world civilization was when the architect Vitruvius constructed the first aqueduct. Now it would not seem that a row of pipes running through the hills along the Appian Way of Rome could have produced a profound effect upon civilization for all time, but it did. The simple development of a method of bringing water in large quantities into a community made possible the phenomenon of large cities, and moved our entire civilization from the suburban to a cosmopolitan consciousness. Up to the time of the development of the aqueduct and drainage system, three or four thousand persons constituted a large city. The city could not increase in population or size beyond the capacity of its local wells. Now all this was changed, and in a very short time innumerable villages began to cluster around the centers of commerce for life. It was the aqueduct and sewer that created the Roman Empire and gave it its position of world domination.

Every important change we make in our way of life brings innumerable consequences, and the consequences are often more far reaching, more important, *apparently*, than the causes which produce them. This is because we have not sensed the profound force of causes. Now in China we know, for example, that their way of life was influenced largely by the lack of roads. All metropolitan living was geared to the produce problem. There was no way of refrigerating or preserving foods. Therefore no community could grow larger than the surrounding countryside could support. There was no way of bringing

food from a distance. Food could only be kept, at the very most, for a one or two day journey, so the source of supply had to be in that range. For that reason the land in the Si-Kiang delta, some of the most important land in China, could not be used; it was too far from the center of life. Transportation and refrigeration had their part in changing our entire perspective on living.

Innumerable parallels can be cited for world changing circumstances, and these circumstances have set up patterns of thinking and living that have endured. We do not even know the names of some early inventors and architects who set up new ways of life, but uncounted millions have been influenced by these changes.

Now we must regard the invention or discovery of the atomic bomb as a dividing point in history. Beyond any question it is the most momentous discovery in the records of human achievement. It has within itself all the elements of changing the entire structure of our civilization. We always view change with alarm, whether that change be essentially mere newness or potential menace. To some human beings all newness is menace. Anything which takes us out of our habits, out of our normal and traditional way of thinking is viewed with alarm. For this type the present perspective is particularly alarming. Then we know that at last we have made a discovery which has within it an almost infinite capacity for destructiveness. Never before have we released so terrible an instrument of potential annihilation. This in itself, coming at a time when the human family more than ever before is in a position to think through the challenge, makes this a most important, profound and significant occasion. Had the discovery been made a thousand years ago human beings as a collective would have had very little to say or think about it, but our educational opportunities, and the increasing individual intellection of our people, causes this discovery to appear to each of us, and to every human being in all civilized countries, as a poten-

tial destructive instrument. Already we are beginning to feel the repercussions of our own discovery, and we must approach the matter with thoughtfulness and with a certain basic understanding, or our whole civilization may be in the grip of panic.

You will probably realize, if you have been reading your journals and papers with reasonable regularity, that in the last month the atomic bomb has moved forward in journalistic significance, and there is scarcely an issue of any importance that does not refer to it. From the temporary silence, due almost to awe and terror, we are emerging into the evidence of conscious reaction. At first the world was a little numb, it took time to realize the weight of the thing we had done. Now we are beginning to come out of our mental anesthesia which the shock produced. We are beginning to search, in one way or another, almost desperately for some answer, and those variously responsible for the discovery are now trying to find means of shifting the responsibility. We suddenly realize the magnitude of this thing, and we are searching for a way out of the challenge with which we have confronted ourselves.

It is evident, obvious, inevitable, and we must all accept it, that we cannot prevent, lose, destroy or wipe out this thing we have done. One of our political leaders has suggested that we write into our laws that any person who shall communicate this secret to any foreign power or nation shall be held guilty of high treason. Well that is one of the early, infantile reflexes. Such a procedure is worse than useless and hopeless. Humanity can never undo that which it has done, it must go forward to use. It cannot hope to go backward into that age of innocence which lies behind any important change. We may as well think in terms of giving up all of our civilized institutions. We cannot, even if we desire, cease to know that which we do know. Therefore it is not by attempting to remove the thing we have done, but by attempting to use it constructively that we must find our way out. Neither the individual nor

the collective groups can ever forget. It is important, therefore, that we develop constructive ways of learning.

