

## THE PRINCE OF PHYSICIANS

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ABU ALI IBN-I-SINA, who was the premier physician of his age, was born in a village called Kharmisan situated in the Central-Asian Province of Bukhara. In the year 370 H. He acquired his primary education in the city of Bukhara. He was introduced to literature, mathematics and Islamic law by his father and the various eminent scholars of the day. He acquired excellence in logic and advanced mathematics under the patronage of Abdullah Natili and studied medicine under the guidance of Abu Mansur bin Nuh Al-Umari. He studied Aristotle's philosophy with the aid of a book known as 'The Objects of the Book of Metaphysics' by Abu Nasr Farabi. At the age of sixteen, he was called upon to treat Amir Nuh bin Mansur Samani who fell seriously ill and was thus able to secure the favour of the prince and make use of his grand library, a chance which helped Ibn-i-Sina complete his studies in a comprehensive way. He is popularly known as Avicenna to the western world and hardly needs any introduction to students of philosophy all over the globe.

After the passing of Abu Nuh bin Mansur when the Samanian Empire collapsed about 389 H., Ibn-i-Sina proceeded to Khawarizm and stayed there for a few years and kept himself busy in scientific research and writing copiously but when Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna conquered Khawarizm, he summoned him to his court. Probably, he was ordered to attend the royal court and the philosopher who was a gentleman of high sense of self-respect and personal dignity could not appreciate the invitation under compulsion. He politely declined the Sultan's offer and passed most of his time travelling to and fro some important cities in Turkestan and Khorasan as a-traveller till he came to the city of Gurgan and chose to stay there taking up the profession of medicine in the city. In Hamadan Ibn-Sina completed his well-known scientific work, 'The Canon' and it was also in this very city that

Abu Ubaid Jauzjani, one of his famous disciples happened to meet him and thenceforth kept attached to him as his faithful apprentice. Surely, Zauzjani rendered laudible services to the cause of literature and science in collecting and preserving the distinguished and valuable works of his master.

From Gurgan Ibn-I-Sina moved to Rai where he was engaged to treat Majd-ud-Daulah of Dailam as his patient suffering from repeated fits of melancholia. Ibn-I-Sina wrote for the prince a valuable pamphlet, 'Ma'ad' and then left for Hamadan to see Shams-ud-Daulah (brother of Majd-ud-Daulah) who was indisposed on account of colic pain. As a gesture of favour the prince offered his personal physician the high office of Vizier. He stayed there for about six years 405-412-H. (1014—1220—A.D.) Ibn-I-Sina passed the last years of his life in the city of Isphahan in the service of prince Ala-ud-Daulah of Dailam as the royal physician and adviser on letters and science. Consequently, he was able to devote himself to the pursuit of scientific research and compilation of his distinguished works which later brought him enormous fame both in the East and the West. He used to attend a symposium, attended by the learned men of letters, science and philosophy, held under the orders of the prince every Thursday, and took active part in the discussions till he fell seriously ill on a journey which he undertook to Hamadan as a medical consultant of Ala-ud-Daulah and passed away when he was only 58 in 428-H. (1037-A.D.). He was buried in the city with ceremony and honour that he commanded as an eminent philosopher, scientist and doctor of medicine.

The cause of his untimely death by some historians has been traced to his lack of moderation and restraint in his living standard in contradistinction to the fact that the philosopher has in his publications. to the fact that the philosopher has in his publications advised scrupulous avoidance of sensuous and physical pleasures as intrinsically essential and abiding in quality. He always laid stress on the 'middle course' as a condition precedent of valid reason. Strangely enough, Ibn-I-Sina did not personally content himself with the spiritual and rational pleasures alone, his biographers tell us, but on the other hand, he appreciated the good things of life almost inclined

towards extravagance, and such a style of living brought in its wake a physical imbalance which damaged the doctor's health beyond repair, eventually causing his premature death. The epitaph on his grave is understood to read to the following effect :—

“Here lies in the Philosopher whose rambles in the domains of philosophy and science could not bring home the significance of temperance and his intelligent grasp of the art of medicine failed to teach him a balanced approach to life.”

One of the brilliant aspects of Ibn-I-Sina's life is that he rose to such heights among the contemporary men of letters as a towering personality and accomplished a stupendous task in the fields of philosophy, medicine and general knowledge inspite of his comparatively short life which was full of hardships, long journeys and casual imprisonment. For some part of his life, he was busy in public and political affairs of the day as he acted in various capacities as a minister, companion and adviser to some of the ruling princes of his day. His works in the different spheres of knowledge and research, exceeding two hundred in number, reveal him as a scholar, philosopher and physician of great calibre. In medical literature, he is respectfully referred to as “The Prince of Physicians” and is generally known as the “Shaikh Par Excellence.”

The philosopher's works incorporating his views on philosophy must be valued as the store-house of modern knowledge and wisdom being the result of a constant study of a large number of scattered works of the olden times and various types in the great libraries of Asia and Europe, which, of course, did not present knowledge in a conveniently arranged and classified form. Ibn-I-Sina undertook to reorganize scientific and philosophical knowledge and reassess its value. He regarded all knowledge to be of two kinds, *i.e.*, theoretical and practical, and passed it on the coming generations giving it a new shape in a simple and scientific style free from ambiguity and involved construction as it was the wont of some eminent philosophers, especially, Aristotle. In short, Ibn-I-Sina by undertaking such scientific pursuit laid the foundations of modern research. Not only did he preserve

the old repository of thought but also made great strides in the domains of modern science, philosophy, medicine, and psychology.

