

On the perennial philosophy and its immense importance for medicine, culture and human happiness

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Abstract: The perennial philosophy is an overarching principle in art, music, literature, religion and the sciences that can serve to illustrate and even embody some of the most central themes of human existence, that are so simple yet so universal, that they can be hardly expressed in conversational terms. Approach/objective: To give a conceptual outline of what constitutes the perennial philosophy and why we are usually kept away from it by exploring basic notions of ego, consciousness, love and the structure of disease. Material: In-depth exploration of the perennial philosophy as a pattern in Hippocratic medical writings, artistic and rhetorical literature, spiritual and religious texts as well as in philosophy and science; with examples and quotations from leading figures from a variety of political backgrounds, religious traditions and creative culture. Discussion: Evaluation of the perennial philosophy within the specific context of psychology and its relevance for the healing process in medicine in three dimensions: 1) Love for oneself and others as an intimate and immediate way to encounter divinity, reality and (self-) consciousness; 2) the courage to be as the willingness to step forward and claim one's own happiness and joy in life and 3) sexuality as an integral part of human nature and the base to a sustainable and respectful dealing with environmental nature as a whole.

Keywords: Philosophy of life, perennial philosophy, medical practice, medical ethics. depth psychology, Hippocrates, spirituality, religion, divinity, consciousness, love, self-insight, healing, sexuality

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Introduction

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.

—Rumi

Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror. But you are eternity, and you are the mirror.

— Kahlil Gibran

Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.
— Carl Gustav Jung

Fear not. What is not real, never was and never will be. What's true, always was and cannot be destroyed.
— Lord Krishna, 5000 BCE

From time to time, when we meet poetry, art, philosophy, literature or science, there is a feeling of something eternal, true and endlessly beautiful, something that touches our innermost soul, something that reminds us of the most innocent, fresh and wild nature, our mother's love, childhood joy, something eternally human and wonderful beyond description. When something resonates with the deepest core of our existence it is very likely to be what the most brilliant and gifted thinkers through the ages have called the eternal, or perennial philosophy.

The perennial philosophy is an explanation of human reality, our basic conditions for existence, the rules that apply for human life and a description of the understanding and way of living that leads to happiness, physical, mental, sexual and spiritual health, free access to our talents, ability to love and good social relations, a productive and satisfying work life, and all the other valuable and important things in life.

While most people at all times consider a good life and a perfectly healthy state impossible, there have at all times, in all cultures, been wise men and women pointing to the possibility of man living in harmony with each other and the world. As the same philosophy of life reappears again and again in human culture, and can be found in all religious, all spiritual system, all shamanistic and mystical teachings, at all times and on all continents, it has been called "the eternal philosophy" or in the words of Leibniz and Huxley, "the perennial philosophy" (1,2).

The perennial philosophy can be expressed in every imaginable way: in music, in paintings, in dance, in architecture, in garden design, in poetry, in songs, in literature, in philosophy, and even in science, as we know it from the Greek doctor Hippocrates (460-375 BCE) who based his scientific medicine directly on the eternal philosophy (3). The modern science of global quality of life and on holistic medicine and healing builds directly on this (4-11). Even the scientific theories of human existence, i.e. Abraham Maslow's (1908-1970) hierarchy of human needs (12), or Carl Gustav Jung's (1875-1961) depth psychology (13), expresses this eternal philosophy.

The biggest problem of the many verbal expressions of the perennial philosophy is the limitation of language and concepts. The depth of the meaning is always between the lines; and the statements can only be seen as pointing and no sentence can contain the highest universal truth. To understand the perennial philosophy, you need to be in an empty and open state where the phenomena of the outer world are allowed to resonate with the deepest level of your own consciousness – a level known to be non-verbal. Let me give an example so you see the problem. One of the most famous expressions of the eternal philosophy is given by the mystic William Blake (1757-1827) (2):

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.
– William Blake

He who kisses joy as it flies by will live in eternity's sunrise.
– William Blake

Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine.
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.
– William Blake

If you are a sensitive soul, you already get the whole thing from these few lines. Most people can resonate with the beauty of it, but it does not communicate something strong enough to change their life. Realizing this, Blake did not only communicate his understanding of the eternal philosophy in poems, he also explained it in normal words for people who needed this to understand (2):

Enlightenment means taking full responsibility for your life.
– William Blake

To some people a tree is something so incredibly beautiful that it brings tears to the eyes.
To others it is just a green thing that stands in the way.
– William Blake

In the universe, there are things that are known, and things that are unknown, and in between, there are doors.
– William Blake

If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.
– William Blake

The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, and breeds reptiles of the mind.
– William Blake

The person who does not believe in miracles surely makes it certain that he or she will never take part in one.
– William Blake

Make your own rules or be a slave to another man's.
– William Blake

Man's desires are limited by his perceptions; none can desire what he has not perceived.
– William Blake

No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.
– William Blake

What is the core of the perennial philosophy – a scientific explanation

The simplest explanation I can give you of the perennial philosophy is this: Man's consciousness is organized in two layers, the conditioned mind on top, and the original source-consciousness, often just called consciousness, in the bottom (for details, see 14-25).

During our personal history we take learning of everything that happens and this learning takes form as thoughts believe in – beliefs. These beliefs become our identity and defines our interpretation of the world. Now, as normal human beings, we see the world as we think it, and our thinking is bound by our personal history. But this is not our highest possibility. We can “wake up” in the sense that we can re-discover the original source-consciousness, and by this we can come to see things as they truly are, not as we interpret them. Swami Prajnanpad (1891-1974) explains it this way:

You think you see – but you do not see, you think! You rarely see, you think you see.
The first condition for being a real human being is to free oneself from all thoughts and establish oneself on the solid ground of what is seen... As with the exact sciences, spiritual science also requires that one experiments, finds, verifies and realizes the truth...
– The Art of Seeing – Swami Prajnanpad

The possibility of an objective reality that can be found, the existence of a final truth about existence and the world that can be found and conquered, is the core message of the perennial philosophy.

If you want to see how this can look for a normal seeking soul you can read Huxley's discovery of this understanding during his mescaline trip, well described in “the doors of Perception” (26). You can also read the stories of Osho's (1931-1990) or Ramana Maharshi's (1879-1950) enlightenments (27,28), or great stories about Carlos Castaneda's (1925-1998) explorations of this together with the shaman Don Juan (29). You are also welcome to read my own story of exploring the human unconscious helped by a shaman from the Peruvian jungle giving me and my girlfriend Ayahuasca (30). It actually does not matter what you read, because it is always the same story: Suddenly life opens up, and a whole new universe reveals itself, so rich in beauty and details that it feels infinite, so fragrant that you know you have found heaven, so sweet, that you had no idea that life could be wonderful like that. If you want to catch the experience with one word, there is only one word sweet enough to catch its essence: Love. Or if you have religious tendencies: God.

Consciousness manifests all good qualities spontaneously when the limitation of the conditioned mind is not there anymore: Love, presence, wisdom, intelligence, endless knowledge (felt as omniscience), strength, compassion, creativity, goodness, devotion, appropriateness... The human trap is that we come to believe - by injecting the life force, our sexual energy - into our thoughts; this process creates a me-feeling inside the believes that makes all the believes stick together as a lump that we then identify with: the ego.

The false identity, this ego, is the problem of man; this is what gives us all suffering; this is what makes us dull and dumb, what isolates us from reality, so we end up caught in our own lonely bubble-world. But more than that: by binding our life energy (our sexual energy), the conditioned mind makes us low, tired, little energetic, a-sexual, anti-social, neurotic – and even mad. We are all fools for the lord, is an old saying, and that seems to be very true.

