

an extract from: THE POWER TO CHOOSE by godfridev

DETERMINISM

“They say in some religions that our life is already planned out for us. What do you think?”

If you say that life is already planned, or that it's already written, this contains an unrecognised anthropomorphism: that there is some entity somewhere that's planning or writing the future. This is hard for many of us to accept these days, so we easily reject the whole concept. Nevertheless, if you see really, really clearly the totally conditioned nature of all things, the arrow of time flips and you realise that the relationship between the past, the present and the future that you're so used to is an expression and function of your perceptual mechanism and nothing else. To assume that how your perceptual mechanism constructs its simulations is to define reality is foolish. Einstein once said "time and space are not conditions under which we live, but modes by which we think." Now there's a guy that knew a thing or two, someone who was given the gift of clear seeing to a very high and detailed degree. What he realised was that the relativity of time and space mean that time is an illusion. It has no implicit existence. Its just how we experience what we experience. This is hard to get your head round. It was even hard for Einstein to get his head round. But by the end of his life he had accepted unreservedly that the past, present and future simultaneously exist. In other words, the future is already written, we just haven't read it yet: luckily. When we talk about the three

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phases of time, we talk in the language and assumptions of time itself: which is illusory. The deeper truth, which is not one we can live by but one that we can nevertheless live from, is that the future does not exist, the past does not exist, the present does not exist, causation does not exist, actions do not exist, objects do not exist: except as functions of the perceptual and cognitive apparatus that govern our experience.

“Then what does exist?”

Nothing exists. That’s what the Buddha said: shunyata. Citisakti (consciousnessenergy) exists: that’s what the yogasutras says. Consciousness is all there is is what advaita vedantists say. As far as we are concerned however, time does exist, objects do experience action according to the dynamic of cause and effect. What matters is not what actually exists, but what we actually experience. Yet everything we experience is conditioned by our understanding and can be subtly but radically transformed when we understand cause, effect and conditioning fully.

So if ‘it’s already written’ disturbs you, forget it. If ‘it’s already written’ comforts you, wrap it round your shoulders. Maybe one day you will see clearly that there’s no-one who needs comforting and there’s no-one that needs to be concerned about whether or not it’s already written. Then just come back

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to the party, the linear experience of the apparent unfolding of time. This is built into the human design but not to the fabric of reality. Something is actually happening and it's really not very hard to uncover the sweet implications of that. Existence is and you are a part of it.

'If you embrace this fully would you ever pass judgement on another person?'

Well, you might do, but you wouldn't take that judgement seriously, you would see it as a conditioned habit that reflects the nature of your past more than it does what is actually happening. If you get taken by this perspective more fully such a question will become meaningless and the concern behind the question will dissolve. You will not be concerned whatsoever if you are for good or evil in anybody's mind, whether in anybody's mind you choose wisely or foolishly, because you will feel the hand of God in the small of your back and the other one on your head turning you in this direction and then that as her servant. So you can relax. You're not going to be a bad boy anymore.

"I have a philosophical question , I guess the answer doesn't really matter. The matrix you are talking about, how does it start and how will it end?"

I would know right!

“I mean, just hypothetical.”

I'm not really interested in hypothesising about such things. All we really know is that it's now happening and we're slap bang in the middle of it.

Godfrey, are you not simply restating the philosophical case for determinism. I mean that's an old argument amongst philosophers isnt it, whether human beings can have free will in a mechanistic universe governed by cause and effect, and if we dont then isnt it all meaningless ?

Yes, it is an old argument, and no i am not a determinist. I recognise that a libertarian, or anyone who is disturbed by their superficial grasp of the conditioned nature of all phenomena and their lack of intimacy with what they most deeply are, are pretty likley to dismiss what i am saying as simple determinism. However, not only does it go much deeper than that, but what i am saying is not being said as an explanation or definition of the nature of reality. It's simply a persentation of a perspective. A perspective that is very potent in allowing human beings to be radically happy, which is usually difficult because of the inescapable biological conditions that determine the nature of their experience. By which i mean we cant help experiencing self and other, inside

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and outside, and the difficulties of the decision making process that we need to navigate the dualities of life. Yet if we are unable to recognise why it is that we experience it like that, and that there are other perspectives we are bound to suffer from the burden of autonomy and independence expressing itself as guilt, shame, blame and all the rest of the resistance it generates to the flow of life in its indivisible wholeness.

