

PB MENTALISM: From The Notebooks of Paul Brunton:

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B. How do you know?

Tree and Known Tree

This tree right here is a known tree, meaning an experience of a tree. What we experience all the time is our state of conscious experience of tree, not an independently existing tree. And when we experience the tree, for us it is a thing, which definite space-time location and properties. We cannot say for certain what it is before we experience it. And we cannot claim to know it as it is even when we do experience it.

Planck: roweik and knowing of world.

All human experience is *known* experience. The world which comes to my attention *through* the five senses is known to me by the mind. Whatever the shifts of scientific knowledge may be at any time, this will remain as the central fact. 21.1.27

What you know depends on how you come to know it... TWOTO

Is there some precise universal criterion of truth which will be applicable at all times and under all circumstances, in short, something unchanging and therefore supreme? For scientists know that the great principles which formed landmarks in the history of science were really successive stages on the route towards the precise truth. Science changes, its doctrines change, and its earlier approximations are replaced from time to time by more accurate points. We cannot hope to find an ultimate truth nowadays, when science itself is so rapidly on the march. There remains, however, one unfailing all-embracing fact which will forever remain true and which cannot possibly change. Indeed, every advance in experiment and theory made by enterprising scientists will only help to verify this grand discovery. What is it? It is that the whole world which every department of science is busily engaged in examining is nothing but an idea in the human mind. Physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, biology, and all the other sciences without a single exception are concerned solely with what is ultimately a thought or series of thoughts passing through human consciousness. Here, therefore, we possess a universal law which embraces the entire field in which science is operating. This is an ultimate truth which will stand immortal, when every other hypothesis formulated by science has perished through advancing knowledge. 21.4.170

We must firmly grasp this principle, that the only objects we know, the only world of our experience, have no existence apart from the mind. They do not and cannot subsist externally by themselves. That which projects them into space is mind, and as space itself is within the mind, their independent existence is sheer illusion, or *Maya* as Indians call it. We must look behind their illusory independence into the mind from which they spring. 21.2.81

Mind actually creates what it experiences and actually experiences what it creates."

Mind is its own seer and seen, self and not-self, experiencer and the thing experienced. This is insight, that there is nothing in the world but Mind. This is the meaning of mentalism. Ch3

Outside world is Inside mind

The world seems outside, but all our experience of it is in experience. Our thoughts and feelings and images and memories seem intimate and inside, but they are all fleeting contents parading across the screen or light of consciousness. So the distinction that is essential is not between outside things and inside thoughts, but between contents of all sorts—sensory, thought, feeling, volition, image—and conscious awareness. At its heart, this conscious awareness is contentless, timeless, spaceless and self-existent and self-aware. And it is you and me in the deepest sense.

AD: everyone has this illusion...

We know only our mental states, although some of them appear as things.

We see only our mental images, although some of them appear to be outside. [WOTO Ch2 para 31]

“Everyone you speak to has this illusion: That the world is out there, my mind is inside, and the world is mirrored in my mind... this is the view even of most of your 20th century scientists.” AD LIM

It is absurd even to suggest that there is an external world wholly outside of one's consciousness and wholly independent of it. One knows only certain changes of mental awareness, never of externals. The mind can only know its changes of individual consciousness. All its observations, each of its inferences, everything it knows--these lie enclosed within that consciousness and are never beyond it. One's knowledge of anything whatsoever is simply one's *thought* of it. This is not to be confused with one's *right* thought of it. It is a conscious mental state, and even other persons are but appearances within this state, creatures in the cosmic dream...To follow this line of reflection to its inevitable end demands courage and candour of the highest kind, for it demands as ultimate conclusion the principle that knowledge being but ideas in the mind, the whole universe is nothing but an immense idea within one's own mind. For the very nature of knowledge is thus internal, and hence the individual mind cannot know any reality external to itself. It believes that it observes a world without when it only observes its own mental pictures of that world. 21.2.108

Mind must be distinguished from the states of mind, as the object must be separated from knowing it, the act of knowledge. Spinoza opposed the phenomenal world to the substantial, phenomena to substance; what others call relative to absolute; what the Hindus call illusion to reality; and what the religionists call matter to spirit. But all these statements can only be made because the mind originally makes them, for the mind is the witness of both. We must give the primacy to mind, for it is. Whether illusion exists or not, whether the absolute exists or not, Mind IS. If the world is constantly present to me, it is a mind which is making it present, for awareness is a power of mind. It is mind which makes the thought of material objects possible for us; and to make mind a by-product of an alleged matter is a contradiction in itself. 21.5.169