But it does not stop here. Our beliefs we accumulate as the conditioned mind are born out of emotional trouble from our childhood, and the primary reason to buy into these thoughts and make them our beliefs is to avoid the emotional trouble. By this process the emotions and the traumatic events are oppressed into the subconscious; and the whole emotional charge bound to the most material structure of our existence: our bodies (31). The emotional charge is bound to the body by the cells holding on to it; this disturbs the cells in their work in the body and gives us all kinds of physical diseases – auto-immune diseases, cancer, heart insufficiency etc. And here is the great interface between the eternal philosophy and medicine: As you come to understand yourself, you free the body from its emotional burden and the sick tissue and organs heal. The enormous effectivity of this has been documented recently by great doctors and researcher like for example Dean Ornish from California (32-35). His studies have shown that 80% or more of patients with coronary heart disease or cancer (he studies prostate cancer but it works on all cancers and tumors just as it can be found in the teachings of Hippocrates (3).

The teaching of Hippocrates on the perennial philosophy and holistic healing

Hippocrates lived about 400 BCE and was the director of a large holistic university hospital on the island of Cos, famous for its high quality and success of treatment (36). Hippocrates and his students wrote about 70 books about the medicine of that time, collected in the Corpus Hippocraticum (3). Hippocrates is very explicit about his philosophy of life allowing us to identify the perennial philosophy as the philosophic basis of his medicine; the source consciousness is the root of his system (3):

The soul is the same in all living creatures, although the body of each is different.
– Hippocrates

Hippocrates sees the conditioned mind and a person's beliefs as the direct cause of all diseases, mental as well as physical:

Before you heal someone, ask him if he's willing to give up the things that make him sick.
– Hippocrates

For Hippocrates the personality is the collection of beliefs he is carrying, so he says:

It is far more important to know what person the disease has than what disease the person has.
– Hippocrates

Hence, healing comes from a person letting go of his untrue beliefs, so the source-consciousness directing the human form can manifest and heal the disease:

Disease [is] not an entity, but a fluctuating condition of the patient's body, a battle between the substance of disease and the natural self-healing tendency of the body.

– Hippocrates

The natural healing force within each of us is the greatest force in getting well.

– Hippocrates

So if you are sick, the best thing you can do is to learn – meaning learn the eternal philosophy – from your disease:

A wise man should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings, and learn how by his own thought to derive benefit [learning & growth] from his illnesses.

– Hippocrates

Hippocrates was a strong believer in reason, coming from seeing from the source consciousness, allowing him to discriminate between truth and beliefs. He stated his position many times in the Corpus, often in a form similar to this:

There are in fact two things, science and opinion; the former begets knowledge, the latter ignorance.

– Hippocrates

In the end Hippocrates concluded, as man is self-healing and the doctors role is very humble just supporting the self-healing powers in man that...

Walking is man's best medicine.

– Hippocrates

It is often better to do nothing when a patient comes to you, says Hippocrates; do as little as possible and before anything else: do no harm! This is known as the famous Hippocratic principle: "Primum non nocere" – First do no harm!

Hippocratic made, in the most remarkable "Hippocratic oath", his students promise never to abuse a patient's body, and never to use drugs (plants and minerals) or surgery in the treatment of a patient as there is no reason for such measures: just remove the cause of the disease and the patient is cured.

The perennial philosophy in literature

We find the perennial philosophy expressed again and again in the artistic, spiritual and rhetorical literature of the world of which I will give just a few examples that show how it comes to expression. A nice starting point is the famous story of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's (1900-1944) "Le petit prince" (37) which demonstrates the spirit you live in, if you come from this philosophy:

And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.

– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The little Prince

“People where you live,” the little prince said, “grow five thousand roses in one garden... yet they don’t find what they’re looking for...”

“They don’t find it,” I answered.

“And yet what they’re looking for could be found in a single rose, or a little water...” “Of course,” I answered.

And the little prince added, “But eyes are blind. You have to look with the heart.”

