

Four Essays  
By Leonard Read

Foreword by  
Edwin J. Feulner, Ph.D.

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The first twelve President's Essays have been collected as  
*The March of Freedom* by Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.

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## Foreword

**V**ictor Hugo famously said that “an invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come.” It is difficult to think of a more stirring illustration of that truth than the founding of the United States, the first nation in history established on the idea that people are by nature equal and free. It is one thing, however, to found a free nation, and quite another to maintain it. When the Constitutional Convention adjourned in 1787, a Mrs. Powell of Philadelphia is said to have asked Benjamin Franklin what kind of government the Convention had created. Franklin reportedly replied, “A republic, madam—if you can keep it.”

Some 45 years later, Alexis de Tocqueville toured America and recorded his observations in *Democracy in America*. In it he often addressed the underlying question that Franklin had skeptically alluded to: Can we keep our republic? Intentionally or not, Tocqueville was speaking to that question when he wrote:

I think that in no country in the civilized world is less attention paid to philosophy than in the United States. The Americans have no philosophical school of their own, and they care but little for all the schools into which Europe is divided, the very names of which are scarcely known to them.<sup>1</sup>

That is an astonishing observation when you consider that the American Founding was one of the most profoundly philosophical achievements in modern history. Thus, Tocqueville's observation is worrisome, for if Americans as a people do not sufficiently understand and appreciate the philosophical principles—the fundamental ideas—that sustain our freedoms, we run the risk of losing them. That prospect seems more worrisome today than in Tocqueville's time, especially in light of the moral relativism and “political correctness” that have wormed their way into the heart of our educational institutions. The consequences of this are clear. Assessments of cultural literacy show that during the latter half of the 20th century, young Americans were taught less and less about the ideas in which their priceless legacy of freedom is rooted.

And yet the picture is not entirely dark, for in a complex and diverse culture such as ours, ideas are transmitted through many channels at many levels, not just through the formal institutions of education. Freedom itself has spawned countless intellectual midwives: pundits, pamphleteers, and other non-academic writers. Working through popular media, they continually translate and transmit abstract ideas to people who, as Tocqueville noted, pay little attention to philosophy. The effectiveness of these midwives in preserving fundamental moral and political ideas is not fanciful. Ideas that originated with such giants as Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Adam Smith—among scores of others—are alive today in the minds of millions of Americans who never read a line from any of those authors. It was intellectual midwives who translated those ideas for popular consumption.

The four essays collected here for this year's President's Essay were written by such a translator: Leonard Read. They are testaments to the power of intellectual midwifery. Born in 1898, Read established the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE)

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1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), Vol. 2, p. 3.

in 1946. By the time of his death in 1983, he had published 27 books and hundreds of articles and pamphlets. He also traveled millions of miles delivering speeches and lectures on the theme that was nearest to his heart, the beauty and genius of the American experiment, and he was one of a relative handful of happy warriors who resuscitated serious scholarship on the principles of free markets. (FEE is still very much alive today, guided by the able hand of Donald J. Boudreaux. From its Web site at [www.fee.org](http://www.fee.org), friends of freedom can obtain reams of useful material, including many of Read's articles and books.)

I first met Read in November 1963. The circumstances were a bit unusual. I had been reading *The Freeman*, FEE's monthly journal, and was intrigued by its non-political articles covering not only economics but also history. Clarence Carson's *Basic History of the United States* was then being serialized in *The Freeman*. At that time I was a graduate student at the Wharton School in Philadelphia. Upon receiving a brochure from FEE about a seminar at its headquarters in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, I wrote to Leonard Read and explained my circumstances: I was working my way through graduate school and had been involved with the Intercollegiate Studies Institute as both an undergraduate and graduate student. With this as my preamble, I asked if perhaps he would provide a scholarship for me to participate in the program described in FEE's brochure.

Read sent a prompt reply that showed he was as much a teacher as I was a student. He told me that although he admired my diligence and my commitment to the free-market system, he was confident that I was capable of advancing my own education by finding a way to pay the registration fee, which, as I recall, was about \$75. I thought about that and admitted to myself that there really is no such thing as a free lunch. And so I resolved to dip into my spending money for the registration fee (which, by the way, paid for room and board as well as tuition).

With an effort well short of the heroic, I ponied up the money and went to the seminar. My exposure there to Ed Opitz, Paul Poirot, Bill Peterson, and, of course, Leonard Read himself, was

a mind-stretching experience for an intellectually inquisitive graduate student who had been concentrating on such mundane matters as marginal- vs. average-cost pricing of transportation products, and key statutes on labor relations. In other words, it was good to get back to first principles.

In the years that followed, I came to know Leonard more intimately as a friend and advisor. He was a founding member of the Mont Pelerin Society. That fact is significant because, unlike the other founders—nearly 40 scholars who included Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Jim Buchanan—Leonard was more a popularizer than an originator of free-market ideas. He had that rare ability to assimilate the theoretical arguments of trained economists and translate them into terms that resonate with laymen. In short, he was an intellectual midwife, a craft that was still in its formative stages when Tocqueville toured America in the early 19th century. If that keen French observer could have returned in the late 20th century, he would have had to write at least one new chapter on this species of public intellectual. Leonard Read would figure prominently in such a chapter, for he could, in Kipling's phrase, "walk with kings—nor lose the common touch."

You will feel his common touch the moment you begin reading "I, Pencil," the first of the four essays collected in this monograph. Speaking in the first person, the personified pencil will convince you of a surprising fact: No individual knows how to produce this common tool. Only free markets know how, and Mr. Pencil illuminates their magic by describing the vivid details of his family tree. It includes not only actual trees but also the lumberjacks who harvest the trees, the trucks and saws and ropes essential to the harvesting, the railroads that carry the logs to the mills, the motors and other tools that trim the logs into slats, the kilns that season the slats, the lacquer that coats them, and the graphite mined in Ceylon that is the chief ingredient for the "lead." Literally millions of persons, discoveries, inventions, cooperative arrangements—and the laws that pro-

tect them all—are essential to producing the simple little pencil on your desk.

As it is with pencils, so it is with any other commodity or service that flows from the enterprising activities of free traders, and all their buzzing webs of activity are woven by the “invisible hand” of the free market. If there were such a thing as a market genome, it would make the human genome seem simple by comparison.

That analogy can serve as a taking-off point for “The Myth of the See-It-All,” the second essay reprinted in this collection. Read’s thesis is that no human mind could ever map, let alone control, the dynamic forces in a free market. To suppose otherwise is to ensnare oneself in The Myth.

