

The Beginning and the End

Who knows the beginning of things or what mind has ever embraced their end? When we have said a beginning, do we not behold spreading out beyond it all the eternity of Time when that which has begun was not? So also when we imagine an end our vision becomes wise of endless Space stretching out beyond the terminus we have fixed. Do even forms begin and end? Or does eternal Form only disappear from one of its canvases?

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The experiment of human life on an earth is not now for the first time enacted. It has been conducted a million times before and the long drama will again a million times be repeated. In all that we do now, our dreams, our discoveries, our swift or difficult attainments we profit subconsciously by the experience of innumerable precursors and our labour will be fecund in planets unknown to us and in worlds yet uncreated. The plan, the peripeties, the denouement differ continually, yet are always governed by the conventions of an eternal Art. God, Man, Nature are the three perpetual symbols.

The idea of eternal recurrence affects with a shudder of alarm the mind entrenched in the minute, the hour, the years, the centuries, all the finite's unreal defences. But the strong soul conscious of its own immortal stuff and the inexhaustible ocean of its ever-flowing energies is seized by it with the thrill of an inconceivable rapture. It hears behind the thought the childlike laughter and ecstasy of the Infinite.

God, Man, Nature, what are these three? Whence flow their divergences? To what ineffable union advances the ever-increasing sum of their contacts? Let us look beyond the hours

and moments; let us tear down the hedge of the years and the concept-wall of centuries and millenniums and break out beyond the limits of our prison-house. For all things seek to concentrate our view on the temporal interests, conceptions and realisations of our humanity. We have to look beyond them to know that which they serve and represent. Nothing in the world can be understood by itself, but only by that which is beyond it. If we would know all, we must turn our gaze to that which is beyond all. That being known all else is comprehended.

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A beginningless and endless eternity and infinity in which divisible Time and Space manage to subsist is the mould of existence. They succeed in subsisting because they are upheld by God's view of Himself in things.

God is all existence. Existence is a representation of ineffable Being. Being is neither eternal nor temporary, neither infinite nor limited, neither one nor many; it is nothing that any word of our speech can describe nor any thought of our mentality can conceive. The word existence unduly limits it; eternity & infinity are too petty conceptions; the term Being is an x representing not an unknown but an unknowable value. All values proceed from the Brahman, but it is itself beyond all values.

This existence is an incalculable Fact in which all possible opposites meet; its opposites are in truth identities.

It is neither one nor many and yet both one and many. Numberlessness increases in it and extends till it reaches unity; unity broken cannot stop short of numberlessness.

It is neither personal nor impersonal and yet at once personal and impersonal. Personality is a fiction of the impersonal; impersonality the mask of a Person. That impersonal Brahman was all the time a world-transcendent Personality and universal Person, is the truth of things as it is represented by life and consciousness. "I am" is the eternal assertion. Analytic thought

gets rid of the I, but the Am remains and brings it back. Materialism changes “I am” into “It is”, and when it has done so, has changed nothing. The Nihilist gets rid of both Am and Is only to find them waiting for him beyond on either side of his negation.

When we examine the Infinite and the Finite, Form and the Formless, the Silence and the Activity, our oppositions are equally baffled. Try however hard we will, God will not allow us to exclude any of them from His fathomless universality. He carries all Himself with Him into every transcendence.

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All this is Infinity grasped by the Finite and the Finite lived by the Infinite.

The finite is a transience or a recurrence in the infinite, therefore Infinity alone is utterly real. But since that Real casts always this shadow of itself and since it is by the finite that its reality becomes conceivable, we must suppose that the phenomenon also is not a fiction.

The Infinite defines itself in the finite, the finite conceives itself in the Infinite. Each is necessary to the other's complete joy of being.

The Infinite pauses always in the finite; the finite arrives always in the Infinite. This is the wheel that circles forever through Time and Eternity.

If there were nothing to be transcended, the Transcendent would be incomplete in its own conception.

What is the value of the Formless unless it has stooped to Form? And on the other hand what truth or value has any form except to represent as in a mask the Indefinable and Invisible?

From what background have all these numberless forms started out, if not from the termless profundities of the Incommensurable? He who has not lost his knowledge in the Unknowable, knows nothing. Even the world he studies so sapiently, cheats and laughs at him.

When we have entered into the Unknowable, then all this other knowledge becomes valid. When we have sacrificed all forms into the Formless, then all forms become at once negligible and infinitely precious.

For the rest, that is true of all things. What we have not renounced, has no worth. Sacrifice is the great revealer of values.

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As all words come out of the Silence, so all forms come out of the Infinite.

When the word goes back into the silence is it extinct for ever or does it dwell in the eternal harmony? When a soul goes back to God is it blotted out from existence or does it know and enjoy that into which it enters?

Does universe ever end? Does it not exist eternally in God's total idea of His own being?

Unless the Eternal is tired out by Time as by a load, unless God suffers loss of memory, how can universe cease from being?

Neither for soul nor universe is extinction the goal, but for one it is infinite self-possessing and for the other the endless pursuit of its own immutably mutable rhythms.

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Existence, not annihilation is the whole aim and pursuit of existence.

If Nothing were the beginning Nothing also would be the end; but in that case Nothing also would be the middle.

If indiscriminable unity were the beginning it would also be the end. But then what middle term could there be except indiscriminable unity?

There is a logic in existence from which our Thought tries to escape by twisting and turning against its own ultimate necessity, as if a snake were to try to get away from itself by coiling round its own body. Let it cease coiling and go straight

to the root of the whole matter, that there is no first nor last, no beginning nor ending, but only a representation of successions and dependences.

Succession and dependence are laws of perspective; they cannot be made a true measure of that which they represent.

Precisely because God is one, indefinable and beyond form, therefore He is capable of infinite definition and quality, realisation in numberless forms and the joy of endless self-multiplication. These two things go together and they cannot really be divided.

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