

5 THE PATH TO KNOWLEDGE AND UNITY

5.1 Introduction

¹The path to knowledge and unity is the path on which mankind is wandering towards the inevitable final goal: the next higher natural kingdom, the fifth one.

²We are in the physical world to have experiences and to learn from them, to acquire insight and understanding and qualities and abilities requisite for further development in the higher kingdom.

³The path is long from the stage of barbarism to the stage of ideality, from the physical, emotional, and mental worlds of ignorance to the worlds of knowledge and unity.

⁴In the following, it will be shown that without esoteric knowledge of reality and life man will be the victim of his emotional illusions and mental fictions.

⁵He has no idea of the fact that he is a monad in a causal envelope, that being incarnated in an organism he possesses four additional envelopes made of molecular matter of successively higher kinds with different kinds of consciousness. He will be able to ascertain these facts when he has acquired consciousness in his highest envelope (intuition in his causal envelope in the world of Platonic ideas).

⁶The “maya” of the Indians was originally a common term for all the conceptions of reality, life, and the meaning of life that people invent. “Maya” thus does not mean (as Western philosophers think) that the physical world is an illusion, a figment of the imagination, that physical matter is unreal.

⁷“Maya” means that a knowledge of reality cannot be acquired by men, not by any kind of beings in the three worlds of man (the physical, emotional, and mental) but only in the causal world, which belongs to the fifth natural kingdom. If those who have attained that kingdom incarnate in order to help men, they return, having left their organisms, to their worlds. They do not dwell in the emotional or mental world.

⁸Thus “maya” is the sum total of all kinds of philosophical constructions and scientific hypotheses and theories; in addition, all kinds of emotional illusions and mental fictions and all kinds of clairvoyant investigation.

⁹Man has yet to learn that he is quite simply inconceivably ignorant of practically everything in the cosmos in which he exists. So-called Sokratean wisdom (the supreme wisdom available to man) consists in the insight that practically he knows only that he knows “nothing”. We believe that we know but we do not truly know even the things we have explored the most. Perhaps in some hundred years’ time it will dawn on mankind that the authorities that have been its guides have only led astray (excepting, of course, the messengers from the planetary hierarchy). We must rely on “authorities” in all the various fields of research, since they know more than what the “layman” can know. However, that remains an emergency for the time being. When these authorities appear with normative pretensions, they display a fundamental deficiency in their intellectual equipment.

¹⁰Where man’s way of life in various respects is concerned, the esoterician has been taught to see that the knowledge of the laws of life is the only standard, those laws of life of which mankind still is ignorant and which it still, as it seems, refuses to heed, being entangled in its emotional illusions and mental fictions. To liberate mankind from these things will probably a long time yet be beyond Hercules’ feat of cleaning the Augean stables.

THE WORLD OF EMOTIONAL ILLUSIONS

5.2 Introduction

¹The emotional world is the world of illusions. Emotional consciousness is by nature exclusively desire, urge, or what the individual at the emotional stage perceives as dynamic will. At the stage of barbarism, before mentality has yet been activated, desire expresses itself as more or less uncontrolled impulses. According as the mental envelope is affected by the vibrations of the emotional envelope, the two envelopes are interwoven, mental consciousness is roused to life, and desire and thought merge. If desire preponderates, desire coloured with thought (feeling) is obtained. If thought preponderates, thought accentuated by desire (imagination) is obtained. It is feeling and imagination that give rise to the illusions of emotional thinking. At the stage of civilization, most thinking is the wishful thinking of desire. The individual is always personally committed and never fully impersonal except when it comes to purely mental problems (mathematical ones, for instance.).

²In the normal individual in physical incarnation, emotional consciousness is subjective, individually or collectively. It falsifies the conception of and attitude to reality there is in mental consciousness. Thus illusion is misleading, disorienting, and life-falsifying desire, feeling or imagination.

³During thousands of years man has identified himself with his illusions, which therefore are latent in his subconscious and determine his instinct at lower stages. The subconscious, which consists of complexes, more than 90 per cent illusory complexes, is the material that psychoanalysis tries to explore by sporadic nose dives and the individual himself tries to sound in so-called self-analysis. True man is the sub- and superconscious, largely inaccessible to waking consciousness.

⁴During the emotional eon, emotional matter is the most vitalized, emotional vibrations are the strongest, emotional consciousness is the most suggestive, and emotional will is the most dominant. The certainty of feeling is absolute when determined by the will of desire. Liberation from all this is possible only for mental consciousness methodically and systematically activated.