History is littered with the debris of political and economic meddlers who imagined that they could see it all. For more than seven decades, a succession of bumbling Soviet masters clung to the fantastic belief that they could successfully command the production and distribution of goods in national economies. From the beginning to the end of that ghastly experiment, despite an abundance of fertile land and other natural resources, the Soviet system never produced enough food to feed its own people. When the system finally collapsed in 1989, Westerners went behind the crumbled walls and beheld industrial plants struggling with technology that American ingenuity had made obsolete in the 1930s. Such are the results when see-it-alls take control.

Yet, for all such dramatic demonstrations, The Myth of the See-It-All lives on, even in America today. Examples are so common they often pass unnoticed. For instance, as this essay goes to press in the early autumn of 2000, Americans are debating the issue of school vouchers. An opponent of vouchers writes in *The Washington Post*:

It would be good if proposals for voucher programs included an analysis of the potential number of spaces that might be available compared with the

expected number of students who might be applying. In cases such as Washington, it would show that there is no point in proposing vouchers as a serious solution to the city's educational problems.<sup>2</sup>

This is The Myth. The writer assumes that a free market in education cannot work unless someone (we know not who) can see it all: see the extent of demand for places in private schools, and see the supply that entrepreneurs would produce in response to that demand. The writer himself is a see-it-all, smug in his belief that there is "no point" in allowing educational choice for parents in Washington, D.C., home of one of the most miserable public school systems in the country. The one thing see-it-alls never see is The Myth that ensnares them.

Contrast the see-it-all's mindset with that of Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman, who said in an article defending school vouchers: "What would a competitive educational industry look like? I do not know, nor does anyone else, any more than anyone could have predicted what would happen to the telecommunications industry after the break-up of Ma Bell."<sup>3</sup>

The antidote to the see-it-all is what Read calls Creative Wisdom, "that enormous, over-all wisdom that accounts for the piece of toast, the auto or jet, or whatever—a wisdom that does not exist, even remotely, in any discrete individual." But, Read notes, Creative Wisdom cannot flourish unless it is protected by rules of law that guarantee three things: private ownership of property, free pricing of goods and services, and non-intervention in people's affairs except to keep the peace.

Read enlarges on that point in the third and fourth essays, "The Law Without" and "The Law Within," which are best read as companion pieces. In "The Law Without" he presents a caution-

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2. Letter by William R. Fothergill, *The Washington Post*, September 8, 2000, p. A32.

3. Milton Friedman, "Why America Needs School Vouchers," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 28, 2000, p. A22.

ary reminder of another common error: Although the rule of law is essential for regulating some actions, we should never think it sufficient for regulating all actions. “We must learn to know what the law cannot do as well as what it can do.” Read recalls the lesson of Prohibition and the sprawling black markets that grew under it, providing encouragement for good people to ignore the law.

But—and this is an enduring puzzle of political philosophy—how do we know what actions the law *can* regulate? Under what conditions will a properly conceived rule of law maintain order without stifling freedom? “A reasonably righteous people,” says Read, “has to be the first assumption.” Here Read echoes the thinking of Hamilton or Madison (the authorship is unclear) in Federalist No. 51: Even though people are capable of evil, “there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. Republican government presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form.”

Moral virtues, human qualities that justify esteem and confidence, are not products of the law without: They constitute the law within. Statutory laws can protect our rights; but inside the boundaries of our rights, we need self-control born of good character to sustain us as a free people. “Self-discipline—obedience to moral law—lessens the need for exterior disciplines,” Read says. “A person without inner-direction is asking to be controlled.”

This final pair of essays prompts us to pause and reflect on how Americans in recent decades have shifted their reliance from the law within to the law without. Strangely, the very people who have undergone this shift are aware of it and disturbed by it: Fully two-thirds of Americans say that moral standards in the United States today are lower than in years past and are getting worse. And, as Read foresaw, the decline of moral virtues and the increase of legal controls are mutually reinforcing trends. Disputes between neighbors that once were amicably resolved are increasingly settled in court. Myriad human needs that were

the moral responsibility of families, neighbors, and charitable organizations have increasingly been subsumed under the coercive mechanism of the welfare state. Cordial relations in the workplace that were once maintained through fairness and mutual respect are increasingly regulated by legal edicts born of political correctness. Discipline at school formerly maintained by a teacher's common sense is increasingly fraught with the risk of lawsuits claiming arcane varieties of "discrimination" and "harassment."

Amid such worries, Leonard Read brings us back to basics. He refreshes our minds with his plain good sense. He buoys our hopes by sharpening our understanding of what we've known all along: Freedom works. We don't need see-it-alls to regulate our lives. We need just laws to protect free markets. We need free markets to liberate the Creative Wisdom that is the well-spring of prosperity. And we need inner law to maintain our character and so we can fulfill our God-given potential.

I hope that in reading these essays you will feel the stirrings of a renewed sense of commitment to preserve the greatest experiment in human freedom the world has ever seen. When you consider the alternative, how could you feel otherwise? The American Founders created a republic—and we *will* keep it.



There are several individuals without whose help this publication would not be possible. I am grateful to my colleague Bridgett Wagner, who first reminded me that the late Don Lipsett had been encouraging me to use Leonard Read for this essay series. I am also grateful to David Thomasson, who assisted me with this introductory essay. Michael Colombo, Thomas Timmons, Richard Odermatt, Michelle Smith, and Gary Boward have helped in the production of this essay. Don Boudreaux serves as Leonard Read's very able successor at the Foundation for Economic Education; he and his colleagues have been very supportive of this effort. Finally, my heartfelt thanks to all of our friends who, with their numerous suggestions and encouragement, continue to make this annual publication possible.

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President  
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Four Essays  
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I, Pencil

The Myth of the See-It-All

The Law Without

The Law Within

# I, Pencil

**I** am a lead pencil—the ordinary wooden pencil familiar to all boys and girls and adults who can read and write.

Writing is both my vocation and my avocation; that's all I do.

You may wonder why I should write a genealogy. Well, to begin with, my story is interesting. And, next, I am a mystery—more so than a tree or a sunset or even a flash of lightning. But, sadly, I am taken for granted by those who use me, as if I were a mere incident and without background. This supercilious attitude relegates me to the level of the commonplace. This is a species of the grievous error in which mankind cannot too long persist without peril. For, the wise G. K. Chesterton observed, “We are perishing for want of wonder, not for want of wonders.”

