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Intelligence or Mind and Minds

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Intelligence or Mind and Minds

The nature of intelligence. This chapter has especially to do with the mind element of the universe; for we shall hold here that there is a distinction between mind and matter, as there is a difference between that which acts and that which is acted upon; as there is a difference between the thinking essence or substance and that which has or manifests mechanical force merely, and which for the manifestation of that force is dependent upon its mass and its relative distance from other masses—gravitation: ~~or upon combination or separation of substances.~~ as also there is a difference between intelligence viewed as “the light of truth”—the power by which truth is discerned—and substances capable merely of manifesting chemical force dependent upon union in certain combinations and proportions with other substances. Moreover we shall hold that there is a difference in mind stuff as there are differences in matter; distinction between the intelligence of man and the instinct of brutes. As this work is concerned chiefly with man, it is of man’s mind, or man *as* an intelligence, that we shall here speak of him, and of his relationships to other intelligences of this and of other worlds.

The sense in which the term “intelligence” is to be used in this discussion is that of a mind, or an intelligent entity. Milton makes such use of the term as the latter when he represents Adam as saying to the angel Raphael, who has given him a lesson on human limitations:

How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure
Intelligence of Heav’n, angel serene(!)¹

And so Tennyson:

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state.²

¹Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 8.626–27.

²Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, section 85, 95.

Also the being whom men call God is referred to as the “supreme intelligence.” It is in this sense, then, that I use the term “intelligence”; a being that is intelligent, capable of apprehending facts or ideas; possessed also of power to think, to will, and to act. In other words, the term “intelligence” is descriptive of the thing to which it is applied. Intelligence (mind), or intelligences (minds), thus conceived, are conscious beings. Conscious of self and of the notself; of the “me” and the “not me.” “Intelligence is that which sees itself (as), or is, at once, both subject and object.” It knows itself as thinking, that is, as a subject; thinking of its self, it knows itself as an object of thought—of its own thought. And it knows itself as distinct from a vast universe of things which are not itself; itself the while remaining constant as a distinct individuality amid the great universe of things not self. Fiske calls consciousness “the soul’s fundamental fact,” and “the most fundamental of facts.”³ It may be defined as the power by which intelligence knows its own acts and states. It is an awareness of mind—it is mind in awareness. By reason of awareness—consciousness—an intelligence when dwelling in a body—as we best know it, as man—knows itself as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching; also as searching, and finding; as inquiring, and answering; as active or at rest; as loving or hating; as contented or restless; as advancing or receding; as gaining or losing; and so following, in all the activities in which intelligences, as men, engage.

Mind powers: (a) Power of generalization. By another power or faculty, intelligence (mind) “can perceive, as connected with the things that sense perceives, something that cannot be taken in by sense perception.” That is to say, intelligence can generalize. “Sense can get at the individual, concrete thing only: this triangle, this orange, that triangle, those oranges,” etc. By the consideration of the individual, concrete object, however, the mind can form an idea, a concept, a general notion—“triangle,” “orange”—which does not specify this or that individual object, but “fits to any individual triangle or orange . . . past, present and future, and even the possible oranges that never shall be grown.”⁴ In other words intelligence can rise from consideration of the particular to the general.

Again there are *a priori* principles, which the mind can perceive to be incontrovertible and of universal application, by mere reflection upon the signification of the principles and without going into the

³Fiske, *Studies in Religion*, 244.

⁴Poland, *Truth of Thought*, 41.

applications.⁵ Such for example as that one and one make two, that two and one make three. To continue the illustration above, borrowed from the late Professor William James, for some time professor of psychology in Harvard University:

It is either a principle or a definition that 1 and 1 make 2, that 2 and 1 make 3, . . . that white differs less from gray than it does from black; that when the cause begins to act the effect also commences. Such propositions hold of all possible “ones,” of all conceivable “whites” and “grays” and “causes.” The objects here are mental objects. Their relations are ⟨perceptually⟩ [perpetually] obvious at a glance, and no sense-verification is necessary. Moreover, once true, always true, of those same mental objects. Truth here has an “eternal” character. If you can find a concrete thing anywhere that is “one” or “white” or “gray” or an “effect,” then your principles will everlastingly apply to it. It is but a case of ascertaining the kind, and then applying the law of its kind to the particular object. You are sure to get truth if you can but name the kind rightly, for your mental relations hold good of everything of that kind without exception.⁶

(*b*) *Imagination*. By a mind-power known as imagination, or imaginative memory, intelligences, as known to us through men, can hold before consciousness, in picture, what has been perceived by an outward sense, and this even when the outward sense has been shut off from the outward world of matter. I once saw an orange tree with a number of ripe oranges scattered through its branches, but on other branches of the same tree, and at the same time, were orange blossoms. What the outward senses then perceived, when I was standing before the tree, has been shut off; but at will I can call before the vision of my mind and hold in consciousness the picture of that tree with its mixture of ripe fruit and fruit blossoms. This power of imagination is also constructive. Intelligences (men) can put before themselves in mental picture, combinations which are fashioned from the varied stores of memory.