5.3 *The Objective Illusions of the Emotional World*

¹Emotional matter is formed instantaneously after the faintest expression of emotional consciousness. This explains why the emotional world is filled with emotional material forms. In the three lower regions of that world, which are made up of the three lowest emotional molecular kinds, there are in addition enduring counterparts of the physical forms. In the four higher regions, all material forms (except the emotional envelopes of emotional beings) are created by the imagination of emotional beings. The life-time of the forms is conditioned by the intensity of the desire that formed them.

²There is no possibility for a clairvoyant or a newcomer in the emotional world to judge the reality content of emotional forms. The esoteric axiom says: "No self-tutored seer ever saw correctly". He cannot decide whether what he is seeing (a mountain, a lake, a tree, an animal, a man, a building, etc.) has any physical counterpart, nor whether the human form he is seeing belongs to an evolutionary monad living also in the physical world, is only the emotional "corpse" of a man, or a figment of the imagination. He cannot judge whether the events he is observing are happening in that very moment or are reflections of historical events in the past or descriptions in a novel or a drama.

³Religious ideas of god or Christ, etc., become, just as everything else, forms in emotional matter. The saint, who lives in a heartfelt community with god, unconsciously shapes a divine form, which, when he leaves the physical world, will appear to him as the reality he has believed in.

⁴What has been said here explains why a Swedenborg, a Steiner, a Martinus, a Ramakrishna, etc. took such material forms for thoroughly genuine realities. The Virgil with whom Swedenborg conversed was not the Roman poet but a replica of him. The same is often true of the characters appearing at spiritist evocations.

⁵The one thing that man can learn in the emotional world is that everything there is illusory and deceptive. The sooner those who have entered the emotional world strive to reach the causal world or to reincarnate, the better.

⁶In the following, the emotional illusions of physical man will be treated. The ability to see through them is a prerequisite of having a knowledge of life.

5.4 The Illusions of Self-Centredness

¹The self is the centre of its circle and the focal point round which the universe rotates. Everything else is irrelevant. The self lives in its wishful thinking. Self-centredness is anchored in the subconscious. The latent self complex is roused through everything that deprives the child of its spontaneity and simplicity, impersonality and objectivity. Thereby also begins the falsification of reality through subjectivation. Soon the passive inferiority complex as well as the active superiority complex are fully functioning. These two vast complexes are by their basic tendencies repulsive, although they can mask themselves as attractive ones as need arises.

²These complexes develop in the child from the age of three years through everything that comes into a relation with the self complex. Inferiority is formed partly through the expression of depreciatory personal opinions, partly through comparisons with others. Such actions destroy instinctive self-reliance and security, foster fear and vulnerability. The complex of superiority is stimulated partly through personal rather than objective praise, partly in self-defence against unsuitable treatment and aggressiveness.

³At lower stages of development, self-centredness is a factor necessary to development, at higher stages it becomes a factor hampering development. At the stage of barbarism, it stimulates the individual to acquire superior faculties; at the stage of civilization, to acquire a greater insight. It is only when the sense of solidarity makes itself felt that group-thinking begins to supersede self-thinking. At the stage of culture, egoism becomes ever more refined and self-deception, falsifying everything, ever more difficult to discover. Nothing is as easily corrupted as your own motives, and what facilitates this corruption is the fact that development involves a continuous shift of motives.

⁴The illusions of self-centredness include, among other things, everything that goes to form self-assertion: self-underestimation, self-overestimation, self-delusion, self-blindness, self-importance, self-sufficiency, self-excellence, self-pity. Moral illusionism belongs here. Vanity, pride, false humility, judging, indignation, disdain, malicious pleasure, etc. belong here. The illusions of power and glory belong here as well. Self-centredness is both the ground and cause of the fact that practically everything human in us and about us is lie. The wee bit of truth existing is the divinity within us.

5.5 The Illusions of Possession

¹The Buddha as well as Christos warned emphatically against the illusions of possession.

²Desire is insatiable, and increased possibilities of satisfying our “needs”, if we yield to the inherent tendency, have the result that desires can grow endlessly. “All the gold of the earth does not suffice for the desires of one single man”, according to the Buddha.

³The mania for collecting things is a manifestation of thoughtless egoism. The desire of acquisition can grow into a greed that stifles all noble feelings, kills out the love for one’s neighbour, and makes man hard before the distress of others. The most common motives for collecting money are probably fear of poverty and striving for the power that wealth affords.

Many a miser deceives himself by assuring that he collects money to donate it to charities some time. A typical example of the relation between wealth and so-called charity was the man who prayed to god to be given a million so that he could succour a person in distress with one thousand crowns.

⁴How the individual relates to money is one of the most important tests to show whether he has acquired an understanding of life. The illusions of possession vanish as the understanding of the law of reaping and of the meaning and goal of life awakens.