As to the possibility of preserving a secret such as that of this bomb, such a secrecy is also impossible. The very structure and nature of the discovery itself makes it vulnerable to any highly trained group of scientists. The latest opinion of scientific men on the subject is that in a period of from two to ten years, every major power capable of producing a group of reasonably thoroughly trained scientific men can discover the formula, and certainly will. We realize Germany was very close to the discovery in a laboratory it had set up in Norway. Japan was very close to the discovery of it, and there is no reason to doubt that Russia already has the bomb or is in the imminent process of discovering it. That which is true of these principal powers we may say will be true of any other nation capable of training and producing scientific thinkers. There is no reason to doubt that within ten years other nations, such as China, India, the more prominent Latin American countries, and practically all the larger countries of Europe will have this secret.

Now one of the inventors has suggested an ingenious viewpoint on the subject; namely, that the mutual possession of the secret will probably protect the world from the consequences of this bomb. Experience, however, cannot support such a viewpoint. Whereas in the past, human beings have made discoveries which in their own time and in their own circumstances were as startling, they have never been able to preserve themselves or each other from the institutional reprisals and retaliations, from the revenge and national and internal aggrandizement which plays such an important part in our political viewpoint. It is not reasonable to presume that human beings basically antagonistic, basically separated by tradition and by the psychosis of our time, which is the psychosis of domination, can be expected to ignore this discovery if they can use it to achieve the purpose they desire to achieve.

The important consideration here lies again in the fact that the possession of this secret largely neutralizes the relationship between the minority and majority classes. The minority equipped with the instrument becomes a majority, and classes which hitherto, because of lack of number, were unable to occupy a prominent position in world affairs, are confronted with the temptation of this equalizing force, the force by which one man becomes as strong as an army of old. This is bound to have its place in the attitudes of the races and international groups in this so-called postwar pre-atomic period. The possibility, therefore, of any nation holding this secret against the rest of the world is slight. In fact, it may not even be given serious consideration.

The next issue that has arisen is one that is being considered by the committee of scientists who worked upon the project itself. The substance of their statement on this subject is very briefly this: "No defense against the atomic bomb is known, and there is a serious question as to whether or not a defense can be found." Now this opens up another important line of thought. No direct method of insulating against the atomic fragmentary process is known. Probably it would be unwise in the light of experience and history to affirm dogmatically that no solution or defense is discoverable, but certainly such a discovery of defense will require a considerable period of time. We are in the presence of a force so terrific that the release of it represents a shattering power against which none of the structures we have so far developed are capable of being preserved or sustaining themselves.

This being the truth at the moment, regardless of future discoveries, it brings home another situation of importance, and that is, that the atomic bomb can only be, in part at least, neutralized by the decentralization of population and industry. In other words, the only way we can protect ourselves is to reduce the number of targets in any given locality. From the time of the discovery of this bomb, as one commentator has

noted, we may as well give back our large cities to the Indians. Large cities are intensely vulnerable areas, and the degree of vulnerability can be estimated not only in terms of the present bomb, but in terms of the fact that the bomb that has been used is already outmoded. In a few months the bombs which were dropped upon Japan have become obsolete. Now bombs from fifty to two hundred times as powerful are already in process of being manufactured. In terms of this fact we can realize that the city of New York could be demolished and depopulated with one bomb. We may find that it will be necessary to give the Indians a small inducement to get them to take it back.

One of our military experts has already suggested that by a process of sabotage, the placing of seventy-two atomic bombs in strategic areas would practically destroy our nation. These could be placed secretly by suicide saboteurs, and seventy-two men could accomplish all that previously required an army of invasion and a tremendous land and air force. It is rather interesting that the number seventy-two should have been hit upon because, of course, it is the great number of antiquity preserved in our Christianity in the Septuagint, which was the great Bible of the seventy (actually seventy-two) editors. We have written a new book, a book of destruction that can be administered by seventy-two human beings.

Now that which is true of us is true of other nations. We can realize the potential consequences had Germany been able to attach an atomic bomb to its robot plane. If they had had the discovery in time they could have depopulated the British Isles. Furthermore, we need no longer think in terms of robot planes. By use of this bomb in connection with rockets and artillery it is possible and reasonable to fire with considerable accuracy an atomic shell from a fixed emplacement a distance of five thousand miles. In other words, artillery set up on the European continent could successfully shell the city of Chicago. Now we begin to have a slight idea of the Pandora Box we have

opened, and we are also suddenly confronted with the sickening feeling in the pit of our stomach that we have finally achieved a maximum of power while still suffering from a minimum of integrity. At last we have really taken off the lid of hell.

