

Survival and Rebirth

TITLE TO COME

By Max Jacobson, M.D.

The position of science in the world today is one of great paradox. On the one hand, we are faced with the terrifying spectacle of hundreds of scientists seeking wholesale methods of obliterating human life. Balancing these technicians of wholesale destruction is an impressive number of scientists devoting their energies to an indefinite extension of human life. Continuing with our paradox, we are becoming aware of the possibility that humanity as a whole may survive even if the world once more becomes a battlefield; and that individual members of the human race may be able to compete with the Biblical patriarchs - in longevity, if not in wisdom or the number of offspring produced. To complete our paradox, we are confronted with the ironic evidence that the majority of people who should benefit by the discoveries of medical research in prolonging the life span are the ones least interested. Indeed, the idea that their daily frustrations and dilemmas might be continued over centuries, instead of decades, would worry most people into the grave before their expected time.

Why should anybody today want to live for a thousand years? As a doctor whose main interest in life is helping people live longer and more successfully, my

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response is: why not? In making this affirmative  
reply, I am fully aware of the serious lag between the  
 structure of our civilization and the people living  
 in it. The machine has dominated man because neither  
 spiritually nor emotionally has man been able to cope  
 with a technological culture. Consequently, the progress  
 of technological development has completely overshadowed  
 the rate of development of human nature, and in doing  
 so, has given birth to all our contemporary anxieties.

Every day in my work as a general practitioner, I  
 see patients, however varied their individual symptoms,  
 who are casualties of the split between man and manu-  
 facturer. To these people, the idea of living a  
 thousand years is a prospect of enduring mental  
 torture. They no longer know why they want to live.  
 They have lost their why in the cogs of their gadget-  
 worlds: blindly identifying themselves with their  
 cultural climate, they unconsciously attempt to convert  
 their bodies into machines, and their bodies have  
 naturally revolted. The results are confusion, lack  
 of purpose, psychosomatic ailments—all the fashionable  
 complexes of what will surely be the Frenzied Fifties.

Let us examine the machine-complex. Cybernetics,  
that dazzling new science, has evolved for us a per-  
 fect wish-symbol for the times—the mechanical brain-  
 machine which can rapidly compute equations and

formulas requiring hundreds of mathematicians hundreds of years to figure out. Its guardians proudly announce that it even has a memory. But it remained for the abstruse scientific organ, the New Yorker, to point out a distressing clay foot in this streamlined Baal: if the machine receives conflicting commands it balks, sulks, and has what amounts to a nervous breakdown, precisely what the human brain does in the same situation, which it faces daily.

We have created a new life-pattern into which people are being arbitrarily forced, deprived of a perspective on themselves without which there can be no freedom of choice. In the museums we can trace the development of the human skull; even as late as the xxx Neanderthal man we can detect definite evolutions. But there has been no alteration in skull-structure since the Egyptians; and as for the contents of the skull, there has been no discernible development since the beginning of the machine age.

Technical conquests have taken place with an ever-increasing rhythm, but instead of a parallel spiritual evolution within the personality, only the intellect has broadened its scope.

If I generalize, it is because every time I take a fluttering pulse, or read a cardiograph, or prescribe a sedative for a headache, I am dealing with generalities become flesh: six million Jews methodically exterminated, forty thousand lives lost in the millionth

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of a second at Hiroshima; even the positive progress of nuclear fission and the Einstein law relating to radio-active isotopes have some bearing on every individual I treat.

Of course, the pulse, heart, or brain of the individual <sup>I am treating</sup> does not react consciously to any of these phenomena. Tragically, the spirit itself struggles to remain <sup>to</sup> unaware, and these struggles/maintain unawareness are translated into bodily symptoms. The responsibility for awareness, as well as the responsibility for dealing with it, has been delegated to specialists. Unhappily, when these specialists speak, they tend to fall into a jargon so complex that we have had to invent another speciality—semantics, the science of meaning—to explain their findings.

