

PREFACE

I am starting to write this to give me some clarity in my mind. Whether I am able to complete it, whether anyone will ever read it, or whether I am able to elucidate my understanding of life intelligibly enough for readers to follow me, I do not know. What follows has plagued me for over thirty-five years – at least half of my life – and as my time is getting in shorter supply, I know that it will be therapeutic for me to get this down on paper. I realise that most people will dismiss what I have to say because, in a way, it denies everything they accept as being a member of the human race. Yet, somewhere, there must be others who have reached the same conclusions as myself. I would love to meet them.

I should explain here, that I am as normal as most people who have been lucky enough to have been born and live in the comparatively civilised society that Britain has been during my lifespan. My life has therefore been easy and comfortable. My everyday existence must also mirror tens of thousands of others. I get out of bed in the morning, put on a dressing gown and slippers and make a cup of tea. Then I decide, or think I do, what I should do next. However that is my life on its normal or lower, day-to-day, plane. There is a higher plane that I enter the moment I reflect on what is really happening to me.

I have been continually surprised, since my mid-thirties, that I have never heard about or come across

anyone else who appears to have reached the same simple - and to me blindingly obvious – conclusion. Yet that is so. I am conscious that some philosophers must have arrived at the same conviction as myself or, at least, considered it but - to date - I have not come across their writings. None of the science books I have perused or any general factual literature, that has come my way, appears to broach this subject. Perhaps this is a matter many intelligent people understand but dare not write about, because it would seem to trivialise all knowledge – and by that their own *raison d'être*.

When I was a boy and later as a young man I often questioned what I had been taught, but these were usually peripheral matters. In the main I accepted the evolved wisdom of my elders and betters. We each have a completely individual set of circumstances that govern the way we reason. As I got older my way of thinking, by chance, gave me my own realisation that everything I had been taught and almost everything I had ever read or heard was – in essence – incorrect. Reality, for me, became completely different to the way in which everyone I knew accepted it. Most things were the complete opposite of whatever I had been taught. Cause and effect had been reversed.

Let me give some examples. I realised that politicians did not change society, I saw that they were merely reflections of that society. I understood that a supreme being had not created man, monotheists had created God in man's image. I accepted that many scientists had interesting things to say – but, so far, they invariably appeared to have missed the ultimate truth. I agreed that good and evil could be adjectives used to describe events – but knew that there was no such thing as a good or evil

individual person. I had also become aware that relationships, supposedly between two people, were – in reality – only one-way situations.

These statements are rather sweeping and, if true, appear extremely bleak as they would seem to rubbish all human endeavour. For myself, I do not feel this is so. Humanity's continual striving for fulfilment and happiness are all part and parcel of our normal plane of existence. I'm sure I enjoy living as much as any man. However I cannot escape from that higher plane of actuality. If I rationalise 'down' - from the perspective of my own individual evolvement, or reason 'up' - from the present scientific explanation for the evolution of all self-replicating life, including that of humans, I only arrive at the same - to me - rational conclusion.

However hard I wrestle with this enigma the same answer has always been given and my conviction has also been reinforced, without exception, with every single experience of my life since I first arrived at it. Briefly, this is simply that free will is a myth. Human self-determination cannot be logically possible.

I do not know if I will succeed but I will try to explain, as briefly as possible, how my thought processes arrived at this conclusion and I trust this may ring bells for some of you. Others may see flaws in my contentions and I would love to hear these.

To give a simple illustration of what I am suggesting, let us suppose that I am going by myself on a country walk - in an area that is new and unfamiliar to me. As I have no map, it seems unlikely that I will find a circular route. I expect I will proceed so far and then walk back again. It is a beautiful early summer day and I am strolling along a leafy lane between a wood and a field.

Coming round a bend, I find that the lane divides into two - a Y-junction at which there is no signpost. One of the paths is slightly uphill, leaving the wood behind, the other a little downhill keeping to the trees. Although very slightly different both routes look equally attractive.

I am usually impulsive so proceed in one direction without thinking of my options, alternatively I stop and eat the apple I have brought with me, while I 'consider' which route to take. You may perceive that I have a simple choice which, in any event, is of little importance. This is not so. I am only able to go to the left (or right) because of all the events in my life up to that moment in time - and my situation at that moment. Perhaps one route looks easier and I am feeling lazy - or I may prefer the challenge of the harder route. Perhaps I prefer to go uphill now as it will be downhill when I return. Perhaps I usually prefer woodland to open country, as it may give me the opportunity to see more bird-life. Perhaps, that day, I am in the mood for looking at views. Perhaps I usually instinctively turn left but, on this day, feel I should turn right to break that pattern. What I am attempting to explain is that, in reality, I have no option. Everything that has happened in my life before that moment will dictate what I do. If I stop to eat my apple - I may (or may not) go the other way as new factors are added to the dilemma. Of course it will probably not matter which way I go - either route could provide me with an enjoyable country walk. However there is a chance that the choice of one junction in the lane over another might alter my future entirely. If I go left I could meet a companion for life. If I go right I might be heading for an accidental death. Stopping to eat my apple may (or may not) have transformed or saved my life.

I am not a scientist, but my line of reasoning is based on pure logic not on science. However I will use some contemporary scientific knowledge, both mainstream and speculative, to help explain some of the observations I make. I am not a theologian, but I was brought up in a religious atmosphere and know that one great Hebrew philosopher came to a partly similar conclusion between twenty-two and twenty-three hundred years ago (orthodox Jewish scholars, who believe the wise man to have been King Solomon, place the text over 500 years earlier). Although often quoted by both Christians and Jews, they usually qualify his three words of wisdom in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes. "All is Vanity" is not a comfortable thought to carry around in your head.

You may question, that if there is no such thing as self-determination, how can I have 'decided' to sit down and write this. The answer is in this short book and you will either accept it or dismiss it. As I write in my first paragraph, I have no idea if I will finish this. If I have done so it must be in print in front of you because that is – *AS IT IS*.