In this situation, with all its alarming and disquieting considerations, which unquestionably will find their places in our psychology, we begin to hear reverberations. The various scientific personnel that has been working on the atomic bomb for the last twenty-five years now wishes to wash its hands of all responsibility in the matter. The inventors themselves have come forward and stated simply that they worked on their invention with the most deep and profound hope that they would not be able to solve the mystery. Now that sounds like a rather hypocritical remark, but it is not necessarily so. Let us play fair with all values. The race for the atomic bomb was not carried on by one nation alone, and it is perfectly possible for the scientists of several nations to hope mutually and individually that they would never make the discovery, but still be forced to continue their efforts in the fear that another, and possibly a less ethical group, would make the discovery. In all probability the majority of scientists who have been working on the bomb would be perfectly willing to have the entire formula obliterated forever, if at the same time they could be sure that some other, possibly subversive force, was not at work trying to regain the secret. But there again human nature is inevitable. We know it can be done and the same type of mind that has labored so insidiously for world domination since the dawn of history is never going to permit us to forget, and will never stop dreaming itself, of the power this bomb carries with it. We cannot hope to escape in that way.

There is also a grave feeling among scientific personnel as to the uses to be made of the atomic bomb, and the majority of those who worked on it regret that any actual use was made of it. Several of the scientists have been

quoted as saying they believed the intimidating power of the bomb would have been sufficient without its actual use by any military power against human beings. This viewpoint is resulting in the rise of an unusual division between science and politics. The scientific world is accusing the political world of using their discovery without consulting them as to its release, or as to the possible administration of its power without its actual use. Science is threatening in several groups to disassociate itself entirely from all political implications, if science is not permitted to have its own say in the use of its discoveries. Here the scientist is taking the fundamental viewpoint that the purpose of science is to further human life, and that the discoveries made by scientific individuals and groups should not be applied to destructive purposes, and that if this process is continued, science will simply cease all research in fields that can be regarded as destructive. It is a thought, but it is too late. The masterpiece has been accomplished and the process of closing the door after the horse is stolen is not going to be of benefit to us.

Science has a new job that may take quite a while to work out, and that is the problem of discovering an antidote to its own discovery. That, more or less, has been the creeping paralysis of the ages, man is forever trying to find remedies for the destructiveness which he discovers in the name of progress.

All of these elements can be regarded as groundwork, and from the challenge which the bomb itself presents and which will inevitably occupy the consideration of the whole world for many years to come, we must now pass into the philosophic consideration of the implication of this matter.

We should like first of all to take up the problems and issues which have confronted the religious world. A large number of individuals, hearing of this bomb for the first time, seeing photographs of its consequences, asked the question in a sort of numb and hopeless way, "Why did God permit its discovery? Is there nothing in the universe

to protect man from his own folly? If there be laws, principles, divine truth and divine mind in space, why do these not prevent the human being from releasing an energy and power over which he so obviously lacks any method of control?"

Here again we can have simple recourse to fact against fancy. If we look about us in life, in the large nations and in the small nations, we realize it has been the rule of the ages that the deity, or divinity or universal power in nature has never interfered in the development of human ingenuity, whether it be for good or destruction. During the period of the great plagues the gods did not prevent nearly a hundred million human beings from perishing of the bubonic plague. During periods of war divinities do not step in to prevent destructiveness in which human beings indulge themselves. During periods of disaster, natural and man-made, we do not find any evidence of intervention. Therefore, we have no reason to presume that intervention would appear today.

Our reason for keeping on hoping for that intervention is because we have a feeling that the thing we have done is in itself practically cosmic. That it is too big for us, and therefore of all the emergencies we have ever known this is the one in which we are in the most need of the help of the gods. This reaction is reasonable and normal but it can be paralleled in the experience of individuals. If a small child, though he may be without guile, innocent, noble and guilty of no wrong, in ignorant playfulness, or through inexperience, drops a lighted match into a powder barrel, the result is inevitable, and the innocence and well-meaning of the child will not prevent the explosion or his own destruction if he is nearby. In other words, the belief or attitude that we did not mean to do wrong or that we did not know any better, that type of excuse has never been accepted by nature, never regarded in time or space as a substitute for knowing or performing such actions as are essentially right. The destructiveness of inexperience has

never been coddled by the gods. There is no reason why universal law should intervene, for the very simple and natural reason that universal law has only one primary purpose and that is the furtherance and growth of nature.

