



## Our Situation on Earth, by Albert Einstein

Our situation on this earth seems strange. Every one of us appears here involuntarily and uninvited for a short stay, without knowing the whys and the wherefore. In our daily lives we only feel that man is here for the sake of others, for those whom we love and for many other beings whose fate is connected with our own. I am often worried at the thought that my life is based to such a large extent on the work of my fellow human beings and I am aware of my great indebtedness

to them. I do not believe in freedom of the will. Schopenhauer's words: 'Man can do what he wants, but he cannot will what he wills' accompany me in all situations throughout my life and reconcile me with the actions of others even if they are rather painful to me. This awareness of the lack of freedom of will preserves me from taking too seriously myself and my fellow men as acting and deciding individuals and from losing my temper. [...] Although I am a typical loner in daily life, my consciousness of belonging to the invisible community of those who strive for truth, beauty, and justice has preserved me from feeling isolated. The most beautiful and deepest experience a man can have is the sense of the mysterious. It is the underlying principle of religion as well as all serious endeavors in art and science. He who never had this experience seems to me, if not dead, then at least blind. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is a something that our mind cannot grasp and whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly and as a feeble reflection, this is religiousness. In this sense I am religious. To me it suffices to wonder at these secrets and to attempt humbly to grasp with my mind a mere image of the lofty structure of all that there is.

--Albert Einstein

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