This unawareness is protective. If every individual constantly showed a clear reaction to Dachau or Hiroshima neurotic symptoms in our time would be enormously multiplied. However, we must <sup>realize</sup> ~~relax~~ at the same time that this type of protection results in an atrophy of conscious feeling affecting the smallest facets of the emotional life of that person. <sup>Result:</sup> Loneliness, despair, frigidity and psychosis, ~~amongst~~ the Four Horsemen of our prefabricated society.

The instinct for survival, deflected and thwarted in so many ways, must be reawakened in us. Given an opportunity to <sup>revel</sup> ~~manifest~~ itself, it will certainly do so.

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Many people today are in the position of a man lost in an arctic region. If he gives in to his ~~fatig~~ fatigue, the sleep he sinks into is likely to be a permanent one. He must continue blindly if he is to survive.

Perhaps it seems a far cry from the solitary explorer to the city dweller who gives in to his little exhaustions, his constant inner ~~fatig~~ fatigue. Yet the seductive slogans, the self-imposed frustrations, the passive entertainments, the excessive steam heat, the devitalized foods—all lull the individual instincts and deprive the human being of his creative heritage as a personality.

I have learned some surprising facts from my experience with concentration camp victims. It is unnecessary to describe the sub-human conditions in those monuments to our enlightened age. But in spite of the extreme stress and nutritional deficiencies under which the prisoners lived, a recurrent pattern in those cases I treated became apparent.

After being exposed to the animal level of camp life, sufferers from asthma, heart trouble, severe colds, menstrual disorders and migraines found their ailments diminishing and, in many cases, disappearing completely. Ironically enough, after they were released and entered countries like the United States where there was no longer the danger of the same tortures and brutalities, the ~~same~~ symptoms reappeared.

often in exaggerated form. I have histories of many prisoners whose grasp on ~~his~~ life survived unspeakable brutalities, only to succumb from thrombosis, stroke, or hemorrhage when they were liberated.

There is a grim lesson to be learned here. Obviously, I do not recommend that we transform our society into a vast concentration camp. But from the example of these tragedies, we can draw certain conclusions concerning the human element in an artificial society: namely, that in such a society consciousness of the need for survival disappears, and energies actually intended for survival are expressed as anxiety. The instinct for survival expresses itself most directly and most creatively under conditions which are so extreme that the thought of survival is never far from consciousness. Here is a clue toward the reshaping of our daily lives which, combined with the pharmacological knowledge at our disposal, can help achieve the spiritual transformation so urgently required today of every human being.

Recent biological research gives us the physical echo of the spiritual suffering of the Dachau victim and the lost arctic wanderer. Starvation induces a hyper-thyroid condition. Experiments with rats under conditions of extreme cold also reveal that the rats treated with massive doses of thyroid, which stimulates the metabolism, are best able to survive. Unlike

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laboratory rats men are gifted with the capacity for hope and action.

2 *Here is a distressing*  
~~We have today an~~ alternative to (hope and) action ?  
 under extreme stress which parallels natural hibernation, ~~for~~ where life is suspended at a minimum. But hibernation is unnatural to man, and as fatal as starvation; perhaps more so, since a starving man with an objective can often carry on until the stress is relieved. Yielding to the lulling of the instincts, which hibernation represents, is the first neurotic step on the path to the rejection of individual responsibility, and hence to totalitarianism on the collective social and political level. Under extreme social conditions the individual can spiritually hibernate and slowly become immobilized in a fascist Antarctica; or he can emerge from his chaos into awareness and assume individual control over his mechanisms, with an objective of directed energies before him.

The latest information in nuclear physics indicates that a true understanding of the laws which govern nature (and city-dwellers often forget that they are part of nature) can only be achieved when we know the laws governing the smallest unit. If each of us experiences in himself the survival-motive which is the basic law of life, we will no longer <sup>defeat</sup> ~~curse~~ ourselves with doubts. The search for a biological explanation

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of human survival has led to the discovery of the sub-<sup>m</sup>thalenic, pituitary, and adreno-cortical systems.

(But) this search for the motivation-function of survival itself springs from the deep creative sources of man's life-energy.

*no connection*

Let us agree on a working definition of a harmonious life. The life process itself is too complicated a phenomenon to define in a phrase. However, if we concentrate on its physico-chemical aspect, we can safely say that in the human body it best functions through healthy higher tissue. This process, when applied to the individual, is called metabolism, which roughly means: the ingestion of food, the reaction of the body tissue toward its environment, and its role in the evolution or decay of that environment. If the role is a healthy one, not only the society but the organism itself benefits.

Point 1: To live harmoniously, then, you must function to your full capacity within the pattern of your personality.

Examine Point 1 carefully. Simply telling a person to function well means nothing; if he has to be told, or has to make an effort to do so, obviously he is not operating at his full capacity.

Each human being should become aware of the element of purpose in his own life. Of course, he will often need to be helped with the achievement of this purpose. The moment the individual senses his purpose

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and realizes that there is a way of achieving it, he will begin to feel well.

Point 2. Find your personal reason for existing, in your own terms, and discover the best way of directing that existence toward an objective.

If every man had the power to look clearly within himself and channelize his interior forces with due consideration for other human beings, we could scrap the fraternities, lodges, pressure-groups, and the whole range of security organizations that clutter our civilization. In this clean, new society each member would be responsible to himself as well as to the community.

[There has always been a struggle in man as to whether he should create the perfect State to which he owes complete allegiance and adjust himself to it; or whether the change should occur in the individual, resulting in the evolution of a feasible society. On paper at least, the western peoples are devoting themselves to the latter thesis.]

If you wish to live long and well, extricate yourself from the conflicts that paralyze action. Conflicts are inevitable; they can be good for you and the world of which you are a part when they cause both to advance. Use any sensible means to view yourself objectively; many legitimate therapies are available today. When you select one, however, check the therapist's professional standing, and be sure your attitude

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toward the treatment is a constructive one.

Medical therapy should not be overlooked, if you can find a doctor who has conquered his own dilemmas. It is possible for the doctor, utilizing present biochemical advances, to create a physical state of well-being in the patient, provided the doctor is sufficiently trained to know what he is doing. This synchronization, employing pharmaceutical means, can give at least a temporary balance, and form in the patient's mind an impression of the goal toward which he can move.

Point 3. Maintain an objective attitude toward your work.

"I'm tired all the time," you tell the doctor.

"You're working too hard," the doctor answers, looking at you with an impressively analytical eye.

Let us analyze what the doctor has said. What does working too hard mean? Why should work be 'hard'? Is work only a compulsion, an unpleasant labor? Or does the doctor mean you are working too intensely? If this is the case, then your work is not associated with pleasure. In theory, one should take pleasure in one's ~~work~~ work. Why should this not hold true in practice as well? Most individuals fail to see any purpose in their work; thus, they are unable to get their work done properly, or work only under strain.

Another complication arises: the individual is aware

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that he is being paid for work that is not being done at his maximum capacity. He begins unconsciously to fear that he will be found out; or if he is fortunate enough not to be discovered, that he will be unable to continue his work pattern. Then, he usually resorts to a false stimulation, and the resulting confusion is projected into his work life, into his home life, and finally into his sense of values. Gradually this confusion combines with the confusions of other like him in his social unit, and politics, art, and human relations are negatively affected. What can one do about this? Let us return to the doctor's office.

"I think," says the doctor in a soothing, professional baritone, "that you ought to slow up a bit. Relax. Get away for a rest."

The patient looks alarmed or annoyed, depending on his job importance and the state of his finances. Also, he questions the doctor's advice. Perhaps he has pondered Confucius' remark, "One must be constantly active in order to be an alive human being," and realized its truth.