I, Pencil, simple though I appear to be, merit your wonder and awe, a claim I shall attempt to prove. In fact, if you can understand me—no, that's too much to ask of anyone—if you can become aware of the miraculousness which I symbolize, you can help save the freedom mankind is so unhappily losing. I have a profound lesson to teach. And I can teach this lesson better than can an automobile or an airplane or a mechanical dishwasher because—well, because I am seemingly so simple.

Simple? Yet, not a single person on the face of this earth knows how to make me. This sounds fantastic, doesn't it? Especially when it is realized that there are about one and one-half billion of my kind produced in the U.S.A. each year.

Pick me up and look me over. What do you see? Not much meets the eye—there's some wood, lacquer, the printed labeling, graphite lead, a bit of metal, and an eraser.

### **Innumerable Antecedents**

Just as you cannot trace your family tree back very far, so is it impossible for me to name and explain all my antecedents. But I would like to suggest enough of them to impress upon you the richness and complexity of my background.

My family tree begins with what in fact is a tree, a cedar of straight grain that grows in Northern California and Oregon. Now contemplate all the saws and trucks and rope and the countless other gear used in harvesting and carting the cedar logs to the railroad siding. Think of all the persons and the numberless skills that went into their fabrication: the mining of ore, the making of steel and its refinement into saws, axes, motors; the growing of hemp and bringing it through all the stages to heavy and strong rope; the logging camps with their beds and mess halls, the cookery and the raising of all the foods. Why, untold thousands of persons had a hand in every cup of coffee the loggers drink!

The logs are shipped to a mill in San Leandro, California. Can you imagine the individuals who make flat cars and rails and railroad engines and who construct and install the communication systems incidental thereto? These legions are among my antecedents.

Consider the millwork in San Leandro. The cedar logs are cut into small, pencil-length slats less than one-fourth of an inch in thickness. These are kiln dried and then tinted for the same reason women put rouge on their faces. People prefer that I look pretty, not a pallid white. The slats are waxed and kiln dried again. How many skills went into the making of the tint and the kilns, into supplying the heat, the light and power, the belts, motors, and all the other things a mill requires? Sweepers in the mill among my ancestors? Yes, and included are the men who

poured the concrete for the dam of a Pacific Gas & Electric Company hydroplant which supplies the mill's power!

Don't overlook the ancestors present and distant who have a hand in transporting sixty carloads of slats across the nation.

Once in the pencil factory—\$4,000,000 in machinery and building, all capital accumulated by thrifty and saving parents of mine—each slat is given eight grooves by a complex machine, after which another machine lays leads in every other slat, applies glue, and places another slat atop—a lead sandwich, so to speak. Seven brothers and I are mechanically carved from this “wood-clinched” sandwich.

My “lead” itself—it contains no lead at all—is complex. The graphite is mined in Ceylon. Consider these miners and those who make their many tools and the makers of the paper sacks in which the graphite is shipped and those who make the string that ties the sacks and those who put them aboard ships and those who make the ships. Even the lighthouse keepers along the way assisted in my birth—and the harbor pilots.

The graphite is mixed with clay from Mississippi in which ammonium hydroxide is used in the refining process. Then wetting agents are added such as sulfonated tallow—animal fats chemically reacted with sulfuric acid. After passing through numerous machines, the mixture finally appears as endless extrusions—as from a sausage grinder—cut to size, dried, and baked for several hours at 1,850 degrees Fahrenheit. To increase their strength and smoothness the leads are then treated with a hot mixture which includes candelilla wax from Mexico, paraffin wax, and hydrogenated natural fats.

My cedar receives six coats of lacquer. Do you know all the ingredients of lacquer? Who would think that the growers of castor beans and the refiners of castor oil are a part of it? They are. Why, even the processes by which the lacquer is made a beautiful yellow involves the skills of more persons than one can enumerate!

Observe the labeling. That's a film formed by applying heat to carbon black mixed with resins. How do you make resins and what, pray, is carbon black?

My bit of metal—the ferrule—is brass. Think of all the persons who mine zinc and copper and those who have the skills to make shiny sheet brass from these products of nature. Those black rings on my ferrule are black nickel. What is black nickel and how is it applied? The complete story of why the center of my ferrule has no black nickel on it would take pages to explain.

Then there's my crowning glory, inelegantly referred to in the trade as "the plug," the part man uses to erase the errors he makes with me. An ingredient called "factice" is what does the erasing. It is a rubber-like product made by reacting rape-seed oil from the Dutch East Indies with sulfur chloride. Rubber, contrary to the common notion, is only for binding purposes. Then, too, there are numerous vulcanizing and accelerating agents. The pumice comes from Italy; and the pigment which gives "the plug" its color is cadmium sulfide.

### **No One Knows**

Does anyone wish to challenge my earlier assertion that no single person on the face of this earth knows how to make me?

Actually, millions of human beings have had a hand in my creation, no one of whom even knows more than a very few of the others. Now, you may say that I go too far in relating the picker of a coffee berry in far off Brazil and food growers elsewhere to my creation; that this is an extreme position. I shall stand by my claim. There isn't a single person in all these millions, including the president of the pencil company, who contributes more than a tiny, infinitesimal bit of know-how. From the standpoint of know-how the only difference between the miner of graphite in Ceylon and the logger in Oregon is in the type of know-how. Neither the miner nor the logger can be dispensed with, any

more than can the chemist at the factory or the worker in the oil field—paraffin being a by-product of petroleum.

Here is an astounding fact: Neither the worker in the oil field nor the chemist nor the digger of graphite or clay nor any who mans or makes the ships or trains or trucks nor the one who runs the machine that does the knurling on my bit of metal nor the president of the company performs his singular task because he wants me. Each one wants me less, perhaps, than does a child in the first grade. Indeed, there are some among this vast multitude who never saw a pencil nor would they know how to use one. Their motivation is other than me. Perhaps it is something like this: Each of these millions sees that he can thus exchange his tiny know-how for the goods and services he needs or wants. I may or may not be among these items.

### **No Master Mind**

There is a fact still more astounding: The absence of a master mind, of anyone dictating or forcibly directing these countless actions which bring me into being. No trace of such a person can be found. Instead, we find the Invisible Hand at work. This is the mystery to which I earlier referred.

It has been said that “only God can make a tree.” Why do we agree with this? Isn’t it because we realize that we ourselves could not make one? Indeed, can we even describe a tree? We cannot, except in superficial terms. We can say, for instance, that a certain molecular configuration manifests itself as a tree. But what mind is there among men that could even record, let alone direct, the constant changes in molecules that transpire in the life span of a tree? Such a feat is utterly unthinkable!

I, Pencil, am a complex combination of miracles: a tree, zinc, copper, graphite, and so on. But to these miracles which manifest themselves in Nature an even more extraordinary miracle has been added: the configuration of creative human energies—millions of tiny know-hows configuring naturally and sponta-

neously in response to human necessity and desire and in the absence of any human master-minding! Since only God can make a tree, I insist that only God could make me. Man can no more direct these millions of know-hows to bring me into being than he can put molecules together to create a tree.

The above is what I meant when writing, “If you can become aware of the miraculousness which I symbolize, you can help save the freedom mankind is so unhappily losing.” For, if one is aware that these know-hows will naturally, yes, automatically, arrange themselves into creative and productive patterns in response to human necessity and demand—that is, in the absence of governmental or any other coercive master-minding—then one will possess an absolutely essential ingredient for freedom: a faith in free people. Freedom is impossible without this faith.

Once government has had a monopoly of a creative activity such, for instance, as the delivery of the mails, most individuals will believe that the mails could not be efficiently delivered by men acting freely. And here is the reason: Each one acknowledges that he himself doesn’t know how to do all the things incident to mail delivery. He also recognizes that no other individual could do it. These assumptions are correct. No individual possesses enough know-how to perform a nation’s mail delivery any more than any individual possesses enough know-how to make a pencil. Now, in the absence of faith in free people—in the unawareness that millions of tiny know-hows would naturally and miraculously form and cooperate to satisfy this necessity—the individual cannot help but reach the erroneous conclusion that mail can be delivered only by governmental “master-minding.”

### Testimony Galore

If I, Pencil, were the only item that could offer testimony on what men and women can accomplish when free to try, then those with little faith would have a fair case. However, there is testimony galore; it’s all about us and on every hand. Mail deliv-

ery is exceedingly simple when compared, for instance, to the making of an automobile or a calculating machine or a grain combine or a milling machine or to tens of thousands of other things. Delivery? Why, in this area where men have been left free to try, they deliver the human voice around the world in less than one second; they deliver an event visually and in motion to any person's home when it is happening; they deliver 150 passengers from Seattle to Baltimore in less than four hours; they deliver gas from Texas to one's range or furnace in New York at unbelievably low rates and without subsidy; they deliver each four pounds of oil from the Persian Gulf to our Eastern Seaboard—halfway around the world—for less money than the government charges for delivering a one-ounce letter across the street!

The lesson I have to teach is this: Leave all creative energies uninhibited. Merely organize society to act in harmony with this lesson. Let society's legal apparatus remove all obstacles the best it can. Permit these creative know-hows freely to flow. Have faith that free men and women will respond to the Invisible Hand. This faith will be confirmed. I, Pencil, seemingly simple though I am, offer the miracle of my creation as testimony that this is a practical faith, as practical as the sun, the rain, a cedar tree, the good earth.



# The Myth of the See~It~All

*He who is not aware of his ignorance will be  
only misled by his knowledge.*

—Richard Whatley

**R**eferring to numerous problems that beset us, I remarked to the audience, “We need seers but no one has to be a see-it-all.” This brought a chuckle from them and a question to my mind: Had I perhaps stumbled upon a breakthrough term? Repeatedly, in attempts to restore faith in the free market, I have failed to communicate what the obstacle to this faith is; I might as well have spoken in Aramaic.

We are desperately in need of terms which accurately convey our meaning and, hopefully, “see-it-all” might be one.

No human being ever has been or will be, even remotely, a see-it-all. Yet, our thinking is beclouded, frustrated, and often blocked entirely by the unconscious assumption that we are—or ought to be—see-it-alls. We get into our heads that the microscopic bit each of us sees is all there is to see. There may be no greater deterrent to evolving humanity, certainly to the ascendancy of freedom, than this mischievous see-it-all assessment of self. How priceless an explanation that would beat down this notion!

But it is next to impossible for anyone to appreciate fully just how little he apprehends of the world around him. The five

senses reveal so very much, it seems, how possibly could there be more?

But reflect on the persons who see a thousand times as much as the ordinary man—those blest with extrasensory perception, those who, like Galileo, can see the truth that the solar system does not revolve around the earth. How possibly could there be more to see than they see?

Yet, a Galileo, Newton, Edison, or an Aristotle, Milton, Shakespeare has only an infinitesimal peek at the world around him. These “giants” might be expected more readily to realize how little they see than the ones who see less. But, too often, they compare themselves with those they judge to be inferior, rather than with the infinity that is barely opening up to them. We must conclude that an expanded perception is not necessarily a remedy for this malady.

I believe that a cure is available, as open to those of us who see less as to those few who see so much more. It depends upon how we look at things, upon exercise and practice in judging how little we see:

Browse around a million-volume library. What is seen are a million book covers, but scarcely an inkling of the enormous knowledge and wisdom therein.

Peer through a powerful microscope at a single blood cell, one of trillions in your body. Its shape and color are seen, but nothing of the essential chores it performs. Nor does the microscope reveal to the eye the trillions of atoms in the cell or their fantastic energy.

Peer through a telescope at a galaxy millions of light years away. Again, you see shape and color but nothing of the mysterious radiations emitted.

Flick on your reading lamp. Now, define electricity!

Make an assessment of your best friend. What goes on within? You can arrive at only superficial conclusions, most of which will be inaccurate.

Make an assessment of your own mind, psyche, soul. Even here, in the one person you could and should know best, you see little more than you see into the phenomenon of life itself!

I have used only five suggested exercises. This way of looking at the world within and without has countless applications. Indeed, I am aware of nothing within my purview—or yours—to which it cannot and should not be applied.

Again, let me emphasize the need to realize how little we see: it is to insure against the easy and more or less natural inclination to think we see it all. For the see-it-all is one who cannot imagine any future happenings except those he can foresee. How can there be any progress except it be set in motion by those stimuli, forces, and events that fall within his purview? Yet, without his knowing it, his purview is infinitesimal. Here, in the see-it-all, we have a powerful obstacle to both faith and progress; implicit in the see-it-all's attitude is the message that the Hand of Creation is paralyzed. All of history, if read aright, attests to the contrary; history attests that every step ahead has been as if fortuitous. No one foresaw the first great civilization in Sumer, or the glory that came to Athens, or to America. Most things that have taken place in the past, no person foresaw. Most things that will take place in the future are things none of us can foresee.

### **As Far as He Could See**

Let's apply this theory to our workaday world. Recently, I heard a learned economist brilliantly analyze our country's politico-economic distortions. Indeed, he dug so deeply into our troubles that neither he nor his listeners could possibly see a way out: "We are sunk; there is no hope!"

