

The Garden of the Mind

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Extract:

The individual is a miniature representation of the living whole. According to the well known Law - 'As above so below' - the same laws, principles and powers which maintain the whole also maintain the individual, but on a different scale. Since the whole is perpetually engaged in self-enrichment and the generation of new activities and functions, so should each individual engage in self enrichment and the cultivation of new skills. Emmanuel Swedenborg is a fine example of a person who constantly enriched himself through his relentless passion to know, to understand and to do. He studied and mastered a very broad range of subjects, acquired nine languages, wrote prolifically, and developed practical efficiency in a number of trades.

Swedenborg was interested in everything and usually made a detailed study of the ideas and things which captured his attention. Gurdjieff, too, was an unrelenting seeker of truth. He travelled far and wide throughout Egypt and Asia in search of ancient wisdom, acquired several Asiatic languages, mastered the principles of about thirty trades and constantly sought the aim and meaning of life. Albert Schweitzer became an authority on organ building, an expert on the music of Bach, a stimulating theologian, a profound philosopher and finally a devoted self-sacrificing physician and surgeon. He attained doctorates in music, divinity, philosophy and medicine. There are many more people like these who can be found recorded in history. They are shining examples of individuals who experienced a more abundant life by living, thinking and acting as fully as possible.

When the world is seen to be filled with wonders and delights, and when the collective learning of the human race is seen to be overflowing with exciting ideas, it does not become a burden to study them. The discovery of new truths, which illuminate the mind and the practical interaction with plants, animals, rocks and all

manner of objects - machines, books and instruments - generate a joy and delight which more than compensates for the effort of study and learning.

We should be familiar with a hundred subjects, ranging from astronomy to botany, mathematics to marine biology and biochemistry to archaeology. The mind has an awesome capacity to learn, and when it is fully awakened it can employ its learning power to grasp universal principles and thereby obtain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of existence. When the mind glows with the enthusiasm to grasp the truth of things, it develops the capacity to transform knowledge into understanding and wisdom. When it understands the truth of things it can affectionately or emotionally *will* that truth into action, deed, service.

Unless we can translate knowledge, understanding and wisdom into beneficial and useful application then those things remain theoretical and useless. We must try to develop a healthy feeling for things and people so that we can relate ourselves to them. Will grows out of feeling or affection and we need this emotional factor in order to live fully and usefully. To use, apply or share with others what we know brings an unmistakable sense of enrichment into our being. This is due to the charitable sharing of ourselves with others, and this is an important feature of the more abundant life. We grow through the human community and the community grows and is enriched by our efforts.

Life is a self-multiplying process. Given the slightest opportunity it will rapidly increase the number of its forms in an exponential manner. If organisms did not die or get eaten the entire earth would soon be clogged with an excessive population of living things. Life as a forward moving spiritual power, endowed with creative initiative achieves a superior kind of expression through the human form. Through the sheer abundance of ideas, inventions, discoveries, artistic achievements, technological advances and engineering constructions we can easily discern the functional excellence of the human form in providing life with innumerable channels through which it can express its opportunistic drives and its novelty-generating conatus.

When we review the history of life on this planet we are astonished by the diversity of forms it has produced. At least a million and a half species of animals and plants have already been scientifically described and classified. This is only a fraction of what exists, and some biologists calculate there may be as many as 30 million species on this planet. Realise now that the life-mind-power which generates such a variety of organic forms is the same life-mind-power which energises your being. Its creative potencies and forward moving urge is in you as a mighty potential to grow, evolve and attain individual perfection. The word 'perfect' means to be thoroughly made. It is not a final end result of a life of effort, but a state of harmonised wholeness and integrity which is but a stepping stone on the endless path which leads towards cosmic completeness. In the spaceless, timeless universe there is no end to the on-going purification, refinement and perfecting which takes place. Individual life enters

into an ever more abundant state as it continues to grow into more comprehensive states of being.

The inexhaustible creative and inventive potencies of life dwell in our being as our potential. That potential is activated and actualised when we invite life to flow in new directions and explore fresh avenues of experience. We give new directions to life by setting up aims and goals, and formulating wishes for the fulfilment of plans and ideas. The mind has infinitely greater flexibility than the body, and the visions of the mind open up new paths for life to follow. We have to exercise our mind by generating images and visions of fresh adventures and experience, new fields of interest to explore, different ways of dealing with our problems and reorganising the nature and dimensions of our goals. Life flows to where our interests are set, and we are well advised to raise our interest to the highest levels we can imagine and spiritualise our goals so that we can enjoy multi-dimensional consciousness and the experience of elevated cosmic states.

We can grow into the abundance which we visualise when we trust that the spiritual powers of life will carry us to our goals. The power and creativity of life itself can be completely trusted. Life is always life, and it can never die - death is only the cessation of activity of the temporary organic vehicle of life, or the cessation of worn out belief systems which have narrowed the scope of life. We begin to get the taste of the more abundant life when we see its unending nature and understand that it is the creative power which generates and sustains all worlds. Above all, that power is in us and is the source of our being, our consciousness and our experience.