– Antoine de Saint–Exupéry, *The little Prince*

Love is the eternal theme of the perennial philosophy which is also what transpires from the works of Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931). Quotes from “The prophet” (38) – a text that gave him endless problems and in the end forced him to flee his own country – which I will be giving extensively here, can give you a feel of the perennial philosophy. In my opinion this text alone can offer a comprehensive view of the perennial philosophy and the consequences for a human life that is coming from it:

Then said Almitra, "Speak to us of Love."

And he raised his head and looked upon the people, and there fell a stillness upon them.

And with a great voice he said:

When love beckons to you, follow him, though his ways are hard and steep. And when his wings enfold, you yield to him, Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you. And when he speaks to you believe in him, though his voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind lays waste the garden.

For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning. Even as he ascends to your height and caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun, so shall he descend to your roots and shake them in their clinging to the earth.

Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself. He threshes you to make you naked. He sifts you to free you from your husks. He grinds you to whiteness. He kneads you until you are pliant; And then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast.

All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart, and in that knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart. But if in your fear you would seek only love's peace and love's pleasure, then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness and pass out of love's threshing-floor, into the seasonless world where you shall laugh, but not all of your laughter, and weep, but not all of your tears.

Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; For love is sufficient unto love. When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart," but rather, "I am in the heart of God."

And think not, you can direct the course of love, for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.

Love has no other desire but to fulfil itself. But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires: To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.

To know the pain of too much tenderness. To be wounded by your own understanding of love;

And to bleed willingly and joyfully. To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving; to rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy; to return home at eventide with gratitude; and then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.

Again and again we also see people of the greater public catch the central ideas of the perennial philosophy and intuit their bigger meaning - making them great leaders, important political figures or the center of cultural debate:

Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.

— Martin Luther King Jr.

Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you.

— Princess Diana

To have been loved so deeply, even if the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever.

—JK Rowling, Harry Potter

The entirety of life is one big risk. To live without taking risks is not to live right. It is to be half alive, under spiritual anesthesia. The modern security society sees risk as the declared enemy, but in doing so, a cold fire spreads. The idea that we could achieve zero risk is not only harmful collectively, but toxic to individuals.

Interview 2016 with M, le magazine du Monde

– Anne Dufourmantelle

Human morality did not evolve as fast as its science. Mankind is not spiritually developed enough to take responsibility for the power it has given itself.

– Dan Brown in Angels & Demons

For the first time in world history, the spiritual powers have all been oppressed

– not by the material powers, but by a single material power: the power of money.

– Joint note on M. Descartes, Charles Péguy

Above all, art affects the soul and gives shape to the spiritual structure of man. The poet is a man with a child's psyche and imagination. His perception of the world is immediate, no matter what ideas he may have about it. In other words, he does not describe the world, he discovers it.

– Andreï Tarkovski, Sealed time: from Ivan's childhood to the victim

Yes, you must live life beautifully and not allow the spirit of the world, that makes gods out of power, riches, and pleasure, make you forget that you have been created for greater things: to love and to be loved.

—Mother Teresa

The perennial philosophy in religion

Of course the strongest and most direct expression we have of the perennial philosophy is found in the world's religions; the enlightens masters, avatars, prophets and saints that gave us the religions of the world came directly from a direct personal understanding of the perennial philosophy. Let me just give a few quotes; if you have a longing for more I recommend the splendid collection of quotes in Huxley's book on the perennial philosophy (1).

Everybody familiar with the Bible will know that Jesus spoke directly from consciousness, the "I am", as he also himself declares when his authority is questioned. I will not, as I assume the bible is well-known to all western readers go in detail with Jesus teaching, but just quote this, showing my point (39):

So I say to you: "Ask and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you."

– Jesus Christ

I give you a new command: love each other.

– Jesus Christ

Everyone familiar with the great mystics will immediately recognize the source - and maybe think of Rumi when he says: "I have lived on the lip of insanity, wanting to know reasons, knocking on a door. It opens. I've been knocking from the inside."

If we turn the light towards Asia, we find countless expressions of the perennial philosophy, many going back 7000 years:

– Lord Krishna, 5000 BCE

A human being is made by his or her beliefs.