His conclusion was as persuasive as it was pessimistic. Why? For one reason and one only: If this skilled, well-trained, and thoughtful economist cannot see a way out, there is no way out! He assumes, without quite realizing it, that he sees all. Otherwise, he would, at the very least, have conceded the possibility that certain events might transpire which his foresight could not possibly reveal to him.

Looking at ourselves realistically, aren't most of us in the same boat? Ask anyone you meet—businessman or whoever—if mail delivery should be left to the free market. Unless he is one of the few who have gained an awareness of the free market's miraculous workings, his answer will be negative. Here is how the typical mind works on activities that have been excluded from the free market—where no market demonstration is available:

Now just exactly how would I go about delivering mail day-in and day-out to a hundred million addresses? H'm! I don't know. After all, I am not an incompetent person. If I can't see how to do this, how can any other? No, this complex problem cannot be mastered by the likes of me acting independently, competitively, cooperatively, privately, freely. This is a chore that belongs to government, the agency that can implement its planning by force.

The above "reasoning" will lead to the same conclusion regarding any other activity which has been substantially pre-empted by government: education, water supply, garbage disposal, or whatever.

In Britain, for instance, where telephones, railroads, power and light, steel mills, coal mining, and mail delivery have been nationalized, hardly anyone can see how any of these might thrive by free market operation. Only disaster can be envisioned!

In Russia, where all creative activities—even farming and the theater—have been brought under compulsive procedures, free market possibilities are rarely considered.

I am suggesting the destructiveness of the see-it-all attitude. It leads people down a one-way road to the total state. Bringing more and more activities under state operation progressively blinds people to what freedom has to offer. As the state pursues its monopolization, the free market as a possibility correspondingly diminishes in men's minds. Finally, utter darkness!

If this were not true, mail delivery in the U.S.A. would be entrusted to the free market.

If this were not true, there would be a denationalization of British industry.

If this were not true, competitive private enterprise would emerge in Russia.

### Stretching the Horizon

As for these activities taken over by government, the curtains have already been drawn. The question is, how can the curtains be raised so that free market possibilities can be seen?

The first rational step is a realization on your part and mine that we see no more than an infinitesimal part of the world around us and that our hand in what goes on creatively is on this same minor scale. As a means of awakening, we need only ask ourselves: What has been your or my part in the auto or jet we ride? Or the part an employee of a pencil factory has in a pencil? Neither he nor any man on earth knows how to make one.<sup>1</sup> It is no exaggeration to claim that what goes on around each of us is a trillion times greater than any one of us sees. No one is remotely a see-it-all.

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1. See the chapter, "Only God Can Make a Tree—or a Pencil," in *Anything That's Peaceful* (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., 1964).

Until we face this humbling fact, we will be blind to a phenomenon of the free market so difficult to grasp that it's nearly a secret: Creative Wisdom. And, as a consequence of this blindness we have no more faith in the efficacy of free market mail delivery, for instance, than Russians have in the possibility of free market farming or industry or trade of any kind. In other words, in a world of see-it-all's, what possibility could there be for change and progress?

Let me do this point over: Compared to the all, I see next to nothing; likewise everyone else. Now, were everyone a see-it-all, it follows that faith in what can happen is limited to next to nothing. When neither I nor anyone else can see how the free market would deliver mail—no one can—free market mail delivery will never be given a chance, not in a society of see-it-alls. An awareness of Creative Wisdom is an absolute requisite.

Consider the history of Creative Wisdom.

We observe bits of freedom cropping up during the past seven thousand years: Sumer, Athens, Carthage, Rome, Venice, Kiev, Amsterdam, England, America. Considering how little we ascribe to freedom in our own "enlightened" time, it is fair to assume that these flare-ups of freedom came about more as reactions to desperate situations in which people found themselves than as rational designs.<sup>2</sup>

Vainly do we look for any forecast by our forefathers as to what freedom would accomplish—any theory about how or why it would work its wonders! The motivation was other than foresight. Our ancestors were sick of Old World authoritarianism; theirs was a revolt against see-it-alls in power.

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2. "Modern man prides himself that he has built [his] civilization as if in doing so he had carried out a plan which he had formed in his mind. The fact is, of course, that if at any point of the past man had mapped out his future on the basis of the then-existing knowledge we would...still have brutally to fight each other for our very lives." Remarks by F. A. Hayek in "What's Past Is Prologue" (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., 1968).

Freedom in America had its roots in an overriding conviction founded on an observation of the Old World. The observation: the more the government controls human action, the more tyrannical it is. The conviction: that government is best which governs least. The action: our forefathers delegated to government fewer powers than had ever been done before. The result: freedom!

Our ancestors wanted freedom for freedom's sake. That was enough for them. Each could be his own man. Hang the economic consequences! They were no more aware of the creative outburst that would follow freedom than most people today—even after the fact!

It appears likely that each flare-up of freedom throughout history—as in America—has been a reaction against governmental tyranny and not the result of any rational design. As each authoritarian arrangement has come to its inevitable dead end—with no bureaucrat knowing what next to do—the victimized people have acted more or less in desperation: “*We might as well try freedom.*” Freedom has been “a court of last resort,” not a rational prognosis of better things to come.

We should take note of three facts:

First, where freedom has been tried, that is, where free markets, private ownership, willing exchange, and limited government have been practiced, civilizations have flowered: Sumer, Athens, America, and others.

Second, all but our own have eventually leveled off, stalled, and fallen—the British Empire, for instance—before our very eyes.

Third, the declines and falls have been associated with a return of governmental intervention with its contraction of freedom.

While neither I nor anyone else can foresee events that will transpire, it seems to me that America also is in danger of a

decline and fall. I only raise the question: Is there anything to save us from the same fate that has befallen others? I think there may be something—something missing in each of the other trials.

Missing then—perhaps still missing—is an awareness of Creative Wisdom as the distinguishing feature or hallmark of freedom. Since we are not see-it-alls, we can hardly hope to understand the phenomenon of freedom and its evolutionary by-product, Creative Wisdom; but awareness is within our reach and may be necessary to our survival.

The American miracle flowered from a degree of freedom unknown at any previous time. Looking backward, the same can be said for the British and Roman Empires, of Athens, Sumer, and the others. Bear in mind that the flowering was an offspring of freedom; then note that as freedom was replaced by government control of life these civilizations underwent a decline and fall. Thus if I read history aright, we must conclude that freedom is the exclusive condition in which creative human energy forms and flourishes; otherwise, it lies stifled and inactive. Creative Wisdom is the term I give to the phenomenon that flowers only when and where freedom prevails.