There is only one mistake you are making: you take the inner for the outer and the outer for the inner. What is in you, you take to be outside you and what is outside, you take to be in you. The mind and feelings are external, but you take them to be intimate. You believe the world to be objective, while it is entirely a projection of your psyche. That is the basic confusion and no new explosion will set it right. You have to think yourself out of it. There is no other way. Nisargadatta Maharaj: I Am That Ch. 51

MORE: *Outside world is Inside mind*

All experience is thought-experience. What we know as the world is a series of thoughts, not a number of material things plus a number of mental thoughts. Consciousness runs through all of them as their common element: they originate from it, exist in it, leave it behind when they vanish. 21.2.15

There is no difference whatever between the things of his experience and the thoughts whereby these things are known to him. In fact the things are the thoughts and vice versa. 21.2.35

The doctrine of mentalism begins and ends with the bold pronouncement that all experience and even all being is in the mind. 21.2.120

No idea is ever really outside another, nor is any idea ever outside the mind, and all ideas, all that which is seen, can only *theoretically* be separated from the thinking seeing mind. As psychologists we have had in thought to separate seer from seen, so that we might learn at length what the nature of pure mind really is; but as philosophers we must now merge them together. It is because thinking must always have an object with which to occupy itself that it can never penetrate the Overself, for here there is only the One. We must renounce thoughts and things if we would enter into the Absolute. Because in this ultimate state there is no more awareness of an individual observer and an observed world, the distinction between individual mind and individual body also ceases. Everything, including our *separate* selfhood, is voided out, as it were. The resultant nothingness however is really the essence of everything. It is not the nothingness of death but of latent life. Human thought can proceed no farther. For when "not-two-ness" is established as the Real, the logical movement from one thought to a second can only prolong the sway of "two-ness" over the mind. In this pure being there can be no "other," no two, hence it is called non-dual. The integrity of its being cannot really be split. If the Overself is to be actually experienced, then it must be as a realization of the Infinite One. To divide itself into knower and known is to dwell in duality. The antithesis of known and knower cannot enter into it just as the opposition of reality and illusion is meaningless for it. The oneness of its being is absolute. The return to this awareness, which regards the world only under its monistic aspect, is the realization of truth possessed by a sage. When rational thinking can perceive that it cannot transcend itself, cannot yield more than another thought, it has travelled as far as it can go and performed its proper function. Metaphysical truth is the intellectual *appearance* of reality, the rational knowledge of it; but it is not reality itself, not realization. For knowing needs a second thing to be known; hence metaphysical knowledge, being dual, can never yield realization which is non-dual.

Reality must stand grandly alone, without dependence on anything and without relation to anyone; it ever was, is, and ever will be. It is this inability of human reason to grasp the super-rational, the divine ineffable, that Omar Khayyam tried to express in his beautiful quatrains which have been so widely misunderstood by Western readers. If the *Rubaiyat* of Omar is only a drunken refrain from a wine-shop, then the New Testament is a mere scribble from an out-of-the-way corner of the Roman Empire. The cup of language is too small to hold the wine of the Absolute. A thought of Mind as the Void is still a "something" no less than a thought of great mountains and therefore prevents us from realizing the Void.

Now when we grasp the basic nature of human thinking, that it is possible only by forming two opposing ideas at the same time as the concept of black is formed by the contrast against white, we can then grasp the fundamental reason why such thinking can never rise to awareness of the

Absolute unity. We cannot think of eternity without thinking of time too. For our conception of it either prolongs time until imagination falters and ceases or negates time altogether into timelessness. In neither case do we really comprehend eternity. Why? Because intellect cannot lay hold of what lies beyond itself. We humans know a thing by distinguishing it from other things, by limiting its nature and by relating it to its opposite. But the infinite has nothing else from which it can be distinguished or to which it can be related, whilst it certainly cannot be limited in any way.

Our earlier division into a dualism of observer and observed must now come to an end. But let us not make the error of mistaking it for the final stage. There still lies a path beyond, a path which leads to the ultimate where both observer and the observed become one.