⁵For many reasons Christos warned against collecting possessions. Our “heart” will be where our treasure is. The collection of money draws our thoughts from the essential things of life. It also has consequences for the future. In life upon life the miser will lay up treasures for himself only to lose them in some way, in all conceivable ways, until he realizes the absurdity of this kind of Sisyphean work with ensuing torments of Tantalus.

⁶Poverty, like injudicious self-denial, is nothing to strive after, but becomes an obstacle if it makes it more difficult for us to rightly fulfil our mission.

⁷Money is goods held in charge, and we are responsible that it is put to use in the right way. It requires judgement even to make sacrifices.

5.6 The Illusions of Sentimentality

¹The illusions of sentimentality, or emotionalism, include the illusions of egoistic love as well as cultural and political illusions of all kinds.

²Four main kinds of love can be distinguished: Self-pity. The love that wants to evoke reciprocated affection in order to be loved. The relatively unselfish love, which manifests itself as admiration, devotion, and sympathy. Finally, entirely unselfish love, which desires the happiness of the loved one, irrespective of the lover’s own happiness.

³Self-pity is the crassest, most self-blinding kind of egoism. It is typical of this self-love that it believes itself to suffer more than those on whom it inflicts suffering. This would imply that persecution and torment of others were sophisticated self-torture.

⁴Egoistic love includes that particular kind of envy which is called jealousy, an incurable disease. (Schleiermacher illustrated this state by his formulation, unsurpassable in its sharpness, “Eifersucht ist eine Leidenschaft, die mit Eifer sucht was Leiden schafft.”*) It is characteristic of egoistic love that it wants to be the sole possessor of the object of its love, and in so doing binds, limits, excludes, instead of setting free. *See endnote.

⁵Our true friends belong to our clan, and we have been united with them during thousands of lives with all the different kinds of family ties. We can never lose them, although we would not meet them in some incarnation.

⁶Individuals waste an immense amount of time, work, and money on the meaningless conventions of social life, on helping other people to waste valuable time, on satisfying curiosity and the desire of gossip, on wrapping other people up in pleasant states in order to enjoy them themselves.

⁷The cultural phenomena can be said to include the products of fiction literature, art, and music. Their function should be to beautify and ennoble life and facilitate evolution thereby. Nowadays they do everything to counteract evolution. Instead of ennobling emotionality and strengthening noble emotions, fiction literature (novels, dramas, etc.) contribute only to amusements, to fostering romantic oozing sentimentality, to resuscitating the illusions of the stage of barbarism, and to filling the emotional world with repulsive vibrations and material forms, to making reality a hell. Modern art does its best to uglify life. Atonal music believes itself able to reach some higher harmony through dissonance. That, too, is a sign of men’s disorientation and torn psyche.

⁸Most political ideologies are the work of life-ignorant so-called idealists who believed themselves able to construct communities and change people by means of theories. They have

wrought more evil than good. It is a psychological mistake to preach ideals belonging to higher stages of developments to people who are at lower stages. They will deride and reject everything that is above their ability to understand and realize.

⁹The assertion of Marx that physical factors are the only active forces in social development evidences his ignorance of life. Emotional illusions and mental fictions are far more powerful than physical factors.

¹⁰Sentimentality affords power of deciding to ignorance and impotence, grants rights without duties, gives power without responsibility, preaches equality, so doing away with all differences between stages of development. That is like allowing children to rule in the society of adults.

¹¹Sentimentality also manifests itself in perverse coddling pedagogy, in the goodness that is just weakness and irresolute laxity, that lets children grow up in ignorance of the laws of life, makes them weak-willed milksops, victims of their own impulses, unable to take care of themselves, hold them back at the infantile stage of barbarism with its arbitrariness and wilfulness.

5.7 The Illusions of Happiness and Unhappiness

¹Emotionality is by nature attractive or repulsive, mostly inconstant and easily affected. As long as the individual is centred in the consciousness of his emotional envelope and takes this to be his soul, he is the victim of the pairs of opposites, the veers between harmonious and disharmonious vibrations, manifesting themselves in desire or distaste, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, confidence or fear, joy or sorrow, happiness or unhappiness, etc. Those who are dependent on those states live in the sense of insecurity and uncertainty, become hesitating and groping, easily led and unreliable, are torn between opposite desires, have a bad conscience however they act. They constantly risk to lose their balance, standing neither prosperity nor adversity. When they have fortune, they are intoxicated with conceit and pride. When they meet with misfortune, they are the victims of despondency, depression, and despair.

²The egoist pursues happiness and runs the risk of never finding it but in a short-lived and fickle shape. He is unhappy whenever he cannot satisfy without restraint the desires that are the meaning of life to him.