Exactly what good will a rest do the patient? After all, standing still is not restful; it is more like hibernating. It postpones action, but solves nothing. Even the machines the patient observes daily are not given such treatment when they become inefficient; they are not repaired by having their motors turned off

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for a while, or having more power pumped into them. Certainly the man or woman in the doctor's office is as intricately put together as the gadgets which surround him. Not if the patient wants to recover, he will not take a cruise to Bermuda or take up a hobby. Let him discover himself. Let him accept the challenge of his age, and become a part of it, rather than a passive integer of it. Most of us are vaguely familiar with certain limited aspects of the world, but its broad pattern remains ominous and unclear.

Our leaders, intellectual and political, continue to discuss ways and means toward a new society, a new social consciousness. In order to participate in this process, the individual should consider it both his duty and his privilege to heighten his consciousness, to become familiar with the inner and outer forces controlling him. For example, how much do you know about your city, state, and federal government? Granted, you know your favorite movie star. But do you know the Congressman who represents your district and whether you agree with the national policies he is shaping or not? Have you any idea how the various federal agencies are constructed and under what powers they operate?

Do not let your favorite political columnist mold your reactions; be responsible for your own reactions, and observe what happens to your overall conduct. We

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easily forget that our government is an extension of ourselves. It does little good to shrug and murmur, "It's all too corrupt to do anything about it." The change has to start somewhere. We cannot wait for a super-pressure group to come along and break up the other pressure groups for us.

If your body is tired, find out what your body is. Once you know how it functions, you are less likely to push it into a breakdown, because you will learn to respect it. The old stimulations will become unnecessary, since the latent energies within you will be directed into a positive current of activity.

Point 4. Be honest with yourself, and aim at honest relationships in your social pattern.

In a world where some concepts are expanding to intolerable proportions, certain attitudes of mind are no longer practical. Hatred, greed, fear, and smallness of spirit are still manifest in the highest places, but our disenchanted <sup>young</sup> ~~young~~ people are coming to realize more and more that such qualities do not pay off in the long run. This is not due to an excess of virtue or ethics on their part. Even those who have rejected organized religion, however, have been exposed to the Gospel according to St. Freud, and they sense what the doctor knows; namely, that the errors of the spirit are visited on the body. **Hidden or imaginary sins no longer await their heavenly**

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punishment; they are dealt with in the earthly organisms. Ulcers, tuberculosis, asthma, colitis, hemorrhoids, and arthritis are not isolated phenomena. They are physical records of a malfunctioning sense of interior values.

A middle-aged composer lies on the examination table in my office. His ulcer is better, he informs me. He watches his diet carefully; he faithfully gets nine hours sleep; he maintains his poise no matter what happens. When will he be cured?

What can I tell him? That he has compromised with a first-rate talent in order to achieve a second-rate way of life? That, accordingly, his stomach refuses to accommodate the necessities for which he sold his birthright? That the security he has falsely achieved is no basic security at all? I am a doctor, not a wizard. I cannot give him back what he has lost; only he can do that. His cure is not only a bland diet and careful medications; somehow he must untangle his personal life, or the ulcer will come back again. No man can fool his own viscera for long.

Think of the native demagogue who shouted national lies with unweary voice until cancer of the jaw silenced him forever. The international beauty whose face is paralyzed into a winking mask. The pianist so tragically crippled with arthritis at the height of his career. You can construct your own

case histories from a careful reading of the obituaries, if you have an interest in this indoor sport.

Humble histories occur to me. The old, bearded Jewish lady who has wandered from country to country contracts Berger's disease, rendering her legs incapable of motion. The lyric tenor who gave up an operatic career to make quick money in the nightclubs develops nodules on his vocal chords. The filing clerk suffering from temporary amnesia.

What would happen if we told ourselves the truth? Whatever economic tensions we might encounter, we would at least be less hampered by our own inner tensions. And then we would certainly live longer and more constructively, whether or not we recaptured our original dream.

