

THE MYSTERIOUS MEANING OF LIFE

BY HENRY HARBERS

THERE is no one, except he be one who cannot think at all, who does not at times wonder what life means, why it ends in death, what comes after, and why it is all a mystery.

Yet while man has thought and wondered about these things for thousands of years, the strange fact is that what really seems to be the most important truth about life, the very facts of life that will lead to the clearest answer to the questions of life's meaning and destiny, are truths that have ever been overlooked, unrecognized and ignored.

These truths or facts of life have been neglected and their meaning allowed to pass unrecognized, no doubt because life is held to be essentially a mystery, the solution of which is not to be found in life and the world, but beyond this life and the world.

As it is the average man who would like to know what life means, why it is so uncertain and unequal, what comes after death, and why it is all so mysterious, if he does not feel that it is all an insoluble mystery and useless to attempt to give a real solution, looks for his solution either in the profundities of theology and metaphysics, or else the obscurities of occultism. Never does anyone seem to think of looking to the actual facts of life for the solution of any questions of the meaning of life.

Yet the riddle of life may not be so insoluble after all, for there are things that plainly indicate what life is, what it means, what its destiny is, and why everything must be shrouded in mystery and uncertainty.

The things or facts that indicate the meaning of life and explain the conditions of our existence, are the fact that life is gamelike in character, and the further fact that life is dramatic also in its character. Life and the world is at once both a drama and a game. Everything in and about the world contributes to make life and the world's story a drama and a game.

The non-recognition of these facts is shown in that the world's drama and the game of life are recognized only as incidental matters and not as the essential features. They are not seen as being the very things that the world exists for, and that life here is meant to be.

Life's game and the world's drama are seen to be matters of primary importance, only when we assume that the world and life in it are in real truth a drama and a game, being played for the interests of some higher world.

How this world and life can be purposely a drama and a game playing to a higher world will be seen by what follows:

After a man has lived this life and gone to Heaven to live eternally, a life of perfect ease and happiness, how will this world and its affairs look to him? Will it not all look like some sort of huge game, a game of life as we should say? And suppose after many million years have passed and the world has ceased to exist as a world of man, everybody being now in Heaven, it happens that someone suggests that the world's story or history be retold in play. The suggestion is adopted and a stage is built as big as the world. On it each person plays the part he took in the real life of the world, and the play, owing to the fact that time in Heaven is eternal and a few million years no objection, takes just as long as the real world did for the same thing when it was real life. Would not this be a drama?

Now note the fact that while this world would look to a person in Heaven exactly like some sort of huge game, in fact be in actual truth a real game, a repetition of the world's history or story of action would not look like a game, but like a drama and would be in real truth a drama. Yet all the difference there would be between the world of real life and a dramatic repetition of the world's story will and can only be that real life is like a game, and a repetition is like a drama, in that a game's course of action is free and determined by the players, while the drama's course of action is fixed, being predetermined upon. That the world and life should be a game, or like a game, and yet be like a drama, being a real drama if repeated, is because the world and life is a drama that is played like a game, or a game, the playing of which is the telling of a drama.

The world and life, in being a game and drama in one, shows a

uniqueness that is absent in any game or drama that we possess in this world.

It is in this possession at once of dramatic and gamelike characteristics, that the real meaning of life and the purpose of the world must be sought for.

The secret appears to be simply this. Your life, in all that you do in showing your ambitions, your characteristics, your passions, with all the results that follow in the different situations in life, that you find yourself in, situations that are comic, tragic, and romantic, and which if portrayed upon the stage would be called dramatic, is really and truly dramatic.

Life is in real truth the playing of a drama, your world is the stage, and your audience is not only the people in this world, but the people of a higher or super world, who are really placed in the position of an audience in relation to the drama of life, and who undoubtedly created the world to be a drama. This superworld is the world that man dimly recognizes the existence of when he speaks about Heaven.

But this is not all. Your life in all the things in which you take chances, in all the things in which you must contend and struggle, in all the things in which you must plan, and in all the things in which you must strive to attain some sort of skill or success, all things that make life gamelike and are analogous to the elements which make the sort of action we call the playing of a game, means that life is a true game.

Life is really the playing of a drama and a game at once, and in one and the same play of action. It is a special form of game, for the playing of which the world was designed and created, to meet the requirements of a higher world.

It is because life in this world combines the dramatic and gamelike in a unit play of action, that it must exist under condition that it be mystery to itself, for it can be shown that it is one of the necessary conditions of a dramatic game, or gamelike drama, that the players know nothing that will break up the course of dramatic action, or interfere with its gamelike character, except that knowledge be gained as part of the dramatic game itself and in the course of its action.

This world of ours is contained in and is part of a higher world, order of reality or order of existence, and our life here is really an episode in our higher eternal life, but being a dramatic game our

world must be isolated, not only from the higher world, but from other dramatic games of its kind, (that is, other planetary worlds,) and we must know nothing save what we learn as we play the game of life.

You came from the higher or superworld, a world of such dimensions and with so many people as to be infinite, a world enjoying such perfection in science, skill and power as to be omnipotent and absolutely perfect, a world of immortal people, a world in comparison with which this world of ours, which is to it really a game and drama, and all the worlds in the universe, are related about as the theatres of New York are related to the whole United States.

When you entered the world at birth, you lost all memory of your life in Heaven, in order that you should not bring into this world any knowledge, any memory that would affect you as a player in an action which is at once both dramatic and gamelike. Think it over, and you will realize that if you knew to a certainty that you lived before your birth, remember what you did, how you did things in a world of perfection, this world could never continue as a drama and game in one.

Possibly you still doubt that this life and world is a dramatic and gamelike incident or event in the life and order of a higher world of being or existence. Explain then why man is born under such conditions of diversity and inequality; why is his life ruled so much by chance? Why is he subject to the vicissitudes of life? Why does injustice exist? Why the mystery surrounding life and why does man possess free will, something which means nothing in a pure drama, but is all important in the playing of any kind of a game? If life and the world be a drama and a game in one, the meaning of all these things becomes plain, and they have no clear meaning in any other interpretation of the meaning of life.

Why does the world exist as a drama and game? Why do we have dramas and games? They are things that make life interesting. But the whole explanation of the meaning of life cannot be told in a few words; a book is needed to tell all.