Yet if we can access this quantum perspective a great deal of our suffering becomes impossible. Being deprived of autonomy doesn't mean that we end up feeling helpless, no matter how much anyone may construe that to be the necessary logical outcome. Maybe it is the necessary outcome of a certain application of logic, but logic is not the power that drives the universe, it simply one means to partially access that power, and a human one at that. Moreover feeling helpless is what sometimes temporarily happens when the whole thing hasn't been fully thought through, and allowed to fully percolate into the unconscious. I am not trying to present you with a philosophy of life, but a perspective that in tandem with other perspectives may allow you to let go of all philosophies, all concepts whatsoever into the inescapable flow of life itself.

What were you referring to when you said it goes much deeper than that?

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Well the determinist/free will controversy is actually based on a very limited framework, and is usually misunderstood because they are not actually a binary alternative. Free will is given as much a hard time by indeterminism as it is by determinism, but coming to see that can be very, very boring. We can leave that to the professional philosophers who can afford to spend that much time up each others' arses. I am not capable of giving you even a potted history of either science or philosophy, but I am saying that if we only use the rational powers of cerebral intelligence in combination with limited sensory data, as scientists and philosophers do, then we are arbitrarily and suffocatingly narrowing our field of enquiry into only what can be easily verified without any serious perceptual transformation.

Yet this is not only ignorant, it's naive. Its ignorance rests on the fact that western civilisation, its philosophy and its science, is based on using the rational mind to explore the nature and possibilities of matter. Consciousness is either dismissed as an epiphenomenon having no significance, or reduced to a remarkable but accidental product of evolution. Yet this perspective, the classical, conventional, institutionalised perspective of scientific materialism which dismisses any other perspective as infantile or deluded is based only on the powers of the mind. It takes no account whatsoever of the intelligence of the body, nor the

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intelligence of consciousness. When we encounter the light and power of these overlooked expressions of intelligence, which in yoga posture practice we are bound to do if we undertake it as intimate enquiry, then we begin to realise that cerebral intelligence is inadequate to explain whats really going on here without their help.

Its naivete rests on not fully recognising the role the nature of our instruments plays in our enquiry. There is no way we could know about quarks and the strong and weak nuclear force, or even about electrons and protons without the electron microscope. It is only because of the amazing power of scientific instruments that the eneregetic nature of matter has become apparent and verifiable. Our perceptual abilities have been deeply transformed by our technology. It may be true that our conceptual abilities rest on our perceptual data, and that as we gather more varied and detailed perceptual data we are forced to expand our conceptual framework to meet and accomodate that data. Neverethless the intelligence of the body and the intelligence of consciousness are neither taken into account, used or similarly enhanced.

We can see yoga practices as means whereby this actually becomes possible, and the scope, though not the nature, of our somatic and spiritual intelligence is enhanced giving us a broader, deeper, more accurate view of life when combined with those offered by common sense, science and philosophy.

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In yoga posture practice we are not only recalibrating our body, we are also sensitising our mind to and on the subtle dimensions of our body. In doing so we begin to access and become comfortable with its energetic dimensions and nature, while simulatenously broadening our conceptual field. In meditation this can be taken much further and we can access, enjoy and come to a rationalised understanding of the power and intelligence of consciousness itself.

Through yoga we are not only polishing our instruments of perception and cognition, but enhancing them. Eventually this allows us to acesss dimensions of human experience and nature that are inaccessible to all but the most elevated cerebral intelligences, such as that of Einstein. So it is that even those of us who wouldnt' be admitted to Mensa can enhance our perception to the point that we can expereince what Einstein meant when he said: "Time and space are not conditions under which we live, but modes by which we think". If we want to make sense of those inner spaces we slip into during practice, we are going to have to use our minds, our cerebral intelligence, and in doing so recalibrate our cognitive pathways and conceptual field.

What do you mean by spiritual intelligence?

Actually first i'd like to clarify what i mean by somatic intelligence. I dont mean to suggest that the body has an

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intelligence that we can use in the way the we use the mind. The mind is of course a refined expression of the intelligence of the body, but it is more usable, for better or worse, than what i mean by somatic intelligence. By somatic intelligence i mean that ability of the body to respond, unconsciously, to stimuli and to organise, unconsciously, its responses so as to flourish as much as it possibly can. This intelligence is an older legacy of the evolutionary process than the cerebral intelligence that i mean by mind. However, if we try to draw a fine line between somatic and cerebral intelligence we will fail. Words are only fingers pointing at the moon. Nevertheless if we are able to get in touch with the intelligence of the body so that we can begin to feel, and recognise the power of that intelligence that has brought life from single cells to human beings, we can know beyond any doubt that intelligence is not an accident or an afterthought but the very essence of life, without which it could not even exist, let alone slither its way out of the ocean five hundred million years ago.