Ibn-I-Sina's works met with unusual appreciation as they were progressively translated into Latin late in the Eleventh century and were taught in most of the school and universities as text-books for the students in pursuit of sciences and arts of the day. Among his distinguished work, 'The Canon' was the foremost, and after that 'Ilm-un-Nafs' a part of Tabi'iyat-i-Shifa was translated. Eventually, all his works were introduced to the intellectual world with the rapid rise of demand for such translations all over Europ.

The Fourth century of the Islamic era in which the philosopher prospered is considered to be the most magnificent period of Islamic civilization. Those were the days when the Samanian Kings who were the great patrons of the letters and arts ruled over the larger part of Iran. However, freedom of thought and expression of opinion was in those days not in vogue, nor available as it is now in most parts of the world. Naturally, Ibn-I-Sina appears to have found himself under compulsion to express his ideas only to the extent they did not run counter to the popular religious and philosophical beliefs and for the rest he was rather content to pass over the subject with a cursory reference or silence, if possible.

Indeed, one of the striking aspects of Ibn-I-Sina's philosophical work is that he has kept away from the views of the peripatetic mode of thinking. His supplementary notes and comments on the classical works of philosophy are, however, in strict conformity with the line of thought taken up by the First Teacher. A certain amount of superficial criticism has been levelled against his views as those of Aristotle while some of his later works bring out his independent and original approach to the problems of philosophy in a remarkable way. For instance, his famous work, 'Isharat-wat-Tanbihat' finished during his last years, represents a synopsis of his approach to logic, physics and metaphysics that bespeaks of a positively critical and independent attitude of the philosopher's mind.

Towards the end of this work Ibn-I-Sina implores the readers not to discuss his views with short-sighted people or inferior minds as he did not wish openly to disclose his bright ideas to those who would not appreciate the true significance and perspective of his views mainly because of a long process of static thought in the past. He did not like to see public opinion unnecessarily incited against himself as some people are somehow prone to hold of something as an excuse to malign even the great minds for their independence and freedom of thought. But 'Isharat' is not the only book which incorporates his views in their entirety or last stage. In another work styled as 'Hikmat-ul-Mashriqiyya', he proceeds to treat of the subject in a bold manner and discusses some of the difficult problems. His treatment of the subject even though sanctified by the teachings of Aristotle must be regarded as fearless and frank even though, unfortunately, only the introduction and a part thereof concerning logic is now available. As for the rest either the philosopher did not find time to complete the work, or it has not reached us as in a duty finished form. Some critics are of the view that some parts of 'Hikmat' have been incorporated in 'Isharat-wat-Tanbihat.'

The followers of scholasticism who are in a sense opposed the reason and rational leanings in religion have always been afraid of the rational approach and understanding of things as calculated to undermine people's beliefs concerning religion and faith. For unknown reasons, they have looked upon rationalism as opposed to Islamic Law and have invariably discouraged freedom of thought and education, which is manifestly against the teachings of Islam as the authenticity of religion springs from another source, but a constant effort on the part of philosophers with a view to reconciling religion and philosophy has considerably softened the opposition against philosophical thought making the teaching of philosophy as essential part of general education and scientific discussion. That is how the students of philosophy, in general, have found it possible down the centuries to uphold the cause of scientific research and a rational mode of life.

Undoubtedly, Ibn-I-Sina is one of the great philosophers for all time to come who devoted his entire life to the cause of philosophy and science, and

his contribution to the service of world literature and thought is simply amazing. It is satisfying to note that writers of international repute have not failed to appreciate the philosopher's his learning and erudite scholarship, One is often surprised by the measure of influence Ibn-I-Sina has been able to exercise on the Christian world as can be gathered from the writings of St. Thomas, a Christian philosopher of note during the Middle Ages.

As a philosopher and physician of fame, Ibn-I-Sina has been admired for his Persian personality. He was contemporary of the celebrated poet, Firdausi of Tus, and was born and bred in the Northern part of Iran, then renowned for the brilliance of its people's soul, thought life which had in no small measure affected the currents and sub-currents of politics in the neighbouring countries.

According to Dr. Ali Akbar Siyasi, of Teheran, Ibn-I-Sina appears to have been acquainted with the culture of ancient Iran as one can infer from his belief in the primitivity of matter, relationship of mind and body, specific attributes of God as these ideas are typically those which were prevalent in Iran before the advent of Islam, but they have been survived somehow in the relics of the ancient speakers and thinkers. The reason why the philosopher should have made some changes here and describe them afresh is not difficult to see as he wanted to adapt such ideas to his own system of philosophy to lay the foundations of which he had worked indefatigably for many long years.

Ibn-I-Sina's psychology occupies an important place among his scientific and philosophical works wherein his discussions on mind are regarded as his scientific contribution of immense value toward the modern system of philosophy.