Creative Wisdom is an essential to social, moral, and spiritual progress as to material advancement. But the latter may be easier to demonstrate.

Take, for example, this morning's toast. Reflect on what happened ere it reached the breakfast table: the mining of the ore and making of the tools that prepared the soil, sowed the seed, harvested and threshed the crop, ground it into flour! The bags? How are they made? Then the transporting vehicles; the bakery and its equipment; the toaster and the electricity.

Not only do I not know how to make electricity—I don't even know what it is—but there is hardly a step in the whole complex process that falls within my ken. My understanding of the production of such a simple thing as a piece of toast is next to

nothing, and so is yours, whoever you are. Yet, millions enjoyed toast for breakfast this morning. How come?

Each human being has within him a mite of potential creativity, that is, you or I may, now and then, have an idea, experience insight or intuition, invent or discover something. How little that is, even when we live up to our potential, can be appreciated by reflecting upon our minor role in producing the piece of toast. The part played by any one person is infinitesimal! But this much can be said: each tiny know-how, when and if developed, is different from all others. Variation!

### **Creative Wisdom**

Creative Wisdom is that enormous, over-all wisdom that accounts for the piece of toast, the auto or jet, or whatever—a wisdom that does not exist, even remotely, in any discrete individual. Creative Wisdom begins as an attracting force that draws out and develops such widely varying creative potentialities as are possessed by each of us. Motivation! And then the phenomenal miracle: the coalescence of these trillions of tiny varying know-hows into a workable whole that accounts for the piece of toast or whatever.

We are at a loss to explain precisely how this works, just as we are at a loss to explain the configuration or coalescence of tiny molecules into a tree in one instance or a blade of grass or a flower. We can only note that Creative Wisdom is a product of freedom and not authoritarianism.

But we can gain some insight into this phenomenon by noting that the free market—freedom—has three distinctive features:

1. Private ownership. There is freedom only when one has a right to the fruits of his own labor.
2. Free pricing, that is, exchange on mutually agreeable terms.
3. Nonintervention in the affairs of men other than to defend life and livelihood—to keep the peace.

In my view, private ownership—the right to one’s own—serves as the motivation for bringing out the creative best in the individual.<sup>3</sup>

And the force that ingathers or coalesces these varying “creative bests” into a workable whole is free pricing, that is, free exchange or, as Bastiat phrased it, freedom in transactions. Price beckons the activity of each toward specific endeavors, those goods and services which, in people’s judgment, satisfy their desires and necessities. It is price that beckons creative effort into those activities which lead eventually to what you want for breakfast: a piece of toast.

Were it not for private ownership and the guide of price, that is, were authoritarianism in the driver’s seat, you would get not what you choose for breakfast but what the authoritarian allots to you.

### No Superman Needed

Doubtless, one explanation as to why Creative Wisdom flourishes in a free society is that no see-it-all is required. One need not itemize and investigate all the wants of the world’s population—an impossible undertaking—in order to be productively useful to himself and others. Being able to read a price is instruction enough. The free market thus accommodates itself to our limited view of the world around us; it is in tune with reality.

A century ago government had a monopoly of first-class mail delivery and still does. At that time the human voice could be delivered whatever distance two shouters could effectively communicate. Today, government delivers the mail substantially as it did then. The human voice? It is now delivered around this

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3. There is, of course, other than material motivation—psychic profit, for instance. See Chapter X, “What Shall It Profit a Man?” in *Deeper Than You Think* (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., 1967).

earth in less time than a postman takes to move one step toward a mailbox.

Suppose you had been asked in 1869, “Which venture would you consider easier, delivering mail or the human voice?” To this seemingly idiotic question, you would have responded, “Mail!”

The explanation? Creative Wisdom has been largely excluded from the socialistic activity, whereas it has miraculously flourished in privately owned activities, that is, where the free market has more or less prevailed.

Of course I don't know how the free market would deliver mail day-in and day-out to a hundred million addresses! Or attend to education! Nor does any other living person! But I don't have to see how it would be done to know for certain that it would be done better and at lower cost. Conceded, I cannot explain how Creative Wisdom works. But I can be nonetheless certain of its workability, so staggering is the evidence on every hand.

When one frees himself from the see-it-all myth, he will then have faith that many wonderful things can and will transpire, things he cannot foresee. Just so long as they are founded on right principle: freedom to act creatively as one chooses!



# The Law Without

**E**dmund Burke provides the setting for this chapter and the one following:

Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites; in proportion as their love of justice is above their rapacity; in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their vanity and presumption; in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good, in preference to the flattery of knaves. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere and *the less of it there is within, the more there must be without*. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.<sup>4</sup>

Their passions forge their fetters! The fetters, of course, come in the form of the law without—external government. If their passions be not too great; if they love justice; if they be distinguished by their soundness and sobriety of understanding; if they listen to the counsels of the wise and good; if men possess such qualities of character, then the external government—the

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4. A letter from Mr. Burke to a Member of the National Assembly in Answer to Some Objections to His Book on French Affairs, 1791.

law without—will be but helpful, simple, and necessary thou-shalt-nots. But if rapacity rages and appetites are uncontrolled; if vanity be their mark; if they heed the flattery of knaves; if these passions be rampant, the external government will indeed forge their fetters. And the compulsions from without will range from out-and-out anarchy to more or less formal, legalized oppression under a dictatorship. It is important, therefore, that we carefully consider what can and cannot be accomplished by external government, the law without.

Increasingly concerned over riots, brutal assassinations, and other depredations—anarchy in its incipiency—the American public anxiously seeks a remedy for these conspicuous evils. Order in society we must and will have; and history reveals that men will pay a high price—fetters notwithstanding—to ward off uncertainty and chaos.

No doubt about it, there is a popular clamor for law and order. And whenever there is a popular clamor, politicians rush forth with their standard solution: Pass a law! Gun control affords a current case in point. As if the remedy for murder rests on the registration of firearms or a law against their possession! It seems doubtful that any of these proposed laws could be effectively administered. But even if firearms were abolished altogether, to what extent would killings be lessened? Not one whit! A killer has a thousand and one other means at his disposal. Deprive him of one and he will resort to another.

There is already a law against murder, whether by firearms, knives, poisons, strangulation, clubs, or whatever. Severe penalties are prescribed and well known, despite which people still commit murder. This should remind us that the law without has but a limited competence when it comes to controlling—let alone improving—behavior.

### **The Lesson of Prohibition**

There is still a lesson to be learned in this regard from the ill-fated Eighteenth Amendment, that “noble experiment” to right

what many people conceived to be another wrong: the drinking of alcohol. So let us recall what the consequences were. First, drinking increased. Second, the stuff imbibed ranged all the way from lemon, vanilla, and Jamaica extracts, to bay rum, rubbing alcohol, and bathtub gin. I once saw an addict of these lethal liquids gulp down two 3-ounce bottles of spirits of camphor—84 per cent alcohol.

And among the catastrophic results was the shifting of the liquor business from law-abiding, honest producers to law-breakers and criminals. Racketeers took over, and the law against murder did not deter them from dealing with aspiring competitors; they shot them down! It was worth one's life to peddle beer in competition with Al Capone.

But by far the worst consequence of this attempt to legislate morality was the attendant disrespect for all external law. Citizens by the millions—the respectable and law-abiding element until then—ignored this governmental thou-shalt-not. Indeed, countless law-enforcement officers became parties to the law breaking—and were well paid for their pains.<sup>5</sup>

If the law without is to be respected, it must be circumspect—its purpose generally understood and accepted. Whenever statutory law becomes capricious or whenever it goes beyond a people's sense of reasonableness and justice, it will be ignored. Remember the widespread disregard of price control and rationing under OPA? These unreasonable, unjust, and unenforceable edicts impaired the free market; many "black markets" arose to serve consumers. These unwise edicts made law-breakers out of good citizens.

When people get in the habit of breaking statutory law because the laws are unwise and unjust, that habit carries over into breaking laws that are wise and just. When the high priest is disrespected for some of his ways, he will not be respected for

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5. Oklahoma remained a "dry" state long after the repeal of Prohibition. I recall attending a convention there. Liquor for the occasion was imported from a neighboring state—and under police escort!

any of his ways; he is suspect in everything. Have a second look at this thought; it may explain, more than is generally supposed, the breakdown of law and order.

It is, thus, of utmost importance that we reflect upon both the potentialities and the limitations of law—the legal framework. To avoid a complete breakdown of law and order—with dictatorship as the inevitable aftermath—we must learn to know what the law cannot do as well as what it can do.

We should recognize one impossibility at the outset: the force implicit in government cannot mend moral deficiencies. A society of thieves cannot be made honest by passing an Integrity Act! Consider the futility of a law against covetousness, or against suicide, or sex, or drinking, or dissimulation. But, possibly, we can better understand what the law without cannot do by reflection upon what does lie within its range.

### **The First Assumption**

If any society is a going concern, it is because the vast majority of people wish to do what's right, reasonable, and just. Otherwise, there is no occasion to discuss these questions, no reason to think about the constitution of liberty, no logic in accepting other than dictatorship. A reasonably righteous people has to be the first assumption.

However, reality cannot be side-stepped: there is in the best of societies a tiny minority whose word is no good, who will lie, cheat, trespass, steal, kill. In short, these few will completely disregard the rights of others; they will try to feather their own nests by whatever low and degraded method comes to mind. Such people lack a moral nature; they have no sense of justice.<sup>6</sup>

Consider the vast majority who at least wish to do what's right, reasonable, and just. Keep in mind that each is unique; no two think or evaluate alike and, thus, no two have precisely the same concepts of righteousness, reasonableness, and justice. Their ideas differ as to what's mine and what's thine. Nor are

they agreed on how fast one should drive on this or that street, or on countless other matters important to harmonious living.

People who wish to treat others right need to know what rules to follow and are anxious to have them formulated for all to see and observe. If the rules—the laws—be fair, they will respect them; it is in their interest to do so, for this is their way to escape anarchy with its disorder and chaos.

### Limitations of the Law

What, really, is the scope of external law? What are its limitations and potentialities?

The law can codify the thou-shalt-nots and prescribe the penalties for infractions. But the law of itself is incapable of being a guarantee against infractions. Observance of the law rests on how people react to it. The law is effective in the case of those individuals who *desire* to respect it and of those who *fear* not to. This is its potentiality. And it is ineffective when the desire dies out and the fear of penalties becomes weaker than the temptation to engage in illegal activities. This is its limitation.

These forces or drives—desire as well as fear—are, in turn, importantly governed by the law's respectability, that is, by people's evaluation of its reasonableness and justice. But respectability is a subjective judgment; it cannot be objectively defined; its definition varies as greatly as do individuals in their moral scruples and intellectual discernment. I am only trying to emphasize the point that law and order in a society rest, in the final analysis, on what kind of people we are; there is no organi-

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6. This division of the good majority and the bad majority is used somewhat symbolically; it is never this clean cut. There is, admittedly, some badness in the best of us, and, we must concede, some possible goodness among the most depraved. As Simone Weil wrote: "From earliest childhood to the grave there is something in the depths of every human heart, which in spite of all the experience, of crimes that have been committed, endured, observed—invincibly expects people to do good and not evil. More than any other thing, this is the sacred element in every human being."

zational gadgetry that can overcome this fact; it is a reality from which there is no escape.<sup>7</sup> And here, in broad generality, lie the limitations and potentialities of law.

If the rules be reasonable and just! Consider a simple analogy—a scale model of the way we act—to deduce what is and is not fair: competitive football, for instance. Note that the rules are exclusively taboos, thou-shalt-nots, things not to do. Penalties for infractions are prescribed, well known to all participants, and imposed by the officials. Even over these, there are minor differences, but none that isn't easily and agreeably resolved. Respect for the rules is near unanimous. Here we have the law in its negative and proper role.

Confining the rules to things not to do opens the infinite realm of things to do. It is only in this sense that law—the rules—is positive: by restricting the bad, the good is made possible.

### The Realm of the Creative

Admittedly, the realm of what to do requires instruction. But this depends upon the coaches (entrepreneurial leaders) as well as the initiative, split-second thinking, and the creativity and ingenuity of the participants. The realm of what to do belongs to the creative, not the restrictive—to the free and voluntary, not to the inhibitive and dictatorial. What a fiasco football would be were the rule book to prescribe the plays!

Football players will never unanimously agree that all the thou-shalt-nots in the rule book are perfect. They can no more agree on perfection than all of us can agree on what is respectable—reasonable and just—in societal law. But the pigskin competitors would be up in arms, as we say, if the rules prescribed the plays. Instantly and instinctively, they would lose respect for any such rules.

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7. Indeed, the law, if reasonable and just, will not, in any significant way, impose prohibitions that a reasonably righteous people would not self-impose.