By spiritual intelligence i mean the power of consciousness itself, which is actually the source of both somatic and cerebral intelligence which are simply extrapolations of it. This is the power by which individual cells, whether in the primeaval swamp or in the tissues of your body, distinguish between stimuli, between safe and dangerous mechanical and chemical events. To say that we use this intelligence, or even could use this intelligence, in the way we use our

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cerebral intelligence to work out what is really happening would be misleading. Nevertheless this primal intelligence is functioning within us all the time, just as our somatic intelligence is. Of course cerebral intelligence is also functioning all the time, albeit mostly unconsciously. While cerebral intelligence evaluates, classifies, organises, distinguishes and recognises, spiritual intelligence provides the possibility of this by noticing. This is the fundamental, functional power of consciousness, upon which both cerebral and somatic intelligence depend for their discriminations. Every thing that we experience, and even are, depends on this power, this intelligence. While the intelligence of the body responds to stimuli, the intelligence of the mind recognises and analyses them, the intelligence of consciousness notices them first. Without that noticing there would be, could be neither somatic nor cerebral intelligence as fruits of evolution. Of course any one with an eye for the subtle will be able to see that you can't really draw a line between them, that they are in fact all phases of a single spectrum of intelligence: the spectrum of consciousness.

Recognising and assimilating this takes us way beyond the narrow determinism of a mechanistic world view. This is not a mechanistic universe as far as i am concerned. It is a fluctuating emanation in and of consciousness that in itself is not only timeless but intrinsically without dimension of any kind. Time and space, matter and energy, cause and effect are

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all modes by which we think. They are all projections. They are always going to be inadequate to explain reality definitively. I recognise that contemporary scientific technology, which has had as much impact on contemporary philosophy as it has on science itself, is not in a position to substantiate this according to the limited, though potent, criteria of scientific verification. However things don't only come into being once their existence can be verified by scientific or rational criteria. Be that as it may i am neither a scenitist nor a philosopher and i am grateful for that. Trying to define or explain the nature of reality is a thankless and impossible task. I believe it is naive to think we can do so. However, we can explain our perspectives, and by allowing different perspectives to fertilise each other we can become very comfortable with what is actually happening even if we can never satisfactorily define or explain it.

“You were saying about not making plans. There is no point really because when things come to happen according to what the circumstances are then you will react or do whatever you do. But not making plans I was just thinking about that and that doesn't necessarily mean not preparing?”

No, I don't mean don't make plans at all, we sometimes do need to plan things. What I mean is you don't need to get your knickers in a twist in that process: in trying to definitely get it

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right, right now. Trying to get the right decision before all the forces and factors have manifested can only lead to failure and disappointment, or self-deception. You are bound to plan and anticipate. Planning and thinking ahead is bound to happen. You know you make decisions all the time and often you don't even act on the decisions. Then other times you make a decision and you act but the result doesn't come out as you expected. So to all these things I say, just hold it all very lightly. Just do it all very lightly. More like as if you are playing an interesting game. Rather than needing a particular outcome, just let it be an enquiry into possibilities. An enquiry into the mysterious and inexplicable movie of this life you take so seriously and personally.

“So when you’ve made a decision it’s done. You don’t have to think about it afterwards?”

Well, you do think about it afterwards or you don't. When you do make a decision you don't have to worry if it does or doesn't come to be. You don't have to worry if its coming to be doesn't bring the desired result. It's all coming as an expression of perfect or cosmic necessity, and of course if you are worrying about it, then that's inevitable. If you are planning and getting your knickers in a twist, that's inevitable. If you remember the origins of all actions in cosmic necessity however, you will probably stop worrying. So the deep point is there is no absolute need for you to judge

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anything, nor is there any need for you to be concerned about anything that hasn't yet happened.