Sensations, once experienced, modify the nervous organism, so that copies of them arise again in the mind after the original outward stimulus is gone. No mental copy, however, can arise in the mind, of any kind of sensation which has never been directly excited from without. The blind may dream of sights, the deaf of sounds, for years after they have lost their vision or hearing; but the man *born* deaf can never be made to imagine what sound is like, nor can the man *born* blind ever have a mental vision. In Locke’s words, . . . “The mind can frame unto itself no one new simple idea.” The originals of them all

⁵Poland, *Truth of Thought*, 41.

⁶James, *Pragmatism*, 209-10.

must have been given from without. Fantasy, or Imagination, are the names given to the faculty of reproducing copies of originals once ~~left~~ **felt**. The imagination is called “reproductive” when the copies are literal; “productive” when elements from different originals are recombined so as to make new wholes.⁷

Example: Flight of imagination. As I have elsewhere said: I am this moment sitting at my desk, and am enclosed by the four walls of my room, limited as to my personal presence to this spot. But by the mere act of my will, I find I have the power to project myself in thought to any part of the world. Instantly I can be in the crowded streets of the world’s metropolis—London. I walk through its well remembered thoroughfares, I hear the rush and roar of its busy multitudes, the rumble of vehicles, the huckster’s cries, the cabmen’s calls, sharp exclamations and quick retorts in the jostling throngs, the beggar’s piping cry, the sailor’s song, fragments of conversation, broken strains of music, the blare of trumpets, the neighing of horses, ear-piercing whistles, ringing of bells, shouts, responses, rushing trains and all that mingled din and soul-stirring roar that rises in clamor above the great town’s traffic.

At will, I leave all this and stand alone on mountain tops in Syria, India, or overlooking old Nile’s valley, wrapped in the awful grandeur of solemn silence. Here I may bid fallen empires rise and pass in grand procession before my mental vision and ⟨make them⟩ live again in ⟨my thought⟩ their little lives; fight once more their battles; begin again each petty struggle for place, for power, for control of the world’s affairs; revive their customs: live again their loves and hates, and preach once more their religions and their philosophies—all this the mind may do, and that as easily and as quickly as in thought it may leave this room, cross the street to a neighbor’s home, and there take note of the familiar objects within his habitation.⁸

(c) *Power of forming new mental combinations.* “The mind ⟨intelligence⟩ can combine various general principles, or individual facts and principles; and, in the combination and comparison of them, it can perceive other facts and principles.”⁹ In other words, intelligence is capable of reasons; of building up conclusions from the data of its knowledge. It has the power of deliberation and of judgment by which it may determine that this state or condition is better than another state or condition. That this, tending to good, should be encouraged; and that, tending to evil, should be discouraged; or if possible, destroyed; and at least controlled.

⁷James, *Psychology*, 302; italics in original.

⁸Roberts, *Mormon Doctrine of Deity*, 132.

⁹Poland, *Truth of Thought*, 40.

(d) Power of deliberation: The will. Intelligence, as embodied in man, is also conscious of the power, within certain limitations, to will, and to perform what is willed: to rise up, to sit down; to raise an arm, to let it fall; to walk, to run, to stand; to go to Paris, to Berlin, or to Egypt; to write a book, to build a house, to found a hospital; to control largely his actions, physical and moral; he can be sober or drunken; chaste, or a libertine; benevolent or selfish; honest or a rogue. Having deliberated upon this and that and having formed a judgment that one thing is better than another, or that one condition is better than another, he has power to choose between them and can determine to give his aid to this and withhold it from that. So that volition, within certain limitations, at least, seems also to be quality of intelligence. It is, of course, possible to conceive of intelligence and its necessarily attendant, consciousness, existing without volition; but intelligence so conceived is shorn of its glory, since under such conditions it can make no certain use of its powers. Its very thinking, since it must end in thinking, in the case here supposed—would be valueless; its consciousness would be distressing. If active at all, its actions would be without purpose, and as chaotic as its thinking would be; unless it could be thought of as both thinking and acting as directed by an intelligent, purposeful will external to itself; which would still leave the intelligence a mere automaton, without dignity or moral quality, or even intellectual value.

I therefore conclude that while it is possible to conceive of intelligence, with its necessarily attendant consciousness, as without volition, still, so far as we are acquainted with intelligence, as manifested through men, volition—sometimes named soul-freedom, the spirit's freedom, or free agency—is a quality that within certain limitations, attends upon intelligences, and may be an inherent quality of intelligence, a necessary attribute of its essence, as much so as is consciousness itself.