Ibn-I-Sina looked upon mind as one of the most important subjects of research with which most of the philosophers have been concerned with a view to answering some of the basic questions. What is the origin of movement, source of thought and knowledge? How is the mind affected by the external stimuli towards active and passive behaviour? In what way the

images and meanings take shape and effect, persist for a short or long time, inter-effect, one another and spring to memory? By what process do the partial images and meanings take the form of elemental and integral entities, which human beings prefer to find intellectual proof and argument by reason towards the discovery of new things and scientific inventions? Ibn-I-Sina has in a lucid manner dealt with the subject of an—'Nafs' in some of his important writings such as *Kitab-ush-Shifa* (almost an encyclopaedia work), *an Najat* (a compendium of *Shifa*), *Danish-Nama-i-Alai*, *an Nafs-un-Natiqa wa Ahwaluha*, *an Nafs wal-Aql*, *Kitab-ul-Isharat wat-Tanbihat* (last stumpy work), etc.,

While glancing through the works of the great physician, one is invariably led to think that although he deals with the subject of mind as part of physics and demonstrative sciences, most of his research, specially in relation to mind—the proof of existence, metaphysics, survival and essence discloses his treatment of the subject as pure philosophy or wisdom of yore. Such aspects of the functioning mind as perception, cognition leading to human understanding, besides recollection, imagination, ideas, inclinations and movements, both voluntary and instinctive—which are of course the irrefutable proof of their existence just as is the case with the vanishing properties of matter—have seldom attracted the attention of the philosopher. Like Aristotle and other philosophers, he does not look upon what are considered to be the events or effects of the mind as the necessary aspects of a subject calling for scientific approach. His attention was mainly attracted by the mind itself as the crux of the problem while the discussion of its active behaviour was something purely subservient to the aforesaid fundamental problem which he has baffled throughout the ages some of the great philosophers and psychologists.

To modern psychologists, the human mind is still an enigma. Hence they have diverted their attention naturally to a new school of thought known as the 'behaviourist' as well as the modern technique called, 'psycho-analysis.' Classical philosophy has always treated of mind under one of the chapters of the entire range of discussion and many of the eminent philosophers have

tried to discuss the problem as suited to their own systems of thought seldom attending to some of its practical aspects and compelling effects. Most of the distinguished philosophers, like Ibn-I-Sina, would describe or point the entity of mind as something in the nature of an 'essence' as opposed to something material, wholly independent of the body invested with certain powers. These philosophers as well as psychologists have in their own ways defined what is called 'mind and its various faculties giving it a functioning character. Ibn-I-Sina, however, that view the mind is a celestial essence and immortal by nature. Even today, the question of mind or soul is as important as ever, and one does not like to be simply told in a mournful strain :

"That life is just an empty dream And things are not what they seem."



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF KARL JASPERS

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1. The Turn Toward Existenz. 2. Existenz and Communication.
3. The Circumceptive and Transcendence. 4. Ciphers and Philosophical Belief. 5. The Philosophy of Existenz Inaluated.

*The Turn Toward Existenz.* The philosophy of Existenz found an eloquent spokesman in the person of *Karal Jaspers*. Initially this thinker was a psychiatrist specializing in psychopathology, which seeks to define the life of the soul by means of the abnormal. Jasper's first important work was *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* (1913). "Life itself is always a whole", and only through the whole can it be grasped; life can never be grasped from physio-chemical details. In *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (1919, 1929), psychology of world-views, Jaspers developed a theory of types involving the various modes of psychic representation. This was a substantial contribution to characterology. His initial interest in psychology enabled Jaspers, in his later philosophical investigations, to delve with extraordinary profundity into the relationships of genuine human and existential conduct and to analyze these relationships in their generic essentiality. In his view however, an ontology in the sense of Heidegger seems *insuimphihable*.

Not until 1932 did Jaspers step forth as an actual philosopher of Existenz. He inaugurated this with a work entitled *Philosophie* which was divided into three parts: (1) The philosophical orientation in the world, (2) Elucidation of Existenz, and (3) Metaphysics. Jaspers philosophy is not as delineated as, for example, that of Heidegger; but it is bound more to tradition and is at the same time more historically oriented. Attention to the problems of religious thought is one of Jaspers' strongest tendencies, even though he does not think that ultimate unequivocal answers in philosophy, religion and metaphysics are possible. According to him it is not the task of philo-

sophy to give us binding, finally valid answers, objective knowledge and ultimate meaning, even though these questions have a most intimate share in our communication with others.

Jaspers maintains that the "philosophical world-orientation" is quite different from the "scientific world-orientation", of the particular sciences. Contrary to the belief of former generations the scientific world-orientation is not able to outline a closed picture of the world. In fact, no discipline is able to conjoin into a united whole the diverse strata of reality (physis, bios, psyche, spiritmind, for each soon arrives at the limits of the objectively knowable. The realms of knowledge stand, rather, next and opposite to one another, just as they are found in the faculties of the modern university. If we attempt to unify them on the basis of a positivistic way of thinking, then the failure becomes complete because this method tries to generalize its findings absolutely. In the same way it is futile to attempt an idealistic-transcendental deduction in which, according to Jaspers, the spiritmind tries to "fixate" its data by means of objectification. The word "fixate" was used by German idealism against rationalism and is here used against idealism itself (New kantianism). Jaspers contends that genuine philosophy however, always leads us "to the ultimate limits and origins of our human *being*", which cannot be observed by the methods of positivism or transcendental idealism.