In principle, at least, respectable law for society does not differ from respectable rules in football, nor does that which is disrespectsable! Yet, in society, most people countenance the unjust along with the just, the unreasonable with the reasonable. They let politicians with their pass-a-law remedies prescribe the plays of life: how long they may work, what wages they shall receive, what and with whom they shall exchange, what shall be done with the fruits of their labor, on and on—a long and tiresome list. And at what cost? *A growing disrespect for all law!*

We should never expect the tiny minority of the population who are thieves, killers, cheaters, rioters to be held at bay as long as the vast majority who at least wish to do right are parties to disrespectsable law. The majority will then no longer observe such law and by their nonobservance set the stage for the out-laws. When a model of rectitude does not exist, evil proliferates and takes over. It cannot be otherwise.

Therefore, let those of us who are bent on law and order look first to our own scruples; next, to what the law without can do for us; and, last and most importantly, what it can *never* do for us!



# The Law Within

**I**t should be plain that progress toward an ideal society depends primarily on the kind of people we are: the greatest chef in the world can't make a good omelet from bad eggs.

It goes without saying that an ideal society is beyond anyone's comprehension. But for our purpose here, let us define an ideal society as one where creative expression suffers no external inhibitions or prohibitions or restraints; where there is no interference with anyone's life, except against destructive actions; where no person is granted a legal privilege that cannot in wisdom and justice be granted to all—no special privileges whatever. In an ideal society every person is free to go as far as his talents, abilities, virtues, and energy can take him.

Creative expression can flower and life find its fulfillment only when destructive actions are not overpowering. Bringing destructive actions under some measure of control is, therefore, always the first order of business for improving the social environment. Is it not self-evident that all would perish if all were killers—or thieves, or parasites, or liars, or dictators?

There are but two forms of human restraint against the destructive: (1) external government—the law without; and (2) self-control—the law within. Restraints are either imposed on me by others or imposed on me by myself.

This raises several questions. How shall we account for the fact that so much attention is centered on the law without and so lit-

tle on the law within? Why all the emphasis on statutory law with its limited potential for the betterment of mankind and so little emphasis on the boundless possibilities of moral upgrading? Why so many eloquent spokesmen for political reform while moral philosophers are but voices crying in the wilderness? Do we find external law that much more attractive than self-restraint? Does the one method attract better and brighter men than the other? Or is it just that we'd rather plan to rectify the visible faults of others than try to see and remedy our own errors? So it is that something-for-nothing schemes—promises of a good society which require no new talents and virtues on one's own part—have a generally seductive appeal; their propaganda gains enormous attention and support.

There is, however, a deeper reason why the law within is neglected in favor of the law without.

### A Study in Depth

The external law is precisely what the term implies, that is, it is visibly on the surface, lending itself to outline, description, wording, phrasing. There is a concreteness about external disciplinary forces; they are something you can “get your teeth into.” They are communicable!

The law within, on the other hand, is always below the surface; it is, and must remain, a study in depth; it partakes of the Infinite. The ordinary channels of communication are not well suited, for this is the kind of thing more caught than taught.

If you are able to plumb deeper levels of your psyche—your nature and your being—than I, communicating your perceptions to me may be out of the question. “A man only understands that of which he has already the beginnings in himself.”<sup>8</sup> Rather than concreteness, there is a nebulosity about internal disciplinary forces.

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8. An entry of December 17, 1854, in *Journal Intime* of Henri Frederic Amiel.

Reflect, again, on the law without. If confined to its principled scope, it has only a few negative possibilities. It can codify and attempt enforcement only of those thou-shalt-nots which bear disastrously on the lives of others: murder, theft, fraudulent representations, and the like.

But in the case of any civilized person, the law within forbids all actions destructive of others and, even more importantly, all actions destructive of self. The law without is simply the brute force to control others while the law within calls for the intelligence, understanding, integrity, and strength of character for self-control.

The law within, if rational, forbids not only ordinary thievery but it also forbids feathering one's own nest at the expense of others—even when the looting is done for one by government.

It is against the inner law

- to take the life of another;
- to be inattentive to mental and physical health;
- to perish in an act of aggression;
- to bear false witness;
- to covet the possessions of another;
- to control the lives of others, or even to wish one could;
- to resign the responsibility for self to a governor, an employer or any other person, or to fail to resist if others try to assume one's personal responsibility;
- to affirm any position contrary to the dictate of conscience;
- to fail to nourish, refine, think through, and bring to the fullest possible development every idea or insight gained;
- to neglect to complete a transaction: if a door is opened, close it; if something is dropped, pick it up; if a promise is made, keep it; if money is borrowed, pay it back; if a contract is made, honor it;
- to withhold from those who seek it such light as one may possess;
- to accept any compulsive or authoritarian arrangement as the final solution to any human endeavor; that is, the inner law requires that one forever explore the ways of freedom.

The above are only samplings of the law within, but isn't it obvious, as Burke points out, that "the less of it there is within, the more there must be without"?

No two individuals, of course, have identical laws. Some of these inner laws barely scratch the surface while many are assuredly so deep others cannot perceive them. For the most part, the inner laws, particularly the deeper ones, are self-discoveries. But the deeper the better, which is to say, the greater the disciplines of self, the less likelihood of infringing the rights of others.

### **Enter Into Life**

The law within, be it noted, often goes far beyond taboos, the negative thou-shalt-nots. There are also inner laws that are positive—actions to take, things to do. For instance, one shall respect others as he would like to be respected. There are inner laws which demand that one's work, whatever the calling, or whatever the pay, be of the excellence that arouses personal pride. Look upon obstacles as opportunities to overcome, as a means to becoming. Put all chores, duties, refinement of ideas, and so on into the past tense as soon as possible to clear the way for new achievements. Get into life! There is no end of these.

It is well to note that the law without, aside from voluntary obedience, is enforced by guns, prisons, fines, or the threat of these. The law within, on the other hand, rests solely on strength of character which, in turn, derives from the will rationally to determine one's own actions. The law without is only man protection, a defensive device, while the law within is man creation; it is a positive force in man's emergence, evolution, growth, hatching.

Self-discipline—obedience to moral law—lessens the need for exterior disciplines. A person without inner direction is asking to be controlled; and a people wholly lacking in rules of self-control must slump into dictatorship.

The moral law is valid and independent of shifting opinions; it may even contradict my whims; and yet, as Sorley observes, “it is something which satisfies my purposes and completes my nature.” Persons in whom the moral law lives are self-controlling, and freedom is their way of life—the Kingdom in its earthly version.