– Lord Krishna, 5000 BCE

Happiness is a state of mind that has nothing to do with the external world.

– Lord Krishna, 5000BCE

Calmness, gentleness, silence, self-restraint and purity: these are the disciplines of the cultivated mind.

– Lord Krishna, 5000BCE

They alone see truly who see that the lord is the exact same in every living creature.

The later follower of Krishna, Gautama Siddhartha, the enlightened one, said around 500 BCE exactly the same, just with other words (40):

[Choices]

We are what we think.

All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world.

Speak or act with an impure mind and trouble will follow you. As the wheel follows the ox that draws the cart.

We are what we think.

All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world. Speak or act with a pure mind

And happiness will follow you as your shadow, unshakable.

– DHAMMAPADA, The sayings of the Buddha

“So I say to you –

This is how to contemplate our conditioned existence in this fleeting world: Like a tiny drop of dew, or a bubble floating in a stream;

Like a flash of lightning in a summer cloud,

Or a flickering lamp, an illusion, a phantom, or a dream. So is all conditioned existence to be seen.”

Thus spoke Gautama, the Buddha.

– The Diamond Sutra, chapter 32

More recently other enlightens souls have enriched us with their words:

“Listen Sariputra,

this Body itself is Emptiness and Emptiness itself is this Body.

This Body is not other than Emptiness and Emptiness is not other than this Body.

The same is true of Feelings, Perceptions, Mental Formations, and Consciousness.”

– Said by Avalokiteshvara in

The Heart Sutra

The last centuries great avatar, Sri Satya Sai Baba of India said again the same, obviously coming from the same source:

What you sow, you reap. What you give, you get.

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Other people’s acts will affect just them. It is only your own deeds that will affect you.

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

You must be a lotus, unfolding its petals when the sun rises in the sky, unaffected by the slush where it was born or even the water which sustains it.

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

This joy and this sorrow is due to opinion which is mere illusion and is ruinous.

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray.
– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Even a well-read person who is not free from the desire of the fruit of his actions, is useless and cannot get self-realization.
– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The secret of perfect health lies in keeping the mind always cheerful – never worried, never hurried, never borne down by any fear, thought or anxiety.
– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Other enlightened masters from the same century said again the same, but in surprising new ways:

Don't seek, don't search, don't ask, don't knock, don't demand — relax! If you relax, it comes. If you relax, it is there. If you relax, you start vibrating with it.
–Osho

If you want to understand the perennial philosophy and its consequences for human life, existence and daily thinking and living, I can recommend the Buddha's words in the Dhammapada, and also the Avadhut Gita, a more recent holy book with a lucky, simple approach.

Allow me to finish with a number of quotes which might help elucidate some of the still dark sides of your understanding if you are new with the subject.

The mind is formless like the sky, Yet it wears a million faces.
It appears as images from the past, or as worldly forms; But it is not the supreme Self.
Song of the AVADHUT

I'm desireless, with desire; how shall I speak of that?
I'm unattached, with attachment; how shall I speak of that? I have no substance, and yet I have; what shall I say of that?
I'm nectarean knowledge, unchanging bliss; I'm everywhere, like space.
– Song of the AVADHUT

I'm neither gross nor subtle; I neither come nor go.
I have no beginning, end, or middle; I'm neither great nor small. I'm telling all the secrets of the supreme Reality:
I'm nectarean knowledge, unchanging bliss; I'm everywhere, like space.
– Song of the AVADHUT

I have no karma (inborn tendencies to believe in negative thoughts); I'm the sacrificial fire in which all karma's consumed. I have no sorrow; I'm the sacrificial fire in which all sorrow's consumed.
I have no craving; I'm the sacrificial fire in which all craving's consumed. I'm nectarean knowledge, unchanging bliss; I'm everywhere, like space.
– Song of the AVADHUT