The Real can never be stated because it can never be thought. Therefore it is quite clear that ordinary means of knowledge are unable to grasp it. But such knowledge is not useless. For if religion can give us a symbolic idea and mysticism an intuitive idea of the Infinite, metaphysical knowledge can give us a rational idea of it. And to possess such an idea keeps us at least from falling into errors about the reality behind it. If metaphysics can never perform the task it sets itself--to know reality--it can perform the task of knowing what is *not* reality. And such a service is inestimable. The function of reason is ultimately a negative one; it cannot provide a positive apprehension of the Overself, but it can provide a clear declaration of what It is not. Reason can demonstrate that the Overself can possess no shape and can in no way be imagined.

Nevertheless we may have both the assurance and the satisfaction that our thinking is correct but we have neither the assurance nor the satisfaction of consciously embracing that with which this thinking deals. We may have formed a right mental image of God but we are still not in God's sacred presence. We must not mistake the image for the reality which it represents.

Whatever discoveries we have hitherto made have been made only within the limited frontiers of reasoned thinking. Exalted and expanded though our outlook may now be, we can still do no more than think the existence of this reality without actually experiencing it. The mere intellectual recognition of this Oneness of Mind is no more sufficient to make it real to us than the mere intellectual recognition of Australia's existence will suffice to make Australia real to us. In the end all our words about the Overself remain but words. For just as no amount of telling a man who has never touched or drunk any liquid will ever make properly clear to him what wetness is unless and until he puts his finger in a liquid or drinks some of it, so every verbal explanation really fails to explain the Overself unless and until we know it for ourself within ourself and as ourself. 7.8.2

Gap in the cognitive science process

It is necessary to keep reminding ourselves that all knowledge of our environment from which the world of physics is constructed, has entered in the form of messages transmitted along the nerves to the seat of consciousness. --Sir Arthur Eddington [*The Nature of the Physical World*, 276-81]

how it is that any thing so remarkable as a state of consciousness comes about as the result of irritating nervous tissue, is just as unaccountable as the appearance of the Djinn when Aladdin rubbed his lamp. --[T.H. Huxley](#)

"Pixie dust in the synapses is about as explanatorily powerful as [quantum coherence](#) in the [microtubules](#)." --[Patricia Smith Churchland](#) on Penrose's theories:

AD: they won't figure it out that way.

By starting with the consideration of matter as something already existent, and mind as something which has yet to come into existence, nineteenth-century science arrived at this impassable gap in its explanation of human world-experience. It is still impassable and will remain so forever because the premise with which science started is wholly wrong. If a human being takes a wrong road and cannot arrive at his destination, the sensible course is for him to retrace his steps and take the right road. There is no other course open to science if it wants to arrive at a satisfactory explanation. It must go back from the materialistic line of thought and start with the mentalistic one, that is, with mind *first*. The essential point which must not be missed is that unless consciousness existed previously, the sense stimuli might strike on the brain forever but they would never get any response. There is no hope for success in solving this problem along the materialistically scientific road of explanation so long as it pursues a rigidly non-metaphysical course, no hope that the secret of consciousness dwells in a stimulated nerve or that the medium of interaction between thought and flesh is in colloidal structure. That secret dwells where it always has dwelt--in the mind alone--and both nerve and colloidal structure dwell there too. Once he grasps this fact, that the whole of his life-experience is only a play of attention, he will have grasped the essence of mentalism. This will liberate him intellectually from materialism. 21.1.137

the observer is part of the observation

Science cannot solve the ultimate [mystery of nature](#). And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are part of nature and therefore part of the mystery that we are trying to solve.

Max Planck *Where is Science Going?* (1932)

We should not only think of an observer: but a participator. We are no longer the observers of the event, as in relativity, but we are participating in the event. There is no event without a participator. --John Wheeler

Explicit and Implicit:

We should not think of the sub atomic particles and us and so on as making connections. We should think there is a wholeness, a field, a connectedness already present: we and the world arise together out of this unified original. We can call the state prior to measurement an "implicate" (implied) order, and after measurement "explicit" (definite) order.

"The new form of insight can perhaps best be called Undivided Wholeness in Flowing Movement. This view implies that flow is, in some sense, prior to that of the 'things' that can be seen to form and dissolve in this flow." David Bohm [Wholeness and the Implicate Order](#) 1981

Implications of dream analogy

AD: dream. world becomes like a dream.

