
The Ethics of Pantheism

This doctrine of Pantheism is more than a mere theory. It has tremendous practical and ethical implications. For if all humanity is one body and one soul, it follows that people cannot hurt others without hurting themselves. To do an injury to your neighbor is to cut off your own finger or to pluck out your own eye.

The happiness of each of us depends upon the well-being of the whole body of human kind and all living things. For the human race, like every human being, is a united living organism. And all living things, human and non-human alike, are united and interdependent. We are more than merely "brothers of a single human family under the fatherhood of God" as it has been expressed in the past. We are instead, members of a single human entity, and members of a global biosphere, which in turn is an integral part of the divine essence of God.

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God, Humanity, and Pantheism



*We seek a renewed reverence
for the Earth and a vision of
Nature as the ultimate context
for human existence.*

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God is the Universe

God, then, is the universe. The stars, the planets, the trees, the flowers, the oceans, the mountains the clouds – these are the *body* of God. The spirit that gives them shape and color and motion and beauty is the *mind* of God. Every human body is part of God's body and every human mind is part of God's mind. This philosophical doctrine is called *Pantheism*, from the Greek words *pan* (the whole, or everything) and *theos* (God).



The Nature of God

God is not *above* us, but *within* us. Body and mind and spirit are but three aspects of a single reality. The visible world is the body of God, the thought that contemplates it is God's mind, and the energy that moves it is God's spirit. God, in other words, is the infinite substance; idea and motion of the world. God *is* the world. Every blade of grass, every cloud of earth, every unfolding flower, every living creature, however lowly, partakes alike of divine essence. The most magnificent constellation in the heavens and the poorest beggar on earth are equally important syllables in the poem of life.

Every human body, therefore, is part of God's mind. Let us not, however, confuse our own puny intelligence with the infinite intelligence of God. The world is governed not in accordance with our individual desires but in accordance with God's all-comprehending plan. The story that God has woven into the drama of life is beyond our understanding.

Universal Intelligence

It is not for us to pass judgment upon the world, since it has not been made for our benefit. It is as logical to believe that the world was made for people to enjoy as it would be to believe that hands and feet were made for mosquitoes to bite or that noses were made for spectacles to rest upon. The human individual, the human race, is but a small part in the infinite plan of god. The entire earth is but a microscopic cell in God's body.

But we must be careful, in speaking of God, not to ascribe to the Divine a human form or human emotions. God is not a capricious overseer who sits in heaven and who is swayed by our prayers to help us or by the prayers of our enemies to injure us. What seems good or bad to us as individuals is of no concern. For though our mind is a part of God's mind, it is only a microscopic part. All things, to be sure, partake of the intelligence of God. But in this world there are different grades of intelligence. The mind of a tree, for example, has very little in common with the mind of a dog; the mind of a dog has very little in common with the mind of the average human; and the mind of the average human has very little in common with the mind of a Socrates or a Shakespeare or an Einstein. But even the mind of Einstein as compared to God is like the mind of a tree as compared to Einstein.

The Symphony of God

The world may be compared to a symphony, in which every one of us is a note. Taken by itself, each note is nothing, but as a contributing part of the symphony, it is everything. Even the so-called "failures" in life are important in the summary of the whole. Suppose, to return to our symphony, the composer puts in a note and then strikes it down again in order to insert something that will be more harmonious in that particular passage. The note that has been written down and then rubbed out has been *necessary* and *important* in the composer's thought while perfecting the symphony.

In like manner, no human life, however short or unhappy, has been in vain. Each of us is an essential thread in the infinite tapestry of life, a significant note in the symphony of God, a contributory stroke of the brush in the painting of god – in a word, an intimate *part* of God.