Sinless, I consume all sins; I'm the sacrificial fire. Dutiless, I consume all duties; I'm the sacrificial fire. Boundless, I consume all bondage; I'm the sacrificial fire. I'm nectarean knowledge, unchanging bliss; I'm everywhere, like space.
– Song of the AVADHUT

I'm beyond non-existence and beyond existence; these don't pertain to me.
I'm beyond both union and separation; these don't pertain to me.
I'm beyond both unconsciousness and consciousness; these don't pertain to me.
I'm nectarean knowledge, unchanging bliss; I'm everywhere, like space.
– Song of the AVADHUT

I have no father or mother; I have no family or caste; I've never known birth, and I've never known death. How, then, can I speak of affection or attachment?
My nature is Freedom; there's no maya (illusion) to me.
– Song of the AVADHUT

My awareness of the Self is constant; I never abandon it; So I'm never affected by darkness or light.
How, then, can I speak of my morning or evening prayers? My nature is Freedom; there's no maya (illusion) to me.
– Song of the AVADHUT

Know, without any doubt, that I'm limitless. Know, without any doubt, that I'm changeless.
Know, without any doubt, that no stains can touch me. My nature is Freedom; there's no Maya (illusion) to me.
– Song of the AVADHUT

The perennial philosophy in science of healing

This could be a very large discussion, but I do not intent to give a full account of this here. I just want to point to the fact that many scientists have been working from inspiration and intuition more than from simple rational thought and empery. A thing all the sciences that embrace the eternal philosophy or an aspect of it, has in common is that everything starts with self-knowledge. "Know Thyself "

This stood over the door of the Temples in Delphi 750 BCE where travelers from all over the ancient world visited the oracle of Apollo, known as the "Oracle of Delphi". The oracle's task was to help people find their way back to the Self and thus find answers to all of life's big questions. In ancient Greece, self-knowledge was the only viable path to happiness, loving, health, talent, confidence, strength – and all other important things in life. We know this from Hippocratic medicine, which heals through the development of self-insight that engages the self-healing forces of man.

In depth psychology, in holistic medicine, in existential philosophy, we always find scheme like the following, if the inspiration comes from the eternal philosophy:

1. First comes self-love, love for the small self (the Ego) and then for the true Self – consciousness, the “I Am”.
2. From self-love comes self-acceptance, an embracement of all aspects of existence, including physicality, sexuality and spirituality.
3. From self-acceptance comes self-reflection: a fundamental curiosity that makes the human being explore the self and the universe it lives in, with great enthusiasm and joy.
4. From self-reflection comes understanding – a deep understanding of the Self and the universe, the reality, which is not different from it (also called the supreme reality, or God).
5. From understanding comes finally healing and growth and self-realization, also called “enlightenment”.

In depth-psychology we see the following scheme:

1. Your attitudes towards life determine your happiness
2. Your happiness determines your health
3. Your health determines your ability
4. Your ability determines your value to yourself and the world

In existential therapy the recipe followed is something like this:

1. Go conscious
2. Grow conscious
3. Know your Self
4. Be free, healthy and happy

In holistic medicine we see this formula for healing:

1. Feel
2. Understand
3. Let go of your beliefs

All these schemes – universal as they are, as they continue to reappear in all cultures at all times – are born out of the eternal philosophy.

Significance of the perennial philosophy for ethics and medical ethics

All religious texts give us strong and explicit ethical advice on how to think and live. Again, I have no intention to list all the ethical rules and moral laws here. I just want to point at the fact that consciousness dictates certain rules we need to follow to be appropriate and responsible.

Western culture is partly built on ancient Greek culture, partly on Christianity - the latter being more influential – and partly on technology and modern industrialism – which have by now become its most prominent streak.

The most important concept in Christianity is faith: a person's direct relation to Self, Truth, Reality, or God. According to the teachings of Jesus faith is what heals your body, mind and spirit; all healing comes through your faith. A person's faith is thus his or her most precious and important attribute. The most fundamental and inviolable human right is a person's right to keep and live by his or her faith.

The Bible tells us, that...