Eternity of intelligences. At this point the question arises as to the nature of intelligence (mind element in the universe) with reference to its *origin or its* eternity. Is it eternal, or had it a beginning; is it a product, or an eternal thing? Already in discussing matter and force it has been shown that these are eternal, capable of infinite changes; in form as to the first, and capable of infinite transitions and transmutations as to the second. If we may say this of force in the realm of mechanical and chemical energy, which seems to be the holding together, the balancing force in the universe, what shall be said when we come to the more wonderful force of mind, which may originate

action and make it purposeful and guide it to the attainment of worthwhile ends? What shall we say of it—this mind force—this force of forces, this intelligence? May we trace its lightening to an origin, or must we assign it a place in the category of eternal things, as in the case of space, time, matter, and mechanical and chemical energy, as a *necessary* concomitant of them in the workings of an eternal universe and as part of it? Shall we not say, are we not compelled to say, by the very nature of the thing itself that mind—intelligence—never was “created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29) it is eternal? John Fiske says of force, in an ultimate analysis of it, that

it is the belief that force, as manifested to our consciousness, can neither arise out of nothing nor lapse into nothing—can neither be created nor annihilated. And the negation of this belief is unthinkable; since to think it would be to perform the impossible task of establishing in thought an equation between something and nothing.¹⁰

If this may be said of mechanical and chemical force, can it not with equal truth be said of the more wonderful force which we call mind, and which in the argument for the eternity of mind force would be as strong as for the eternity of other kinds of force?

Mr. Herbert Spencer says of causation:

We are no more able to form a circumscribed idea of Cause, than of Space or Time; and we are consequently obliged to think of the Cause which transcends the limits of our thought as positive though indefinite. Just in the same manner that on conceiving any bounded space, there arises a nascent consciousness of space outside the bounds.¹¹

That is to say, the idea of cause being eternal is forced upon our consciousness in the same manner that the eternity of space and matter is. If this can be said for the eternity of cause, must not as much be said of the eternity of mind so inescapably associated with purposeful causation—the causation that has produced the cosmos at least?

The mysterious vital something. Sir Oliver Lodge when arguing for the reality and eternity of that “mysterious, vital something” which builds up from earth elements an oak, an eagle, or a man, closes his argument with the question: “Is it something which is really nothing, and soon shall it be manifestly nothing?” “Not so,” he answers;

nor is it so with intellect and consciousness and will, nor with memory and love and adoration, nor of the manifold activities which

¹⁰Fiske, *Cosmic Philosophy* 1:218.

¹¹Spencer, *First Principles*, 95.

at present strangely interact with matter and appeal to our bodily senses and terrestrial knowledge; they (meaning human minds) are not nothing, nor shall they ever vanish into nothingness or cease to be. They did not arise with us: they never did spring into being; they are as eternal as the Godhead itself, and in the eternal Being they shall endure for ever.¹²

Summary. We have found, then, in this review of intelligence, or the mind element of the universe:

1. That intelligences are so-called because intelligence is their chief characteristic;
2. That consciousness is a necessary quality of intelligence;
3. That intelligences are both self-conscious and conscious of an external universe not self;
4. That intelligences have the power to generalize—to rise from the contemplation of the particular to the general; from the individual to the universal;
5. That intelligences can perceive the existence of certain *a priori* principles that are incontrovertible—necessary truths, which form a basis of knowledge and of ratiocination—deducing conclusions from premises;
6. That intelligences, as known through men, possess a power of imagination or imaginative memory, by which they hold pictures of sense perceptions before the mind, and may form from them new combinations of thought and consciousness;
7. That intelligences have power to deliberate, to form judgments, and to will;
8. That intelligences have volition, *that have relation with* physical, mental, and moral *conditions*—within certain limitation—a power both to will and to do; in other words they are free, moral agents;
9. That intelligences are eternal—are among the uncreated things—and the indestructible things.

It should be understood that these brief remarks respecting intelligence and intelligences are in no sense a treatise, even brief and

¹²Lodge, *Science and Immortality*, 160. **Add note from King Folett [sic] Sermon.**

cursory, on psychology; they are made merely to indicate some of the chief qualities that are inseparably connected with intelligence and intelligences, so that when the words are used in this writing, some definite idea may be had as to what is meant.

Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: Guizot, *History of Civilization*, vol. 2, lect. 5, pp. 115–25; Smith, “King Follett Discourse”; Roberts, *Outlines of Ecclesiastical History*, pt. 2, sect. 2, summarizing Guizot; D&C 93. Roberts found no treatise on the will to excel Guizot’s.