Point 5: Maintain a flexible and open mind.

An open mind does not necessarily have to be wide open. There is no reason why flexibility of thought should imply lack of discrimination. Since so many of my otherwise intelligent patients become skittish at new ideas—in themselves as well as in others—one ceases to wonder why predicting universal doom has become such a popular pasttime. Damnation, scorn, and ridicule have become accepted motifs in the pattern of our daily lives; in this anxious atmosphere even outworn ideas are suspect.

Judging from the random remarks and time-of-day chatter of my patients (and that kind of talk usually

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University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

reveals more about them than their carefully phrased health bulletins) this schizoid world of ours seems to be divided roughly into two categories: the persecutors and the persecuted.

Rationally, we are aware that the maladjusted, the alcoholic, and the psychotic have a tendency to feel persecuted, much as it is the privilege of an adjusted mind to live equably with himself or die for a principle. However, when the psychotic, persecuted in his shadowy mind, becomes the public accuser, he never sees the real enemy but only the images of his own distress. These images bear a curious resemblance in every troubled era: 1) Innovators in human relations, politics, or art. 2) The strangers within the gate. 3) Those non-conformists who cannot or will not submerge themselves into the greyness of the average.

From my experience, I believe the truly individual personality is a hazard today. Human personalities are being based on the principle of our machines, so that they are interchangeable wherever they are placed. But human beings are not like so many Springfield rifles capable of having their parts interchanged at will.

From a cursory study of the white-collar and intellectual types that come to my office, I would say we are in the midst of a Renaissance of the Bewildered.

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Recent happenings in the field of the graphic arts will serve as an illustration. For the past five years, snipers in both the popular and highbrow periodicals have been directing their fire on modern art. The artists, those museums which sponsor them, and the clients who purchase their products are almost invariably described as "decadent."

"Decadent art" has a familiar ring. Hitler took a great interest in defining it. Now the phrase begins to seep through the democracies, combined in many cases with the adjective "communistic." Undoubtedly this is a timely and effective phrase, sure to keep the creative imagination in check until mediocrity can regain its lost footing.

Although I am not an art critic, I as a doctor who is interested in the function of mind and body. Therefore I read in the New York Times with pointed interest the Russian attacks on similar trends within their borders. To them, too, the imaginative, the fantastic, the abstract, are "decadent." Their additional adjective, however, is "bourgeois." For once the divided world is in agreement: in neither is the inquiring artistic mind viced without alarm.

Between the persecutors and the persecuted, the creative personality whether artistically endowed or not, wavers. The remedy for this uncertainty is not medical. Simply ask yourself every time the prophets of banality thunder out their jeremiads: "Who are

these accusers? Are they worthy?"

If you wish to live a thousand years, you will  
allow your mind to remain flexible. K

Point 6: Maintain a sensible physical fitness.

I have saved this point for the last, not because it is the most important, but because in a sense it is the keystone of the other points we examined.

First comes the question of diet. My more intense patients, when the question of food arises, usually want to know, "Exactly what shall I eat every day and what shall I omit? What foods will make me young and/or beautiful? What is the best nutritional safeguard against deterioration?"

Unfortunately, I do not have a system of nutritive principles to promulgate. Those interested in complicated formulas for eating will find a wide variety of books dealing with the subject in any health store. Many Mahatmas of the vegetable and fruit faiths are around to direct those with an inherent talent for austerity.

Anyone who has understood Point 1 will realize that it is his responsibility to find the normal amount and kind of food he requires. Certainly, ~~excessive~~ indulgence in eating habits will lead to a subtle deterioration of the system; but if every calorie put in the mouth is counted apprehensively, the anxiety reflexes involved will vitiate the benefits of the soundest regime.

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One can eat cottage cheese, raw fruit, and honey without making a ~~making~~ religious ritual of such a diet. One can also exist on hamburgers, or even candy bars, for a time. Common sense, however, indicates the ~~max~~ necessity of maintaining an average eating level.