Therefore we have to enter into the area referred to as the human Existenz of the subject, which can never be given as an object and which cannot be separated from the being of the world (Weltsein). The singularity and originality of the individual ego, which cannot be exchanged for any other individual, now supersedes the ego of the reason, an ego which can be interchanged for any other insofar as it deals with universals and not with the ultimately singular. The best access to this sphere is found through the elucidation of human "border situation", which we encounter in death, sorrow, and in the metaphysical anxiety aroused by conflict and guilt, for "to experience border situations is the same as to exist".

With this point of departure it is clear that "obstantial objectification" (*gegenständliche Objektivierung*), that is, "formifications of the understanding", cannot give us access to the sphere of human Existenz. Instead, we must first of all radically set aside the "repose of the understanding" which merely registers experiences. Therefore the preconditions and criteria of genuine philosophizing are movement and striving, affectivity, openness and astonishment. In this we recognize the characteristic of dynamism often prominent in German thought, which in its restlessness frequently rejects any attitude which might complacently regard accepted concepts as sufficient. Such a dynamism can also lead to point where any inner lingering and asheltering form cannot emerge. Jaspers says, therefore, that more is gained through a constant inner questioning (*Infrage-Stellung*) than in the counterfeiting of contents of fixed by "thought as definitives (cf. Schelling, Hegel). It should thus be no cause to surprise when Jaspers says that the law of contradiction is only a specific form of thought and is "in no way provable". How can we then, according to him, refer to a logos-defined substantiality and presuppose an intelligible ground. "In the evaporating of all content, being becomes feelable" he says. This "delimitation" of objectifications and concepts is to be accomplished in a way reminiscent of the romantic movement.

Existential philosophy thus no longer has to do with "know-abilities" as in the sciences, and it is a basic error to require this of it. According to Jaspers, and in this he is on Heidegger's side, there is a higher mode of thought than that which knows the knowable. It would be better to speak of an "unobstantial" (*ungegenständlich*) thought which cannot be conceptually defined, for according to the existential philosophers any explication of an ineffable complex of meaning is doomed to failure. It is therefore assumed that this higher mode of thought has to do with ineffable complexes of meaning. Naturally, in order to make ourselves understandable (cf. Heidegger's notion of illumination as concealment, *Verbergung*), we are always forced into the illusory attempt to objectify. In existential thought, therefore, the "confinement to objects" of rational philosophy finds its dialectically opposite position in the being of the ego and the subject.

We are justified in saying that in a most general sense Jaspers stands under the influence of Kant. When we wish to grasp experienceable reality, our statements thereof are bound to the limitations of our thought; and it is shown to be a falsification when, philosophically, the foreground world of phenomena is overstepped. Just as in the sphere of noumenal being, the suprasensible realm, Kant wishes to overstep the finite foreground world without making objective, constitutive statements, so does Jaspers wish to push forward to existence and transcendence. He is ever aware, however, that man's endeavors are inevitably and ultimately doomed to failure, to *Scheitern*, which we shall not translate in the usual way as "failure", but as "defraction".<sup>1</sup> However, it is precisely this defraction which motivates the leap to transcendence; for, according to Jaspers, in defraction we experience being.

In his extraordinary work *Von der Wahrheit* (1947) Jaspers says, in line with the aforementioned basic aspect of his philosophy, that there are *diverse truths* and that we cannot embrace them all in a single univocal truth. Each truth is approached by means of a different inner gauge or standard of measure, depending upon the manner of the question. I can question according to the rational correctness of "consciousness as such" (*Bessufstrein ueberhaupt*), in regard to the purposiveness of *Dasein* or I can inquire about the truth of beings and their ideas. Existential truth, however, is expressed most profoundly as "agreement with my possible Existenz". This involves no finished or "fixed" knowledge, which is left to the sciences, for truth is accomplished as every individual's own "inner doing". The every occurring "primoriginality" (*Ursprünglichkeit*) of truth manifests itself therein; this can be fulfilled only in human communication. In all of this we discover two conspicuous and recurring characteristics of German philosophy (1) the orientation towards the active actualization as the decisive "peractualization" (*Vollzug*), which is constantly changing and (2) the emphasis on that which occurs only once *specific uniqueness*, (*das Einmalige*) in the human communication, which is granted us.

Jaspers tells us, further, that truth is an agreement with that which is intended or meant (*das Gemeinte*). This does not signify, nevertheless, that this truth is in the traditional sense an *adaequatio*, a conformation with the object (*Gegenstand*); for according to Jaspers all knowledge of agreement is to be overcome in favour of "inner truth". If we try to grasp the assumed "unity of truth", its "apprehendability" is completely lost to us. It is even questionable whether a definiteness of meaning as a correlate for "the whole as such" may be accepted. At any rate, if such is possible, it cannot be elucidated. The source of Jaspers' reluctance to accept the conventional and traditional notions of truth is his attempt to overcome the dichotomy between subject and object, which Heidegger also attempts. This was also a tendency of German idealism and the epoch of romanticism. In order that an object as *obstant* (*Objekt als Gegenstand*) not be given objectively and validly for all, there should not even be a subject standing over against an obstant. In philosophical enquiry we much decidedly renounce a subject object dichotomy. At its deepest ground, philosophy is thus "undogmatic". We, however, can question Jaspers: Is this not a dogmatism of another color insofar as its enunciations in their turn exclude any other view?

What does Jaspers wish to tell us about Existenz and about the aforementioned existential truth? "Existenz", he says, "is... origin, out of which I think and do... Existenz is that which relates itself to itself and therein to its transcendence... Possible Existenz lies in factively given Dasein as an appeal, which is a constant being-underway and not a mere "consistency" in constant danger of slipping away Existenz speaks out of its own ground, out of its individual core; in it I find my subjective unconditionality, which seizes me in the instant of fulfilled certitude, even though as something "definitely valid it has no consistence". However, Existenz is not at all to be regarded as a merely arbitrary subjectivity because that which encounters me in it is indeed authentic being, even though the Existenz is accomplished in a manner which is my own and not binding for others. The truth given in Existenz is always individually my own and is therefore uncommensurable. Truth bound to Existenz is thus thoroughly different from the objective kind

of truth achieved by the rational thought of the "scientific world-orientation", which under the existential aspect represents an unforced, "mere" subjectivity (cf. Heidegger). Confronted with Existenz, the objectivities of so-called scientific truth harden into "indifference", because through them "I do not yet know what I am" and remain "unfathomed".

It is no wonder that when according to Jaspers the historical epoch and the various metaphysics which develop within it merely attain their own individual truth, out of which we can detect the language of transcendence in "appropriating metaphysics (cf. Hegel). It is a restrictive acknowledgment of a relativizing kind, but observed according to Jaspers by reason of "existential breadth". This should also be said of our contemporary thought. One's own "enlumination of Existenz" (*Existenzerhellung*) is not an objective insight binding for all; it is only of a symbolic nature, not fixed but unsubstantial knowledge. If we do attempt to express it in a general statement, then it must be expressed like this: "In all speaking about Existenz in Dasein there always remains an insuperable ambiguity".

Nevertheless, we do find that the ambiguity is not so great that it prevents Jaspers from making statements about Existenz, transcendence, liminal situations, communication, and even about God. And these statements do intend to convey a meaningful content, for otherwise they could not be imparted to and made familiar to us. We must recognize, however, that all ultimate enluminations of Existenz must somehow remain in suspension *Lihwebe* because our philosophical ethos is, in fact, a constant state of struggle.

In a way characteristic of him, Jaspers sketches the antagonism between the universal validity of cognition and the unconditionality of existential insight. According to him, for example, Galileo was not willing to die for his universally valid, natural scientific conceptual knowledge, whereas the pantheistic philosopher of nature Giordano Bruno did die for his unconditionally perceived existential belief. This is what Jaspers means by existential conviction. It thus has a wholly different basis than does a theory establi-

shed without its ever having touched the inner realm of one's own Existenz, of one's existential being. As such, existential conviction is certain and only my own.

Yet it can be said against Jaspers that Bruno went to his death for his existenzial insight precisely because he was convinced that he was enunciating not just something subjectively perceived but rather an unconditionally valid truth demanding universal acceptance, even though as pantheism it stood in opposition to the theistic Christian tradition of his time. Psychologically another interpretation would not be possible for giordano Brunox. In our opinion Jaspers, because of his own "fixations", by-passes the effective reality of human life so far as man is only then capable of completely valid, or existenzial, engagement when he, apart from personal advantage, is convinced of the objectively and not just the subjectively valid value. But the possibility of solerance is also given in the case of an objective conviction.

The deepest and truest that Jaspers has to say seems to be in regard to the notion of "*existential decision*". It is accomplished in *communication*, in the open-hearted encounter with other persons. Along with it my authentic self-being also opens itself. The possibility of such an elevated fulfilment actually determines the "order of rank of the Existenzes". Only in this way is true philosophizing possible. In the dialogue with the "other", the aforementioned existenzial truth then becomes veracity; and in the mutual struggle with it, our convictions lay themselves bare. If this attitude is not maintained, all love in communication becomes questionable. The presupposition for this is naturally that in the struggle for existential insight at least a suppressed unrest persists, for otherwise it would lose its inner motivity.

Furthermore, according to Jaspers "communication has not even begun to be existential when it is not conscious of the danger of its being interrupted". For him there is simply no assured persistency. Also, I destroy existential communication "when I seek it with as many as possible", for then I remain merely on the surface of human relationship. The communicative relation proceedings from the I to the Thou is often unique. Hence I must not try to talk the other into something which he actually does

not desire, nor should I force myself upon him. I must be ready to listen to his own answer. A failure in communication results when one does not accept this relation, this state of drawnness to the other; it then effects us "like an actual loss of being". But "I become desolate when I am only I"; What is true not only for me is true, which does not mean that of a generally valid truth. In this sense I must also say: "I cannot love myself when I do not love another". The surties for this relationship are the insights, thoughts and convictions which bring about an inner contact. Jaspers thus asks: "Which thoughts are necessary to make the deepest communication possible?"

Like Heidegger, Jaspers sees man residing in "history" (*Geschichtlichkeit*). In his well-known work *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (1948),<sup>1</sup> he refers to "axial periods" in human history. One such period was from 800 to 500 B. C. when Confucius, Lao Tzu, Buddha and the Hebrew prophets spoke to mankind; which corresponds to the tremendous transformation of our world through modern technology. But as Jaspers said in 1931 in *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, we are today still confronted with Nothingness (Kierkegaard) and are losing the ground under our feet. With the help of technology, modern day sciences have created a universal "apparatus for Dasein (thereness) in order to cover up Nothingness, to delude oneself and, shall we say, to establish a dogmatics of Nothingness. "In losing the substance of my self, I sense Nothingness"; concomitantly there occurs "a poverty of spirit, humanity, love and creative power. "When a new axial period comes, it can lie only in the future" (cf. Heidegger). Jaspers' view here is astonishingly negative; and despite the genuineness of his observations, the creative and promising aspects of the present are not touched upon.

Existenz, which is always individually my own unique and not substitutable, is thus ever imbedded in the historical Dasein of its time and is subject to its necessity. Nevertheless, Existenz asserts itself beyond this in the sphere of *freedom* (cf. Kant); it rises above temporality and, in the so highly valued *existential instant*, is even able to bring us into touch with time-



lessness (cf. romanticism's notion of the "instant"). None of this can be proved or explained by rationalistic objectual thought, for it is rather in the very performance of freedom that I become conscious of freedom, as well as of the transcendence which is concealed. The frequent discussions of determinism and indeterminism are thus not relevant to the existential phenomenon of freedom, for to the question of freedom they apply a set of terms and conceptions which stem from a completely different realm and which are therefore not commensurate. Through free choice I obligate myself to that which is coming (cf. Sartre); in this choice I bring about my Existenz, and then my *self* breaks forth. A choice is always the *wisk* (wagnis) of an arational decision, is thus an existential decision. But in performing this choice I always somehow acquire a certain guilt because I have cut myself off from other possibilities cf. Heidegger. Ultimate clarity cannot be attained; and I find myself in a paradoxical situation, which I must admit, however, for it is in this admission that I preserve myself from pharisaical presumption or hybris.

*The Circumceptive and Transcendence.* In my preparedness to accept the aforementioned circumstance. I, as philosophizer, approach the "whole world-being", the entirety of the world's being, its total beingness,,. Confronted by it, I encounter this being insofar as it is" in the modes of *des Umgreifende*. "the circumceptive"<sup>1</sup>. The circumceptive is neither subject nor object, nor is its essence ultimately explainable or clarifiable. I must always "retreat" whenever attempting to grasp it is objectual rational thought"; for here I have to do with that being which circumspects us as world and transcendence, with that "being, which we are": Dasein spirit mind and consciousness in general as such. This disposition contrast sharply with the Greek attempt to arrive at an objectivistic clarification of a cosmos governed by logos. According to Jaspers, a more genuine question would be a non-objectivistic clarification of the whole in its relations. The latter frame of mind, as opposed to that of the Greek disposition, the calls "Nordic". Of course, it can be asked if Jaspers himself has ever been able to carry through a non-objectivistic clarification of the whole in its relations, at least consistently; for does not every attempt to convey meaning eventually have recourse

to substantial objectal though, even though it be ultimately inadequate? According to him, we must eventually risk the leap to the circumceptive, which we actually are", for it is our own Existenz. Even though there is an essential difference, we can say that just as spiritimind "wants to become whole," so Existenz "wants to become actual, authentic being" (cf. Heidegger). Nevertheless, into this last depth no thought can reach.

Just what is the being-in-itself, the *Ansich-Sein*, of *transcendence*? It does not reveal itself until we are in the face of "defraction" (*Scheitern*) that state of existential shipwreck. Hence it is understandable that for Jaspers it always remains hidden, non-objectual and never univocal. Also we can never identify it with the being of finitude. But is this a sensible undertaking when from the very start it is clear to us that every conceptual representation, every statement is "evanescent" and thus "cancelled out"? Cannot an ultimate metaphysical meaning be bound up with this transcendence?—and is it not a depotentialization of the spiritual endeavor to exclude even the possibility of an answering statement to this question? According to Jaspers, a reluctance to answer these questions does *not* connote a deprivation of the mind's capacity; to conclude in that way would be to misunderstand him. Apparently for Jaspers, as for Lessing, the 18th century man of letters, the quest for truth is of more value than the possession of truth. For him the attainment of inner rapport and interiorization of being suffices; it is of more consequence than the distortions of objectivization. Thus transcendence is "the being in the fracture of all Dasein (therefore) for us it is a "negative limit," indeed a "transcendence," which completely superscends us. But we stand in constant relation to it and remain certain as to what "is essential only for Existenz", because "Existenz exists only in relation to transcendence." Herewith our inner being grows, especially as we constantly remain conscious of this higher horizon. In this way "transcendence (is) the being for us who are Existenz. Let us go a step further It encounters, us in the incomprehensible moment of eternity in temporality (German Idealism; it is the absolute in the face of finitude; it is delimited, equivocal "unclosedness". This is a way of speaking which reminds us of the mode of perception common to the romanticists; but apparently if any-

thing is to be meant with the word, it does intend to impart a meaningful reference even though we are warned against hastily jumping to conclusions, *i.e.* conclusive statements. Evidently we have here merely a "transcending," which means more than it does with Heidegger, for we ought to accomplish a radical superscension of the being of the world because Existenz is not itself sufficient.

"The modes of the circumceptive" show us "the self-producing and closed-in-itself origin of transcendence". Yet we can distinguish between a so-called unauthentic transcendence, which encounters us in every circum-, mceptive, and an authentic transcendence, the "circumceptive of all circumceptives". Even though the distinction between both realms may remain unclear, it is nevertheless clear that here we are standing before the ultimate secret toward which the risk of the inner ascent and the freedom of my essential self-being draws itself to completion. This comes-to-be within me; and it is achieved above all when, in the aforementioned human border situation, I am suddenly and to tally overcome with self-questioning of the human being who stands alone. In the superscension all seems to be disharmonious. My response can be disjunctive: either I respond with full acceptance and trust, or I defiantly rebel in the face of the overporering questionably of being. These are the two prototypical modes of response which Friedrich Nietzsche and Oswald Spengler both referred to as the primal trust and the primal mistrust of man in the face of the whole world. Jaspers has not been able to achieve an inner conjunction of the two. But, on the other hand, who has?

Like Heidegger, Jaspers also speaks of the "Nothingness" which encounters us when we try to advance to the last things: "Transcendence is the Nothingness". Our dismay becomes seven more penetrating when we say that transcendence represents "Nothingness as well as authentic being", that it is not able to be given to us and that for us it has lost all definiteness of contour. In the last analysis, we cannot even say if it is absolute plenitude or absolute emptiness, for all is "simply to be doubted... as if it had disappeared". It has been remarked that such notions are reminiscent of the

old tradition of so-called negative theory, which Jaspers seems to prefer apositive theology. The ultimate is thus effable only in negative expressions, such as in-finite, un-spatial, in-temporal. Nevertheless, Jasper's notion of Nothingness is much different than its signification in traditional negative theology.

Jaspers also speaks of the *deity*; but he does not explicate its sense any further because sense (*Sinn*) is only a particular temporal category containing limited reference and objective determinations. On the contrary, in the deity there lies "the identity of sense and non-sense. Nevertheless, a notion must be connected with it if the word is to be used at all. Indeed, Jaspers does give the word a content when he states that the deity is "above all world and before all world", is "absolute true unity" and is "ranked before everything". It even gives us "support", even thought the idea of a personal deity or the "idea of One God" cannot be spoken of.

We enture to ask: with what right does Jaspers refer to kinds of religious convictions different from his own as a mere "rational encasement" especially when we think of the early Protestant concept of belief. He does not see the essential difference between a rational deduction simply and an existentially accepted spiritual, objective content; further more, Jaspers restricts himself to the opposition between objective, so-called dead fixations and subjectively abiding decision.

*Ciphers and Philosophical Belief.* But why do we continue to strive?—because in our striving a constant summons to transcendence fulfills itself, even though we do not achieve the transcendence itself. *Ciphers* are for Jaspers the sings of the enlumination of the un-enluminatable. Since such ciphers are not varifiable, everything remains in suspension. Because our powers of represatation are thereby exceeded, it is not possible to compare the sign with that which is to be signified. Yet Jaspers does reiterate that symbols, even though without a possibility of interpretation, do serve as "analogies" in "presenting the deity" to us. The ciphers are thus the "messengers of God." They are the only way open to us. Jaspers is prepared to say that we can gain newly fulfilled obslouts" and be adappealobe

to them. We thus have a "share in being". The unfulfilled transcendence becomes an enterprise which, as struggle, completes and elevates at least our Existenz, for otherwise our highest endeavors would be valueless and lead nowhere. This is of decisive importance.

But we should not take such positive formulations as final setiacedy and completely definitive; for the Existenz of "Philosophical belief", (1942), if it is genuine, always stands "in the reflexion of radical putting-in-question" Furthermore, the aforementioned "defraction", as the encompassing ground of the being of all ciphers and the language of the absolute, must also be present. How could it be otherwise, since for us "finitude is not to be overstepped", and every form of truth must defract in the face of any such attempt (cf. Kant)? "Defraction as thinking-of-truth can fall into its abyss, but a thought in it will not hold". We will always begin anew and enduringly bear our anguish in the face of "the abyss casting us into shuddering and vertigo". Dialectically, however, this abyss can confront us with the last positivity, and one can speak of an apotheosis of defraction, which ought not to be underestimated since it is a basic psychological phenomenon in Jaspers' conception of human existence. This eternal seeking and self-endeavor, which never reaches a given goal, appears in its turn to be an ever-recurring characteristic of the German spirit.

In keeping with this outlook, it may be said that "we are becoming incapable of believing in the harmony of being" (cf. Tillich) especially when it is maintained that ultimate unity is "the identity of sense and non-sense". For thousands of years the harmony of the cosmos taught by the Greeks was accepted; but now because of modernday catastrophes it appears questionable. It is only an "illusory belief", which "springs from the mere inferiority of life". Such a presupposition would only too greatly ease our Dasein which, when rightly understood, is basically heroic and tragic (cf. Nietzsche) The unrest, the suspension, the defraction stand in the foreground. The tone of our Existenz is determined by the striving and struggling, the overcoming and the power of act, and by eternally seeking without getting a final, clarifying answer. Falleness if not sinfulness, meets us on all sides.

All of these states, here extremely intensified, are derived from a definite soulic disposition in the German nature. The object of view thus does not so much lie in the relatively fulfilled field of finite being; and even the classical ideal of partial achievement (cf. Goethe) is thanklessly overlooked. Hence the following statement is characteristic of Jaspers: "Each should make it existentially as difficult as possible for himself and also for others." Nietzsche one said that the Germans want to become *schwer* "heavy" about everything, *i.e.* they make everything weighty and difficult. Thus it follows that even the religious need for salvation is by Jaspers disdained. All of this betrays an outlook which admits of the primacy of inner, soulic dynamism and which is not amenable to the "easing of life" (Nietzsche). Such an ethos appears ever again in German philosophy. Compare, for example, Kant's rigorous ethic with Goethe's joyous affirmation of existence. In secular life this is underlined by the notion of *burdensomeness*, of the "unshelteredness" of human existence. But if genuine love is to prevail, says Jaspers, then we must learn to bear and sustain one another.

Be that as it may, we can already observe a countermovement in Germany which talks about the inner "new shelteredness" (Bollnow) and which sees that all higher, creative beginning come from affirmation. Precisely the joy over acquired positive value-insights is able to elevate man and to give meaning to life. Does not an all too burdensome viewpoint of actual adexistence include the defects and extreme attitudes which we in Germany have already experienced? Jaspers, who demands much of us, would deny this insofar as he summons us to win our own Existenz, to preserve the relation to transcendence and to hold it ever in viable inner communication.

Finally, "In radical detachment" we avert ourselves from all orderly distinctions and divert ourselves to a *unio mystica* with the One. But in what does this consist? If we inquire in this manner, "we push into what is for us a void". Instead we should be content with this "not-knowing as a new way of unobjectual knowing" (*gegenstandsloses Wissen*). It is an a reverential endeavor which cannot take on a form regardless of how great

its effort to overstep the confines of finitude. And if we try to understand the ultimate meaning, we again transfer our human notions to the prominent world. We are not at all justified in applying our inner spiritual structure of meaning to the "One-Divine", for this is the authentic transcendent which cannot be touched nor given and which has no definitely signifiable content. Having thus established his own notion of transcendence, Jaspers then finds room to acknowledge the rights of religious belief next to his own "philosophical belief". Of course, religious belief can be acknowledged in its merely "sensible particularity"; nevertheless, Jaspers speaks of "real transcendence". The religious secure or sheltered person, therefore, does not know the eternal unrest of the philosophizing man in his existential endeavors and in his "risking of radical openness": "The philosopher who actually arrives at belief was never really philosophizing". Only here in the purity and the philosophizing man evident. Even though religion and philosophy both have their rights and form a kind of "double truth", Jaspers give philosophy the priority. In philosophical belief there occurs an existential manifestation be modest and admit belief.

5. *The Philosophy of Existence Evaluated.* In the movement called *Existential philosophy* we encountered the summons to the inner integrity, ultimateness, authenticity and decisiveness of human existence. In it man is called upon to realize these states of being while, according to Heidegger, in the supersession itself he accomplishes transcendence; or, according to Jaspers, while turning towards the One, towards transcendence, he is ever again renewed in the very act of transcending. Also characteristic is a strong metaphysical tendency, already present in Immanuel Kant, which abjures any rational foundation and all speculation. But in the case of existentialism it is permissible to substitute Heidegger's pre-cognitive cogitation or Jasper's cipher. Therefore for Jasper's in authentic philosophizing, the cipher does not define anything and a fixing statement about being is to be disdained; everything must remain in suspension and stand open to many possibilities. In contrast to Heidegger, Jasper's existential affirmation is always followed by a negation. The danger of misuse and confusion which this implies was seen by Jaspers himself (*Vernunft und Widervernunft*, 1951)<sup>1</sup>. So, like Hegel,

he not distinguishes between rational understanding and a reason (Vernunft) bound to Existenz. Yet, we may ask, how does this succeed in achieving an inner obligation for mankind and in preparing the way for a responsible entrance into the community? Can everything be ultimately questionable, or even remain nugatory? A statement which does not carry an obligation with it serves no thing, and in our opinion the existential attitude demands for its own self a valid truth which seizes and obligates me inwardly and existentially, for otherwise in life's long run I shall fail or break down.

The question for the problem of Existenz can be conceived as a justified counterblow against pure phenomenology, which restricted itself to beholding a priori essences. Existentialism turned away from the eidetic a priori and inquired into the problems of the un-conditionality of individual experience, of the actually unique and of the historicity of each and every human endeavor, regarding it as utterly important. But did not this philosophy, originating antithetically even in the pathos of its urgency, go to its own extreme so that it did not proceed beyond the analysis, however genuine, specifically unique, the actual Existenz? And does it not remain unable to find a possibility of including its merely human Existenz in the manifold relations of the whole of ontic reality, which itself demands an inquiry of much greater comprehensiveness? The question of the general, essential features of a thing must always be united with the individual-concrete situation of Dasein, which is in every case preferred so that a spiritual guidance of life and its foundations can be maintained. Hence there has come forth in Germany another direction of thought which could be called direction of thought the philosophy of *lebendiger Geist*, of the "living spirit" which endeavors to bring the existential and phenomenological extremes together in a higher spiritual unity. The influence of this philosophy is contemporary with that of *Existenzphilosophie* (Eduard Tranger, Nicolai Harneen and others).