To our minds the atomic bomb threatens our survival and our growth. In terms of nature, however, the atomic bomb threatens not our survival, but our way of survival; not our existence, but our mode of existence. It does not endanger our immortal realities, but it is shattering to the mortal unrealities which we have come to identify with realities. The atomic bomb, like all material things, only hazards material things, and it is part of nature's eternal plan that the human being shall ultimately disentangle his human consciousness from material things. Therefore, the discovery of the bomb is a cataclysm to man, but is not necessarily a cataclysm to nature. It is a cataclysm to us that something we have built up should be destroyed. It is the ultimate cataclysm to us if we ourselves as creatures should be destroyed. But this is largely due to the local egotism of our viewpoint. It is due to the fact that as far as we are concerned, we regard ourselves as highly significant creatures. We regard our own survival as highly important and we have proved through five thousand years of uncivilized civilization that we regard our particular pattern of life as more important than truth, reality, wisdom or spiritual integrity. We are perfectly convinced that our reason for existence in this world is to preserve the institutions we have built here. Therefore, we view with uniform disquietude anything that threatens our way of life.

Here we are confronted with a problem of spiritual decision, a decision which we have forced upon ourselves, a decision which we will ultimately have to make, which might have been one thousand, ten thousand or fifty thousand years in the future had not our ingenuity caught up with us; namely, the decision as to what constitutes the purpose for our existence. We must recognize that this bomb, like every other destructive thing we have devised, surrounds

us more closely and binds us more tightly to the fabric of our own illusion. It also leaves us fewer and fewer escapes from the inevitable decision that we must make. We have evaded and avoided this decision for years and now we have released something that makes this decision necessary to survival.

Nature has always found, and can demonstrate beyond doubt, that the human being never selects survival until no other possible course is open to him. With the exception of a few deeply philosophical idealists, no human being is good because it is good to be good. He will only be good when it is too uncomfortable to be any other way. An occasional individual is born virtuous, a very small number attain virtue, for the rest it must be thrust upon them; and it looks very much as though a very considerable impetus toward virtue is being thrust upon us. Naturally there is an immediate division in our people, a division that reveals exactly the condition that we are in.

Some people have made a discovery in the atomic bomb which is very healthy. More often they are saying to themselves and each other, "This is something that is too big for us. This is something we are not ready for. This is something we are not wise enough to face." Even this slight sense of personal insufficiency is practically the first crack in the armament of our egotism. If we suddenly realize there are many things we are not ready for, that is the beginning of true readiness. It is the beginning of the necessary attitude toward life.

This sharp division that has arisen in the thinking of our people is represented on one hand by greater seriousness, and on the other hand by greater thoughtlessness. The atomic bomb is attacking the unprepared very much in the form of battle fatigue. Those who have no strength within themselves and have depended upon the strength of their way of life for survival are showing, already, serious indications of panic. This panic will manifest itself in the years that are ahead in the increasing recklessness of living, dissipation of living, general lack

of acceptance of responsibility, general disinclination to build or plan or prepare, and a constant increase in the escape mechanism of living now for any moment may be our last. This represents itself in the emergence of a chaotic pattern which we will feel all around us and to which we will be exposed in our daily contacts with people. There are going to be those among us who, having no internal foundation, will suffer a sense of complete frustration as the result of the loss of all external security. We will live to see a period of reckless, irresponsible living because, as these people will say, nothing is important any more. This attitude reflects again the basis upon which they built their sense of importance. It is only an ultimate admission that that which was never important remains unimportant; that their security from the beginning was ephemeral and illusional, and that weakness was concealed by mass motion. Individuals who could not survive by themselves eked out their existence by leaning upon each other. Those who could not find any reason for life within invested their reason for life in external accumulation and accomplishment.

The atomic bomb reveals dramatically the complete folly of our entire concept of life. That is the reason we are going to dislike it so heartily. We are going to dislike it because we are afraid of it, and we are afraid of it because it reveals to us our own consistent and abundant inadequacies.

This division between classes of individuals is based upon a series of considerations. To return to the bomb itself, what is the effect of the atomic bomb? What is it in the terms of power release? Does this effect extend beyond material things? Will there be consequences resulting from the use of this bomb which may, as one scientist hazards, actually destroy the entire planet? Will we come in the end to a universal deluge of energy, and will it result in the same pattern that confronts us in our consideration of past life; will civilized nations, having possession of this instrument, destroy themselves and leave

the world again to be the abiding place of such aboriginal tribes as live outside the sphere of culture and civilization? When we get through will we leave the perpetuation of our kind to some wandering nomads of Northern Asia, the Polar Eskimos, or some tribe in Africa whose tribe is not worth bombing? That opens also an interesting field of speculation, whether a decadent world will wipe itself out. Of course, to us these considerations are vital because we are part of it, and to us our own survival and the survival of our institutions are the reasons for our existence.

Consider the man who is engaged in a line of business which he does not particularly enjoy, but which is highly profitable; you may have heard of such individuals. In this country they are probably a hundred million strong, or weak. This individual sits at his desk, mumbling in his beard his dissatisfaction with everything but finally acknowledges his lot is not too bad because he has accumulated a tidy sum. We are reminded of the story published not long ago about a high pressure American business man who was having a little chat with an Indian sitting in front of his wigwam. The Indian was lolling in the warm sunlight, the picture of contentment, when the high pressure American of imported origin arrived on the scene and said, "Say, Chief, why don't you get a job?" The Indian looked at him for a moment and said, "Why?" The man said, "Well, if you take a job you make thirty or forty dollars a week." The Indian said, "Why?" The man replied, "Well, if you made thirty or forty dollars a week you could save money." "Why?" "Well, if you saved money you could retire and then you would not have to work any more." The Indian said, "I don't work now."

Now this is part of the cycle of success by which man, as the result of doing things he does not want to do, manages to buy a certain amount of leisure to do the things he wants to do. Now the atomic bomb means he may have the privilege of doing the things he does not want to do for the better

part of his life and then be blown to smithereens about the time he could do the things he wants to do. This is a most disquieting process of rumination. Possibly this business man hopes as a goal that the small business which he has built up, and to which he has been a slave for years, will sometime produce its own skyscraper and stand in the midst of humanity as an eternal monument to him. For this end he slaves, struggles and finally dies of internal complications but it is all worth while because later there will stand in the midst of the community the Jones Building; *he* won't stand, but the building will. Now, horrible to consider, there may be an explosion somewhere and there will not only be no Mr. Jones, but there will be no Jones Building; therefore, there is nothing left to live for because we live largely in the hope that we will survive in something we have done. The prospect of our civilization being destroyed, the prospect of our children perishing, the prospect of the end of existences for all the things toward which we are building, paralyzes our own initiative and leaves us bereft of any so-called constructive, purposeful reason for being here.

Now against the problem of Mr. Jones, therefore, comes this terrific cataclysm and his immediate effort toward finding some way of circumventing it. He is now going to pray they will find some way of insulating the Jones Building. We believe this way of life is what the Gods want because we have been convinced that the gods are primarily concerned with what we want, since that has been our background for centuries and we have never questioned it. But against the problem of man's building for the future, there is the situation of the individual who is not doing things he does not want to do so that ultimately he will accumulate, but rather he is doing the things he enjoys doing. His reward is actually intrinsic with the action and requires no terrific compensation in the end. Instead of making his goal the escape from what he is doing man might be wiser to make the thing he is doing the joy of his life,

then he no longer has to be rewarded, and the reward is no longer hazarded. The individual who is making each day he lives the perfect reward for having lived it, is not going to be greatly worried over whether a monumental office building stands in memory of him. Mr. Jones never considered when he was building that great building that in fifty years the building would be torn down, and its ultimate disappearance was inevitable any way. If the individual would live and could live in the terms of the thing he is doing and not in the terms of the thing he expects to get in some other time and place, this would be a basis upon which to build a civilization. It is not the permanence of the thing we do, but the joy of doing it that is the basis of a reasonable way of life, because nothing is permanent anyway. As one wise old cynic observed long ago, "Nothing is changeless but change." No material institution we can ever construct can have any actual enduring quality. If, then, instead of investing the symbols of our efforts in those destructible things which can be destroyed by bombs, we begin the process of investing effort in the development of ourselves, we not only achieve our results, but we take the emphasis off the need for the bomb. This is true because the entire policy of the bomb is involved in the policy of material power, and it is only while material ambition dominates the world that the bomb has any particular significance.