Those who tend to vegetarianism must be especially careful to keep their daily intake balanced. Perhaps in a well-tempered society, when reason rules our conduct toward ourselves and others, we would not be obliged to kill animals any more than our fellow men. But the predatory and aggressive nature of our contemporary jungle suggests that a diet emphasizing meat and decreasing starches and sugars is better suited to the average person. Whatever your dietary instincts are, be sure you feature high proteins and green vegetables, avoid an excess of fat and flirt only occasionally with a more intricate cuisine; you'll live longer and move faster.

Sleep is another important factor to be remembered. One shop in New York has a special department devoted to sleep aids for the sleepless metropolitan resident. Despite these factory-produced devices, the only true source of rest is within yourself.

"But doctor, things keep going through my mind..."

"Doctor, I was too tired to sleep..."

"The noise in the streets keeps me awake..."

Unfortunately, the deep trouble is not only the inability to sleep by yourself, but with yourself (or

in some unhappy cases, with anybody else, for that matter.) Then the little red devils come tiptoeing in, wooing you toward a barbiturate paradise for a few hours. The sleeping pill is a contradiction in terms: the price paid for its false comforts should be well-known by now.

Confusion is not conducive to sleep. Any toxic element that stimulates or soothes the body (and I include alcohol and cigarettes in that category—but how could I ask you to give up these?) must rigorously be avoided.

Some of my patients have come to me complaining of insomnia. I found they were putting themselves to sleep with red devils, waking themselves with benzedrine, and restoring themselves with alcohol during their slump periods. Here is the really dispossessed personality of our day, lost completely in a misapplication of scientific discoveries. Any unnatural aid becomes a self-perpetuating function. Truly natural processes occur without friction. Have you the courage to reverse the contemporary downslide and find your way back to yourself?

The baby today is allowed to select his own feeding and sleeping times, rather than the sternly fixed periods formerly allotted to him by the psychologists. Allow yourself the same choice. Remember, a sane course will help preserve the individual from his

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biological drift toward fatty degeneration, which old age will obligingly provide for him even if he does not insure himself against it.

"Very well," I hear you say, "I've read this far and still haven't been informed how I can live to be a thousand."

I would like to hold off a moment and ask you to consider how relative time values are. Some bacteria live only a few seconds; a sea-turtle lives for centuries; a rock for aeons. The length of a life is not as important as the completeness with which its totality is lived.

Old Farr lived a century and a half; Keats died in his twenties. Which life would you have preferred to live? (Conversely, George Bernard Shaw is healthy and active in his nineties and Pretty Boy Floyd died in his twenties, but the same rule applies here.)

The way to survive for a thousand years is to begin now, exactly where you are, and prepare to do so. The suggestions I have made will help you, if you absorb them in your own terms. You will hear of others; still others you will discover for yourself.

The life expectancy of man has increased considerably in the past decades, but even more surprising developments are on the way. In Europe, for example, there is revitalized interest in the results of experiments involving the improved *Drosophila* serum.

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Known as the ACS (anti-reticular-cytotoxic) serum, it promises to prevent or repair arterio-sclerotic damage, and to renew the vigor of the connective tissue. The results so far have been promising, although it is too early yet for a definitive analysis of the permanent effect of the injections. Increasing knowledge of the behavior and metabolic action of the human cell, through the use of radio-active tracers in the blood stream, promise a deeper understanding of the cell and of the life process itself. Hormone therapy which can already relieve the stress on overworked glands, and in many cases renew an impaired function, holds great hope for the active continuation of healthy tissue. Other discoveries, such as ~~anabolic~~ cortisone, are awaiting careful investigation, but their promise is considerable.

Under ideal circumstances, there should then be no time limit to the durability of your physical and mental equipment. The fusion of science, flesh, and mental direction into a balanced unity will inevitably produce a human being, in the truest sense of the word.

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