So it's not a question of making distinctions between personalising things and not personalising things in an evaluative kind of way to find out how well you are doing. Though it's difficult not to. Wheter you're getting your knickers in a twist or not is a necessary outcome of the indivisible wholeness of totality expressing itself in and as that. Taking one to be better or more important than another is to ignore the implications of the indivisible wholness of totality, though one is almost certainly going to be more comfortable, more enjoyable than the other. The only distinction that has deep significance is whether or not something is actually happening: whether or not something actually happened. That's all you need to get clear about to be able to be radically happy. Knicker twisting isn't bad. Staying cool is not good. Their happening is equally relevant, necessary, important, unimportant, and impersonal. Yet not necessarily equally enjoyable or welcome.

“You talked about not replacing one concept, free will, with another, the illusory nature of volition. I can't, that's just impossible.”

The concept of free will has tendrils going out to other concepts, and they're all fixed together with powerful nuts

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and bolts. Concepts such as autonomy, independence, responsibility, dignity, achievement, failure. The concept of impersonal action has its equivalents. You can get stuck in either. Use the one you're not used to to displace the authority of the one you are used to and then put them both aside before the new one locks you down into its own forms of resistance. Play with them both. Let them both express themselves freely, when they do. If you feel like you are the doer in a given moment, that's fine, that has to be happening. If you haven't had that sense of being the thinker, chooser, decider for a long time, there's no need to think you're something special. Though if you haven't seen the conditioned nature of all phenomena very clearly you're quite likely to do so if you have any insecurity at all. Any concept can make you suffer if you cling to it so it starts to function as a barrier between your sense of self and life as it appears to be unfolding. What is apparently happening is just as important to being human as what is actually happening. We have to see the difference between truth and concepts, though the line between them is hard to demark.

What is the difference?

Truth just is: and that is a concept. I can't do much better than that really.

It's not very helpful though, is it?

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A concept is something that we can disagree and argue about, whereas the truth is something that just is no matter how much we might argue about it. The argument is never the truth. Our arguments are always a conceptual conflict between one point of view or another. The truth is that i am the one speaking right now, and in response to your question. Who's gonna argue about that. There's no point. It's also true that there are 28 people in this room, no more and no less. Free will, on the other hand, is just a concept we use to compartmentalise and simplify our assessment of our experience. It is not true that we have free will. It is not true that we have no free will. It seems like we have free will if we take things just as they are given. It seems like we don't when we look a little deeper. When we are equally comfortable with both we realise that neither are true, but that each has its use, and that its value lies in the effects of its use. If we never see deeply enough for free will to reveal its illusory nature we will be stuck in anxiety, hostility, resentment and blame. If we never see deeply enough for actions and objects to reveal their illusory nature we will be stuck in a mechanistic reality of helpless determinism.

When you say there are 28 people in this room, i dont think that that is necessarily true. I can't be sure that you lot actually exist as people or human beings. You might be hallucinations.

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Yes, you're absolutely right. The simulative power of the cortex is so awesome that it can conjure up projections that are so real they might as well actually exist. In fact that's what it's doing all the time. When looked at from that point of view there isn't a lot that you can actually be sure of is there?

No there isn't. Don't you find that a bit worrying?

Not at all, though i can see how if that's just a rational thought it could be. If the projected nature of all our perceptions is not just an ideological concept, but the fruit of deep enquiry it's not a problem at all. To have seen that you have to have seen beyond that. If you have seen beyond that you will have become comfortable with the "awesome lucid uncertainty" of which Rumi spoke so eloquently. To become comfortable with fundamental and inescapable conceptual uncertainty we need to encounter something deeper, something that supports that uncertainty.

What's that?

Well, when you get down there words are not that helpful. They are a little too dualistic, and that's why poetry is much better at speaking of and from it than philosophy or rational discourse. However it is really not so hard to get to absolute certainty. You just have to feel your way in between all your

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thoughts and concepts, even your feelings and sensations to that which is always there within them.

What's that?

Impersonal awareness of being. That's the only thing you can know for certain. That something exists and is conscious. You know that beyond any doubt. I could persuade you that you are too thin, too fat, too smart, too stupid, too late or too early, but no-one could dissuade you of the fact of your existence. Someone could maybe persuade you that you are an alien, or even a hologram, but not that you do not exist, nor that you are not conscious.

What is it that you are, that exists, that is conscious is however a matter for doubt and argument. By becoming intimate with what is apparently happening, the interaction of individual objects according to the dynamic of causality, we eventually become intimate with what is actually happening, the projection of simulations on and in the movement of consciousness. When we become intimate with what is actually happening we encounter what actually is: impersonal awareness of being. When we become familiar with our own presence as impersonal awareness of being life becomes very light, very spacious, very forgiving.