We are invited to make this shift of perspective, and nature has an amazingly strenuous way of issuing its invitation. It has learned that man is not subtle; it has learned that man will not take a hint unless that hint carries with it an explosion approximate to that of the atomic bomb. We have been building a top heavy world and we are beginning to emerge from the Second World War. We had no more than begun to emerge when we saw definite indications of our emergence from the idealism we had during that war. Before the guns had been silenced and the documents were all signed, the majority of individuals were slipping back into a competitive

way of life. Already we were planning profits, trying to get the last nickle out of the war before it ended, and the day the war was over thousands of houses went on the market for three times their value to get them sold before the slump. We were right at it again. Some individuals were more thoughtful, but the great tendency was to slip back into the same old patterns that had caused the situation in the first place.

Apparently all-provident nature realizes this eternal back-sliding has very little in common with progress and has given us something this time that is really going to make it hard for us to backslide. It has placed the sword of Damocles over our heads as a warning that we can never again so long as we exist fall back into the old ways without the immediate danger of exterminating ourselves on the spot. Of course, that is not the kind of message from the Infinite that the human being likes. He wants Deity to pat him on the head and tell him how good he is, but nature realizes that in patting the individual the main consideration is to pat him long enough, hard enough and low enough to get results. Nature has issued an ultimatum to human beings. It was inevitable. It was the apex of our scientific viewpoint of existence.

Science for the last fifty years has ridiculed religion, at least if not in open ridicule, it has certainly displaced the spiritual life of man. It has placed all emphasis upon material accomplishment and as a result of so doing it has increased human sophistication, and with its boasted achievements has held itself up as the greatest benefactor of mankind. Well, the great benefactor has let loose the whirlwind, and the great scientific foundations of the race that have never been harnessed to an appropriate idealism have brought in a harvest identical with the planting. That is the thing we do not like. The thing we regret most of all in nature is the law of cause and effect, and yet it is the one great hope that we have.

Philosophically considering the problem of the atomic bomb, we realize that to the individual who is building

a solid philosophy of life, this bomb offers no greater hazard than that presented by traffic, sickness, accidents, or any other incidents of nature. It is truly a monumental incident. It is the largest composite accident that we have ever known or had. But in terms of philosophy it is not the cause for any unreasonable demoralization of thoughtful people. Since the first scientific laboratory was built, the motion has been toward the development of this bomb. It belongs in the category of experience, and those who are really thoughtful are grateful that as long as it has to come it is a privilege to be alive when it does happen, because we can see and know and be a part of a condition which other ages will only learn from the written word. It is a privilege to be present in the most critical period the world has ever experienced. It is good karma to be born in bad times because it gives us the opportunity to participate in the privilege of growth. It is the privilege of the individual, emerging from himself, to be challenged by something infinitely greater than himself, and it is the opportunity for victory, the victory of self over circumstances. There is no other victory and never has been any other, and every problem that has ever arisen in the history of civilization had only that as its ultimate solution. Because so many of the problems we have built up have not been as dramatic, we have been able to patch them, make them appear to be solved, or absorb them in other problems so we would not have to face them directly. Here is one we must face honestly. It provides a privilege, an opportunity for an individual to grow at a rapidity of tempo only possible when the challenge itself is intensive. There is nothing less beneficial than easy times, less meaningful than success, as we know it, but here we have the opportunity and the dynamic motivation to begin the reorientation of our lives.

The first steps have already been taken. For example, Yale University is now crying out for new departments of education. It was, indeed, only an atomic bomb that could have reached

Yale. Anything less than a major miracle would have been ineffective; but now comes education, represented by one of our greatest institutions, announcing solemnly and sincerely that the time has come for education in moral, ethical, cultural and esthetical values. Yale has seen the handwriting on the wall. It realizes now that this generation, devoted to making better mouse-traps, must make better mice out of itself. It is no longer going to be possible for an individual to be successful because he can take a motor apart and put it together again; he must realize that while this great atomic monster hangs in the sky he will have to put himself together. If he does not do this he will become a nervous wreck. The whole civilization must become wise or become completely neurotic as the result of this atomic bomb. There can no longer be the delightful indecision we have loved so long. We will have to make decisions. This is a privilege.

The question arises as to how much this reformation is going to be worth if the more or less reformed individual is going to be under the bomb when it goes off. In other words, what about the basic problem of the great destruction of life? That must have its place. We may find before we get through that more casualties were caused by the dropping of the two atomic bombs than by all the bombs that were dropped in Europe and Asia put together. The death rate is appalling. It is appalling in many ways. Those not the immediate victims of the explosion of the bomb suffered a death and agony unequaled in the cruelty of the ages.

