

POSTSCRIPT

Indisputably, the Age of Information

Whether we like it or not, for better or for worse, we are now indisputably in the *Age of Information*. We are in an era of amazing advancement and discovery. But at the same time we are finding new, fundamental, and remarkable truths about the nature and properties of Information. We will ignore them at our peril. It would be disastrous to take advantage of the wonders of our new Age without being aware of the many vulnerabilities and dangers that are also part of this most extraordinary phenomenon. There has never been such a need as there is now for guidance and a new Philosophy of Information. We have argued that Information is our most valuable possession. It steers and controls us in all that we think and do. It is tantamount to Existence itself. It is certain to contain eternal truths although mostly we take it for granted. Only information can provide answers to the questions we have continually asked in our study—What are we; what are we doing here; and why? Possibly, the whole of our Existence is *nothing but Information!*

The Argument for Faith

More than half the World's population have found their answers to the meaning of life in religious belief. We have occasionally referred to this in our text but we never really pursued the subject. The omission was not an oversight. We had no wish to discuss the pros and cons of Faith; and least of all to argue the merits of one Faith against another. Faith is beyond reason. With some notable exceptions, when things have gone wrong, pious and righteous prophets and their teachings have withstood the test of time. Religious belief is still for many a pillar of enormous strength. Such people depend on Faith; in order to survive. They are "twice blessed." They have their answers to *Why and What are we*, and they have inner moral support for all they do. Evidence of this is shown in the joy and happiness in their faces. Without Faith, life for many would be meaningless. To ask them to doubt their Faiths would be as wrong as it would be folly. Faith dismisses scientific claim that life began by chance, that it started from nothing, and will end in nothing, as sheer arrogance. Such a claim, it is said, takes no account of human spirit, the tireless efforts of fearless fighters, and the heroic and selfless acts of ordinary people who for their Faith have often suffered unimaginable adversity. There are others who have very different and opposing views. Even our mathematicians and scientists are divided on the issue.

So here, we have extremely sincere people on two sides of a great divide. As Immanuel Kant and Iris Murdoch conclude in their writings, to which we referred in the study, “some things are sublime and beyond the reach of human understanding.” True Faith is one of them.

Creating the Almighty

To conclude our study without a few personal thoughts on a subject of such importance would leave it incomplete. Everything in life as we have tried to show is to do with, and indeed is, nothing but *information*. Faith, religion, and worship, are no exception. They also depend on information to record and pass on their message. For many people, belief in God is wonderful. It is a principal reason for living. It is an acceptance of humility before something greater than all of us. In Chapter 8, we quoted Voltaire as saying that if there were no God, we would have to *invent* one. Voltaire’s remark is not a flippant, off the cuff, assertion. It is a profound remark like that of Pontius Pilate, with which we began our study. We find ourselves in sympathy with Voltaire’s rationale. Like ourselves, and everything in the Universe, our ideas of God are evolving. We cannot blame God for all the evils that men do, since we have free will; but, there are many disasters and catastrophes that God seemingly “*allows*” that we do not understand. Human sorrow, grief, and sheer anguish, that follow the world’s most harrowing events must be as painful to a God as they are to us. We can only deduce (humbly, within the limited range of human reasoning) that the God we know, while mighty, is *not* omnipotent. He cannot prevent *all* disaster. To God’s devout followers, such a deduction may be irreverent. However, if God is not able to stop the suffering, it may be because we have not *yet* empowered Him to do so. It is we, (here on earth, by our beliefs, desires, and above all by what we do) who could be *creating* the God we deserve. Like ourselves, God could be suffering while we are still creating Him. Even the great 50:50 divide, that we made so much of in our text, may have a purpose in arriving at the kind of God we *create*. In the end, what exists, and all that can exist, is information. We make it. We interpret it. We make things what they are. What follows is entirely due to us.

Dialogue and tolerance of all Faiths

Judging from the many Faiths that people follow, there is seemingly far more than one way of reaching the Divine. If this is so, it is surely time for different Faiths to come together. It is time to share the *information*, knowledge, and wisdom, that that they have. It is time to find common ground and to seek common cause, *not* in any political sense but rather in a purely spiritual sense. Faith prospers best when we keep it as distinct and separate from Politics and Law as we can. The most important common bond of Faith is humanity. It is a bond that can unite people and remove all temporary artificial frenzies. By tolerating genuine differences, and bringing together the best of Faiths, we could perhaps create the “Supreme Being” that we all secretly long to acknowledge and follow. Making use of all information, neglecting none, finding, and slaying the villain that is *within us* (that comes from our sometimes capricious but always *precious* free will), is the proper way to handle information, and certainly the information on which Faith depends. Our lives depend on using information wisely.

Dialogue, deliberation, and tolerance, on all matters, show the way to a just and happier world than the one in which we presently are.

Be Thy Self

In this new and awesome *Age of Information* in which we find ourselves, and in the light of the mass of information and limitless choice before us; we, the ordinary man or woman, may well ask how best can we manage our lives? *Collectively* as we have asserted we need a new Philosophy of Information and valuable guidance through the maze; but, *individually* too, we have much to contribute. In Chapters 11 and 14, we noted that each of us possesses a single separate “*mind world*” that is physically impregnable. The only way in and out of these independent worlds is by using information. Our one small mind world may be just one among millions and millions of others. We may feel that we are *insignificant* and have very little influence over our destiny. But; like every grain of sand on every beach, and every drop of water in every ocean, we *are still important*. We can do no better than look again at the works of William Shakespeare, truly the greatest *Master of Information* the world has ever known. As Polonius wisely said to Laertes⁷⁹, just as Laertes was about to set off on his own life’s journey, -

*“This above all: to thine own self be true; And it must follow,
as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man”*

Armed with such information, we too perhaps may find *truth* in our lives. Faith in oneself, self confidence, and self reliance, the determination to overcome uncertainty and adversity, and to live worthwhile lives, come first. No matter what the answer is to “*Why we are here?*”; No matter how much we may be tempted to imitate; No matter how much we would like to be someone else; No matter how often we might be asked to bend or warp *information* to please others; and No matter that we do not have all the answers we want; there is for all of us (as Polonius has said) no better counsel than, ***Be Thy Self***.

(By some strange coincidence, these are the author’s initials. He has very often been reminded of Polonius’s wise and acutely penetrating advice!)

⁷⁹ William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark