

The Physics of Karma

A Requiem to Time

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TIME AND I

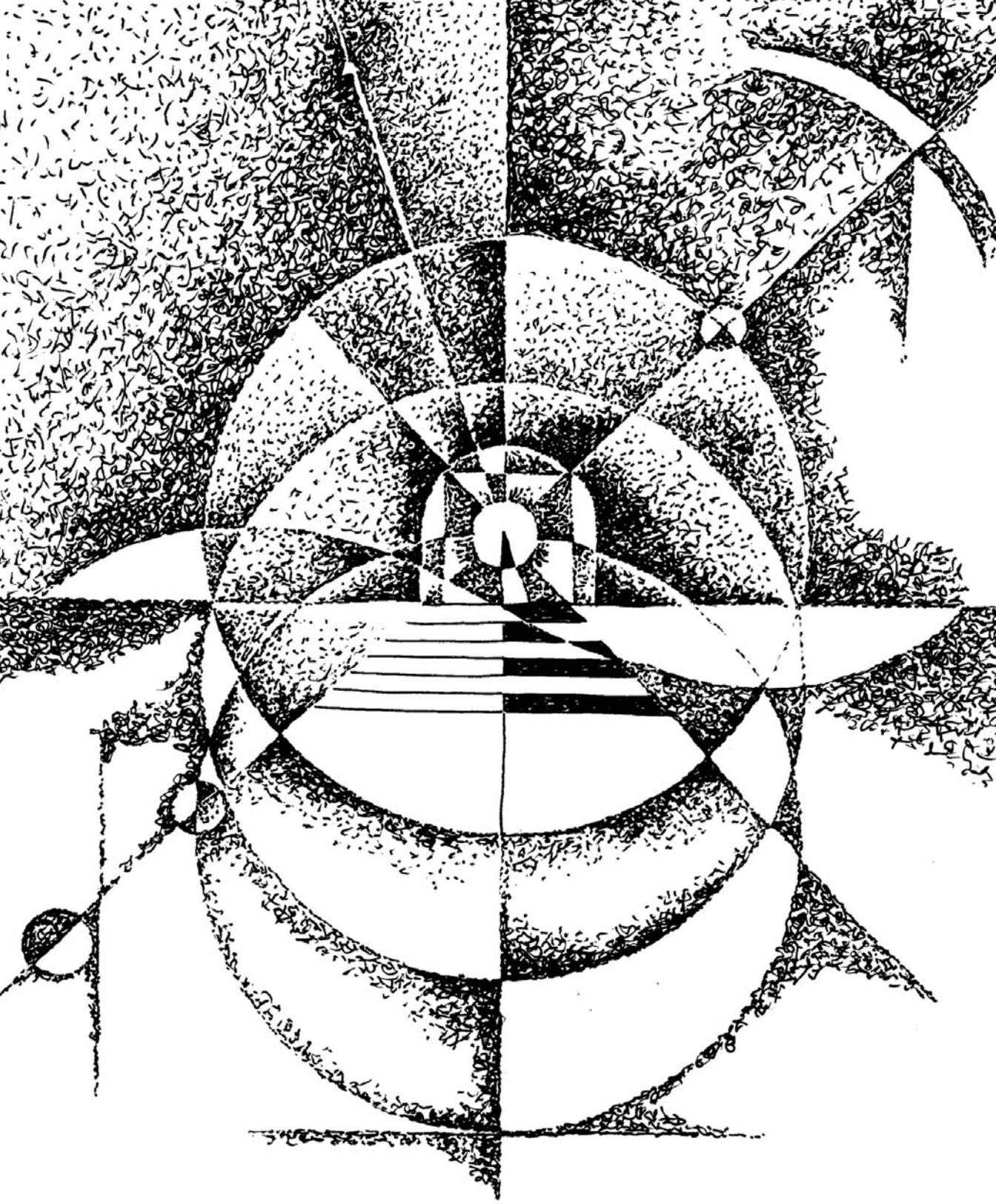
WHAT IS IT THAT ENDURES?

The mere asking of the question has placed Time on a plane apart. It is through the eyes of time that the search must be made. That which is endowed by Time with longer duration will through some untested logic bear the seal of greater authenticity, and possess in our minds a reality that is forfeited by that which could not last as long.

The question has arisen because I see with certainty my own finitude. Fear or hope, and a desperate need for consolation, prompt me to speculate upon the nature of Infinity and its relevance to me. Knowing the answer might reveal to me the utmost possibilities of my circumscribed existence so that I may live and strive and aspire for not a whit less than that which lies within my grasp and, when this short and swift life faces extinction, I may depart with the courageous conviction that, though I was denied more than I was granted, I did not deny myself.

The question is vaster than asking which species of life will endure or which moral values will be upheld. These are all components of change whereas the question is posted in ultimate terms, raising its voice to heaven and demanding to be told whether change is unending or will yield to changelessness. And in a torrent of arrogance and urgency, the question expands itself – nay, explains itself – asking: Which of them endures: Sound or silence? Light or darkness? Indeed, life or death?

Then the mind, recoiling from its own audacity, settles down to examine its experiences after the echoes of its anguished cry have faded



away, fetching no answer from the beyond. The answer has to be found within, in terms of the empirical truths it has lived by.

Sounds arise and subside while silence precedes and again prevails. Can there be sound unto eternity? The mind can conceive sound only with a beginning and therefore an end, while silence must ultimately reign supreme.

Our lights are lit to glow awhile and fade. Ah, but what of the sun? Tell me, O Mind, if the sun had an origin, was not darkness the first possessor of space? And when the sun has burnt itself up in its long exuberance, shall not darkness close in over its ashes, without a sigh, almost as though the sun had never been? Can light challenge forever the power and persistence of darkness?

Thus then must heat yield to cold, motion to stillness, and—why labour the fact too long?—life to death. And when silent, dark, cold and still space is the face of death, Time remains the sole spectator, the only historical witness of the usurper who laid claim awhile to a throne that was not his, and was finally vanquished.

But Time itself has remained disdainfully unconcerned amidst the upheavals of these conflicts, circumscribing all happenings and existences, and exceeding their eternity. Time is the monarch whose domain is silence and stillness. The very same qualities that the mind had perceived as negative now assert their supremacy at the behest of Time and finally negate the positive. Death is the power of Time, the enforcer of submission. All my life I have been; through sound and silence I have been and through light and darkness I have been, but now it seems that my journey will end in the vortex of a void. But if darkness did not rob me of sight, and silence did not destroy my hearing, how can it be that death will deprive me of life?

Instead of finding an answer to its question, the mind has only succeeded in landing itself in a paradox, unless yes, unless life and death do not stand in the same opposition to one another as do light and darkness, or sound and silence, unless the accustomed usage of words has deceived my mind into a

grievous error And it is *living* that stands opposed to death, not Life.

Then, Life is no less eternal than Time. And the question has changed. Time which, assuming an imperial posture, seemed to be beyond the pale of my enquiry, has become suspect.

The question now is: Am I in Time?

Or, I dare to ask, is Time in me?