Now what does this mean? How are we going to confront the simple problem of life destruction? Here again we are going to have to know and realize that life always has been and always will be an exceedingly fragile thing. I think the greatest cause of life destruction up to the present moment is not bombs, not any particular disaster, but that peculiar pattern which nature itself has set up, the law of inevitable mortality. Death from so-called natural causes is still the greatest taker of life,

and always will be, yet against this the average individual has no psychosis. The average individual is not morbid over the mere fact that because he is here is obvious proof that some day he will not be here. Whether this cause asserts itself when he is fifty or when he is ninety, it will inevitably assert itself. As Lord Bacon observed, and it was so inscribed as his epitaph, "All compounds must be dissolved." Man is a compound and the dissolution of that compound is inevitable. But over this we are not concerned. We live from day to day as though we would live forever, and because we have assumed the psychology of that which is termed natural, we are perfectly content with it. As individuals we have certain moments of dilemma, but in substance and essence we accept dissolution as inevitable, and therefore, not subject to reform, and not a suitable problem to receive too much consideration.

Now in the presence of this inevitable dissolution we have created another pattern; namely, that dissolution from any cause other than natural means is a subject of peculiar consideration. The entire problem comes right down to the same thing that Socrates faced when he decided to drink the hemlock rather than pay a small fine his disciples agreed to pay for him. Socrates in his dialogue told his disciples, gathered to mourn his departure from this life, that they should have no particular cause for worry or fear about him, that in sober fact everything was in excellent condition as far as he was concerned. In truth he was looking with the greatest and keenest anticipation, not so much because he was going to depart from uncertainty, but by nature he was an inquiring individual and he regarded the universe as being filled with answers to questions, and that the greater part of the world which he loved and admired was concealed from him by the mystery of death. Therefore he was like a merchant traveling to distant places, he was anxious to be on his way, because before him lay the great adventure. Consequently, the problem of how

long he was going to live was of no great importance to him. The problem was how well he could live while here. The problem was to what degree he could accomplish the transition between worlds with perfect integrity, understanding and calmness, and happiness of spirit.

This might seem to be an evasion, but after all, consider for a moment that the power of the bomb and the use of it depends upon the terror which it causes. The reason why death has always been the enslaver of people and why human beings will compromise all their ethics and ideals in order to live is because they regard death as a terrible thing. The bomb would lose its significance and effectiveness if the human being would live by a pattern in which the survival of his body was not as important as the survival of his principles.

Now in the times of stress of war which we have recently passed through, many of our young men have made the decision that principles were more important than life, and they have paid for that decision on coral reefs in the South Pacific and in other parts of the world, while the rest of us rather smugly at home admired them for their decision but felt ourselves no part of it. The atomic bomb ends the possibility of other men dying for us. It makes it impossible for the great civilian population and great industrial leaders to be protected from the consequences of a cause for which they themselves are partly responsible. We can no longer be delinquent and then send our sons out to die for it. That may be a very thought producing and great forward-looking realization.

To the thoughtful individual the atomic bomb only represents the possibility of the destruction of a physical body, which in nature and in the universe is not of sovereign importance; the important thing is the thing which is within that body, the life which is growing up and evolving through time and space. That life is indestructible. The simple solution to the challenge of the atomic bomb, the answer, lies in

our final recognition of the great philosophical doctrines of reincarnation and karma taught by the wise since the beginning of time. We now need to recognize the doctrine of recurrent life or lives and realize that the thing that is growing within us requires experience, and can not be affected adversely or retarded greatly by any device of science. The individual as an individual may be physically annihilated, but the individual as life, intelligence, progress in nature, is indestructible. Body can be destroyed, but the growth, progress, integrity, wisdom and perfection of the life within that body is indestructible, and man has already died a thousand times trying to learn to live as well as he does now. He may have to die many more times before he can learn how to live. Nature presenting these terrific challenges to our consciousness is demanding from us wisdom and vision. The only way human beings can protect themselves at this time from the possible destruction of their life pattern by the new pattern of atomic energy is to recognize that this energy in no way affects the great foundation of integrity which is the basis of life.