The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself—
Yea, all which it inherit—shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. **We are such stuff
As dreams are made on**, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. SHAKESPEARE *Tempest*

"All that we see and seem is but a dream within a dream." EA Poe

The common objections to mentalism may be summarized in three forms: (1) A thing does not cease to exist when we cease to think about it; thus, Australia is still to be found on the map even when we are not thinking about Australia. (2) The fact that we do not think of a thing does not prevent such a thing coming into existence. (3) Our awareness of things is largely quite involuntary; we do not choose to think them into existence--they just are there. The answer which mentalism makes to these objections, and to all others which may arise, is a simple one. It is this: consider your life as a dream! All possible objections will then have no ground on which to stand. They appear true while we are under the illusion of dreaming, but they are seen to be false as soon as we awake from the dream itself. 21.3.25

There is only one mind and all such names as cosmic mind, over-mind, and so forth are merely imperfect and partial concepts of that ultimate single mind which philosophy puts forth in order to help students advance to a higher stage. These concepts are not false, however. They represent aspects of the same ultimate mind as seen from different standpoints. As these standpoints are not the highest they do not yield the final truth. It will be well therefore for him to accustom himself to the highest standpoint and to remember always that there is but one mind, one reality, one principle, one substance, one being only. All things are forms or shapes which it appears to take temporarily. The key to the understanding of these admittedly difficult points is to think of the universe seen during dream and then to remember that that universe itself, its seas and continents, its peoples and animals, its happenings in time, its distances in space, do not exist apart from the mind of the dreaming person; that even if millions of people exist within that universe they are nothing else than ideas passing through the mind of the dreamer; and that their ultimate stuff or reality is mind although to the dreamer they appear real, as do also water, fire, gas, and even the ninety-odd chemical elements. Now he must try to regard the waking universe in the same way, with this difference: that because the ego is one of the dreamed-of figures in the waking dreams it must be eliminated if one is to break through the dream and ascertain that it is a dream in the universal mind. 21.3.44

Whatever the universe be in human experience, it is, in important ways, like a dream. That is, we must grant existence to a dream world as an indubitable fact because it is a perceived and experienced world; but at the same time we must refuse its form ultimate existence, and hence enduring reality, because it is neither perceived nor experienced after we awake from sleep. This twofold character of the dream world

also belongs to the familiar and so-called real universe. It is plain, yet paradoxical at the same time. For this reason, ancient Tibetan philosophers declared the world to be both existent and non-existent. To the unenquiring mind it vividly is what it seems to be, but to the awakened insight of the sage its form presents itself like a more enduring version of the transient form of a dream world. Both forms are thought-constructions. Both have Mind as their underlying "substance." Therefore Mind is their reality. Apart from Mind the world could not even exist just as apart from the dreamer his dream could not exist. 19.1.34

All the states

This comparison of the three states offers a clue to the real nature of first, the self; second, the world; third, consciousness; and lastly, Mind--the deepest mystery of all. 19.3.20

If anyone could fully perceive the astounding implications of the dream and sleep states, he could not become or remain a materialist. For he would perceive that there is something within him which is able to announce a fact of his experience but which is nevertheless outside his conscious experience. That fact is deep sleep; that "something" is the witnessing element, the soul. 19.3.16

That mental images and mental facts, emotional trends, and intellectual tendencies still exist in a deeper level of mind when they are absent from our consciousness; that the very ego itself still exists therein even when our conscious existence has become utterly blank in deep sleep--these facts indicate how wonderful a thing the mind is. 19.3.28

Consider the fact that our individual lives are totally suspended during sleep, that the waves of personal consciousness then merge utterly in the ocean. How clearly this shows the Divine to be also the Infinite and Universal, our lack of true spirituality, and our possession at best of its pale reflection! For where else could we go to sleep except in this Infinite and Universal Mind? Yet we know it not! To get rid of such ignorance, to attain transcendental insight into the fourth state of being, is the most wonderful of all the tasks which this philosophy sets before us. 19.3.179

The dream state is the key to the mystery of *who* he is, while the more advanced deep sleep state indicates *what* he is; but it only indicates, points, and does not reveal. However, the problem of sleep is humanity's great study because it solves many others. 19.3.34