

MENTALISM

This is a system of thought which was evolved by Emmanuel George Cefai in a series of articles in the *Daily News* a Maltese newspaper which used to be published last century but is not published any more nowadays.

Mentalism 'inter alia' holds that : (1) the human mind has a faculty called 'the Idea of Infinity' (derived and 'proved' by Cefai by a rigorous methodology similar to what Descartes did to arrive at his *Cogito*) which faculty 'proves' the infinite faculties of the mind : in other words the human mind can equal infinite dimensions even if the contents are 'general' rather than 'specific' and (2) as a consequence the human mind has the faculty to 'view in itself' a universe not of its own but rather that must 'include' any universe 'existent outside of the mind' *that is the subjective content of the mens or human mind must in principle perforce include the 'objective world' 'outside of us'* and (3) we further perceive well and correctly this 'objective world' because of the *specificity* and/or degrees of it in our perception itself : the specific data in objects that we perceive and which the human mind cannot 'will away' prove indeed these 'specific data' 'exist' 'outside of us' and are equiparated by Cefai with the 'objective world' and (4) consequently Cefai holds that *Assertion rather than proof* is a key tenet because in the assertions of the human mind - whatever they are - things already proven or to be proved are in principle – and following the Idea of Infinity – always 'included'; and (5) that therefore the innate ideas of the Rationalists are acceptable but not for the reasons that the Rationalists give but because such ideas are mentalist and therefore as asserted by the mens or human mind must be correct; and (6) the universe is not necessarily orderly but can indeed be 'arbitrary' and the 'slice' of 'orderliness' that results is not an assumption but rather as observed empirically and (7) mentalism appears to hold that *what exists does not need to be perceived as existing or indeed even if not so perceived to exist as a physical object but it is enough if it could exist as physical or be so perceived by us* – this is a throwback to the Platonic heavens and to Plato; and (8) consequently Cefai eliminated the bridge between Actuality and Potentiality holding that for our knowledge Actuality is not needed or necessary, that Potentiality is existence and is enough, and that Potentiality (in the objective world itself) and Potentiality as asserted by the mind or mens are one and the same thing; and (9) in Mentalism *perception* in previous philosophy held fundamental is replaced by *assertion*; what is asserted must exist and must include physical existence either in the state of already existing as physical existence or else if not so existent as evolving in future into that state : therefore assertion is all-comprehensive including even physical objects that still have to evolve; whilst perception is limited to physical objects that have already evolved but not to those that are still to evolve; Berkeley had retained that for things to exist they must be perceived; for Cefai for things to exist they need not be perceived but be *asserted* by the mens, or human mind, which has the 'proven' faculty of the Idea of Infinity; and (10) the import of the *Idea of Infinity* in science is also that our knowledge of science in general principles is correct and boundless; further the things that we see hear and observe are observed well and therefore the data of science are correct and acceptable because of the Idea of Infinity, Specificity and 'assertion rather proof' and (11) therefore the 'doubts' cast by

the former philosophical systems (especially Empiricism) on the validity of our scientific knowledge are eliminated.

This does not mean however that in his Mentalism Cefai depreciates or abandons in any way the skeptical methodology; indeed he insists on more rigour as can be witnessed in his discovery of the Idea of Infinity; but he changes the *scope* of our using skeptical methodology as a tool for investigation rather than as the foot-stool of doubt.

Further in Philosophy as well as in Science there are common methodologies of arriving at knowledge, of investigating, and there is validity in our knowledge of both. On the other hand Cefai is constantly saying that in both Philosophy and Science our knowledge must be re-adjusted increased and reformed continually : this is Cefai's *Theory of Inexhaustible Hypotheses*. Logically Inexhaustible Hypotheses should result from the Idea of Infinity and are common to both Science and Philosophy which in Cefai are rather united and brought together contrary to what was done in other preceding philosophical systems.

Cefai distinguishes two types of 'universes' : namely one he terms as *mentalist universe* the universe where the space is occupied by non-physical general data and where the general Principles, forms and space exist – this is very similar to the Platonic heavens but arrived at by Cefai through modern and rigorous methods of skeptical investigation; and this 'universe' includes and is the 'parent' of the other universe namely the *physicalist universe* (Cefai very often uses the words 'physicalist' (which he appears to have coined himself) and 'physical' as referring to the same) where the space is occupied by physical and specific data. Cefai is thus just to both space that is filled with non-physicalist data which Cefai terms as mentalist; and space that is filled with physicalist and specific data or physicalist. Cefai's universes are both *spatial* - but in one non-physicalist data are found in its spatiality and this universe tends to be static for it need not evolve it contains all that can evolve in general non-physical data but therefore at the same time includes (and therefore extends further) than the other universe which being physical is (and for Cefai must always be – vedi Inexhaustible Hypothes) in evolution; in the other physical data are found. Cefai thus gives the 'just due' to both 'non-physical' and 'physical' and manifests with precision the role, boundaries and principles of each. Cefai is thus neither a supporter of Rationalism or Empiricism but is dedicated only to investigation discovery of knowledge and philosophy. Cefai asserts that in as much as the human mind or mens knows the Idea of Infinity therefore and accordingly the human mind must indeed know the mentalist (non-physical) universe – and this knowledge in turn *includes* the knowledge of man of the ever-evolving but finite physical or *physicalist* universe.

Cefai's contribution in his defining with precision the 'two universes' – mentalist and physicalist – in turn lays down the basis for the first principles or rather foundations of science itself especially in the cosmology.

Further Cefai's contributions clear up many 'areas of doubt' and 'problems' that had arisen in the previous philosophies especially through Empiricism q.v.

The main tenets of Mentalism are discussed and explained in the article on Emmanuel George Cefai himself.