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INTELLECTUAL BRILLIANCE AND SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

There are those who believe the universe to be nothing more than a random occurrence, the result of blind evolutionary forces, devoid of purpose and meaning. Some of the advocates for the materialistic doctrine are quite brilliant—Stephen Hawking, for example. But intellectual brilliance is sometimes accompanied by spiritual blindness. A worldview that depicts the universe as a mindless dance of atoms, molecules, and subatomic particles is not one that inspires or uplifts the human spirit. Its message is cold, sterile, nihilistic. For those who respect science, but recoil at the idea that the universe is nothing more than the result of a big cosmic sneeze, Theosophy has something to offer.

Theosophical teachings point to a divine plan in which every sentient being plays its part. No form of life is without significance, however lowly it may appear to be. Animating the vast expanse of our universe is the One Life, expressing itself through countless forms, all of which are evolving along their particular evolutionary path. Moreover, the universe is governed by law, not incoherent and random probabilities. On this point, *The Secret Doctrine* is quite clear: “There is a purpose in every important act of Nature.” Moreover, the scope of the divine plan is not limited to our Earth: “There are millions and millions of worlds and firmaments visible to us; there are still greater numbers beyond those visible to the telescopes, and many of the latter kind do not belong to our *objective* sphere of existence.” What is presented in modern theosophical literature is only a small portion of the divine plan; undoubtedly there is much that remains a mystery.

The materialist will reply that life has no inherent purpose, that any attempt to discover meaning is driven by our psychological needs or insecurities. But the thirst for meaning is too deeply rooted in human nature for that cynical explanation to hold true. The fact that many great minds continue to reflect upon the purpose of life suggests that at some level there exists an awareness that life *does* have a purpose.

Great minds are so-called because of their capacity to see *beyond* surface appearances and intuit sublime truths, a process that eludes the grasp of the literal minded. I think the poet Tennyson had a great mind. In these lines from “Locksley Hall,” Tennyson clearly sensed a divine purpose, both in man and in the universe:

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.”

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