- 1) The body is holy and God-given; we therefore have the full responsibility for our body; as happiness keep us healthy we also need to stay happy.
- 2) Healing of body, mind and spirit comes from one's faith.
- 3) From this we learn, that a doctor who takes responsibility away from the patient, hinders healing and thus harms the patient.

These rules are the foundation of Christian Medical Ethics (41), but all the other religions have similar concepts of ethics regarding the body.

Discussion

In his book *The Perennial Philosophy* from 1947, the great British intellectual Aldous Huxley shows the whole world that there is only one philosophy about life and existence.

There is only one basic philosophy of life that repeats itself in all times, in all cultures and in all religions, all mystical, shamanistic, spiritual, cultural etc. systems.

This discovery is shocking in its way, because if there is only one basic philosophy of life and existence regardless of continent, people and historical time, this philosophy must come from something other than the inventive brain of man. It must come from life itself; it must be a necessity for man, and all who search deep into existence must find it as the ultimate truth of life. Aldous Huxley's assertion of the existence of a Perennial Philosophy shook intellectual England in the middle of the last century; and it became a debate that continues to this day, and which spread across Europe and then to the rest of the intellectual world.

The Perennial Philosophy has numerous expressions. It is expressed differently in all the world's religions. Great mystics like Rumi, Meister Echerhardt and William Blake have spoken about it in paradoxical terms and phrases of which some have been given as illustrations and further in-depth explorations in the material chapter of this paper.

The Perennial Philosophy is primarily about love. Love for life and reality - with a capital R which many mystics equals God - and perhaps most of all about love for oneself and other people. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" thus says Jesus to us, and with this he gives us the core of the Perennial Philosophy, thrown right in our faces as a demand we can all strive for, but which very few pure souls can live up to.

But the Perennial Philosophy is not flat and one-dimensional, as the simple commandment from Jesus may seem to be; the Perennial Philosophy reveals a deep well of wisdom, a sea of life, an ocean of existence into which we can all plunge, if we have the courage to do so.

Because it takes courage to live, and “thymos”, aka “the courage to be” or rather the courage to take part in life is a second theme that repeats itself over and over again in the Perennial Philosophy. It takes courage to acknowledge the joy of life, to take life's table for ourselves, while all the people around us hold back shyly. We all know the envy of another's happiness, and there is no revenge for the deeds of your enemies greater than your own success.

Sexuality is a third theme that comes up again and again. Sexuality, the life force, is the driving energy in everything human – all human striving, interest, curiosity and joy comes from sexuality. This is of course extremely controversial, because we want to rise above the low and animal, and therefore find it difficult to acknowledge our nature, and to admit that we are still, as humans, a complete and totally integrated part of nature. The aspiration to be more than nature is becoming the downfall of all humanity and only the realization of our complete unity with nature – of a collective form of life that expresses this – can save the planet by now. Sustainability and respect for life also on a global level comes naturally as a consequence of the Perennial Philosophy.

The spiritual is a fourth inherent theme, which for many seekers becomes what awakens them to an understanding of the crucial importance of the Perennial Philosophy in our time. The mind and consciousness are deep mysteries to all of us, but if we seek the truth about ourselves and existence, we open Pandora's box and look into our own darkness. Our inner shadow world, the subconscious with all the repressed, traumatic, emotional things we have fled from in our personal history, is what stands between us and the direct experience of the truth of the Perennial Philosophy in our own life world.

The person who opens himself up to the possibility of a Perennial Philosophy, a final philosophical truth about life, cannot help but become interested in personal development. Often you start by reflecting deeply on life; read wise books, or you start going into the kind of therapy that supports self-knowledge, like the classical holistic medicine that in Europe dates back to Hippocrates' time 400 BC, where body, mind and spirit are healed through loving support from the holistic doctor.

Conclusion

To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.

– Oscar Wilde

The Perennial Philosophy shows us the way to happiness, to a long good life, and to our physical and mental health. I have never found a subject more important or more needed in our world and in our time than the Perennial Philosophy.

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