When the human being has established his philosophy firmly, then and only then can atomic energy be used collectively for constructive purposes. There is no doubt it has great, constructive possibilities, but it can be no more constructive than the level of consciousness of the world that uses it. The only way we can protect ourselves is to raise the level of world integrity. Neither legislature nor secrecy can accomplish this end. It is only the restatement by the individual of the resolution to preserve values and to live, not according to the principle of competitive accumulation, but on the principle of co-operative sharing of all things that are necessary to life itself that will bring about this end. The purpose of this world is to be a kind of university in which we go to school. But let us take neither the world nor university so seriously that we forget that our life is merely a term within our existence.

We are really space creatures. We have within ourselves untouched and unknown dimensions of release. Within ourselves are powers greater than any other power we know, because after all man is also a center of atomic energy. He has a greater strength for good, as vast a measure for good, in proportion, as this small handful of energy has in destructive power. The human being is capable of spiritual security whether the world shares that security or not. The bomb throws the problems of security right back into the lap of the individual where it belongs. We cannot be happy because of what we have or do not have, we must learn once more to discover values in what we are. This is the greatest symbol of the detachment of man from the material hypnosis which has developed in the last five thousand years. This is the final and complete statement of the fact that it is useless, worthless and pointless to invest the ability and nobility of the human creature in the creation of a merely economic or industrial existence.

Perhaps it will result in the decentralization of communities. That would be good. Perhaps it will break up more and more false patterns. We will have to give up things we believe in order to survive, and we will learn to survive by giving up the things we believe are necessary. Here again we have the great opportunity that comes periodically from the gods, the opportunity to decide between growth and panic, between the unfoldment and release of the finest values we know and the complete demoralization of character, because the things we have been attached to have been taken from us. In this respect we might note the statement accredited to Hermann Goering upon hearing of the atomic bomb. He said, "I want no part of it." He is now on trial, of course, with other great criminals. His second line of thought was a deep sigh of relief to the effect that in all probability he would be out of the world before he would have to endure that method of departing from the world. So to Mr. Goering the atomic bomb represents an added adjustment between his present

state and that which is likely to be his future condition. In other words, the world for him is well worth leaving.

Now there are going to be people who feel that way, but the fact is, this atomic bomb can be the greatest incentive, the most practical physical incentive toward solution, not a solution based upon trying to lock the bomb up, but solution based upon the final acceptance of the fact that our whole pattern of civilization is wrong. Until the basic pattern is corrected there is no security for us. Unquestionably the bomb is a horrible thing, but there are other institutions which we have set up that destroy life, literally grinding human beings out of existence by intensive competition, breaking the minds and bodies of millions every year in the name of civilization. That does not seem horrible, for civilization itself is in very bad shape. It is completely lacking in integrity that can give it survival.

Nature has again forced our decision, but this time because we have wasted wars and depressions which might have been informative, it is no longer a gentle hint. This time it is an ultimatum. Man dreaming of world power, has it, and now he is suddenly realizing that in building up power he has forgotten to build up himself. That he has created an external strength at the expense of internal strength, and that he must balance the relationship between his consciousness and his world, or else he will be one of those unbalanced forces which, according to the ancient scriptures, shall perish in the void.

We must learn to live and build within ourselves a complete security that is not dependent upon the security of our material institutions, and the moment we are secure in the midst of insecure institutions we will bestow our security upon those institutions. The things we build can never be stronger nor safer than the motives by which they were built, and the only way we can build a permanent world of better people is to build better people first, and the world will take on their shape and likeness.

To the thoughtful, to those truly philosophically, mystically and religiously inclined, this bomb is a restatement. It is an act of divine wisdom, by means of which we are being called forth from the smallness of ourselves as we are now, to the greatness of ourselves as we could be, the greatness that would give us the wisdom to use and an understanding too great to abuse. This is the decision that is coming and we have to face it. The way we face our future destiny, whatever it may be, determines our growth. We will keep on growing, the universe will keep on growing, and human beings will continue to move triumphantly toward solution. There is nothing that can stop us and only one thing that can delay us, and that is ourselves. We are the substance of our own delay and nature has pointed out that delays in the accomplishment of necessary things are dangerous. Let us then think in terms of a rise in courage, character and consciousness above this great challenge that has been loosed upon us.

(A PUBLIC LECTURE BY MANLY PALMER HALL.)

Suggested reading: FACING THE FUTURE; FIRST PRINCIPLES OF PHILOSOPHY; JOURNEY IN TRUTH; SELF UNFOLDMENT.)