³Everyone has his conception of happiness. Life-ignorant people seek happiness everywhere except where it is to be found: in unity. Any opposition to life makes man unhappy and only makes division stronger. To reach unity we must cultivate emotional attraction; without it, we shall have a wrong direction in life and we shall lack any prospect of understanding life.

⁴Success and failure are among the illusions that make us happy or unhappy. There is no failure. There are no other misfortunes than the belief of our ignorance that they are misfortunes, just as there can never be any desperate situations, only desperate people. Every evil thing that comes our way is reaping and repay of an old debt, a lesson, hardening, or a test, and often all of this at the same time. Anyone who has rightly understood life will overcome in his very ruin. Most people probably have experienced that what they thought was their utter undoing proved to be the best thing that could happen to them.

⁵Suffering is bad reaping and ceases when sowing has been reaped. Pity increases the world's suffering, makes us nervous wrecks unfit for life and incapable of helping others. Anyone who has reached the stage of culture has sympathy for all who suffer and takes it to be his duty to do everything in his might to fight suffering, everywhere and always. We all are accessory to the immense suffering of mankind. We all have in past lives contributed to increasing the world's suffering in every way through our lawlessness. However, we do not

help anyone by torturing ourselves. By being unhappy we make others unhappy as well and contribute to increasing universal depression.

⁶A life led in accord with the Law is emotional happiness, mental joy, and essential bliss. The physical and emotional worlds, too, will become the abode of happiness when mankind has acquired a knowledge of the Law and some ability to apply the Law.

⁷The art of leading a happy life was called the art of living by the ancients. In the negative sense, the art of living consists in the ability to forget oneself and one's insignificance, not to pay attention to whatever is apt to make us unhappy, deprive us of calm, courage, confidence. The stoic does not worry about the future, nor does he fret over the past; he makes himself unaffected of "how it feels" in the present. The wise man leads a tragic life but never takes it tragically. We must reap what we have sown. That is knowing the law, not fatalism nor the belief in inevitable destiny. In the positive sense, the art of living consists in striving to reach higher levels, to give life a meaning by fulfilling your duties in an expedient way. Permanent happiness is gained through liberation from the lower by identification with the higher.

5.8 The Illusions of Devotion

¹The illusions of devotion belong at the highest stage of emotional development, the stage of the cultural individual, the mystic, and the emotional saint. These expressions of attraction cannot be rightly understood at lower stages. When they are misinterpreted they become hindrances to those who using those illusions must acquire the qualities and abilities of attraction: admiration, affection, sympathy, respect, reverence, enthusiasm, the spirit of self-sacrifice.

²The pertaining illusions make it possible to confuse higher emotionality with essentiality, to see ideals as ends rather than means. Included here are the false notions that the views of the saint or the so-called truths of faith agree with the knowledge of reality and life, that good motives are defences of all manner of mistakes, that you can do evil that good may come, that the end justifies the means.

³Devotion can blind you. The illusions of devotion include glorification of all manner of talents and geniuses, undiscerning worship of authority which proclaims a book the word of god and turns an ideology into supreme truth. This makes for the brutalities of despotism commanded by a Jahwe, an inquisition, a Hitler, or a Stalin. All of this gives evidence of the unreliability of so-called conscience. Without a knowledge of the laws of life, man is like a reed shaken with the wind.

⁴The emotional saint is the last incarnation at the emotional stage. Such an individual appears perfect, because he has had the opportunity of activating his latent emotional qualities together with the most expedient reaping. The undiscerning crowd regards this kind of saint as all-knowing and as speaking nothing but the word of god. Often the saint himself believes in his omniscient wisdom and fables about cosmic consciousness, thinks he has attained the "absolute", entered "nirvana", etc. Upon his incarnation as a saint, the individual enters the stage of humanity. The individual's humility manifests itself in his realization of his immense limitation and in his lack of the grand airs of authority.

⁵Our conception of godhood indicates our stage of development. The lower the level, the coarser the idea of god. Any attempt at defining the godhead is an evidence of ignorance.

⁶Everything can be a source of mistake before the individual has acquired at least the common sense of the humanist stage.

⁷The greatest and last illusion, which no man can liberate himself from, is the one that makes him think that he is free from illusions.

THE WORLD OF MENTAL FICTIONS

5.9 Introduction

¹The mental world is the world of fictions.

²Mental consciousness is not its own criterion of truth or of reality. It is an instrument which objective sense uses to ascertain facts, which subjective reason uses to put the facts into their historical, logical, psychological, and causal contexts, and to concretize the ideas of the causal world.

³Facts can be grouped into subjective and objective ones. Subjective facts belong to the consciousness aspect; objective facts, to the matter and motion aspects.

⁴The objective perception of reality afforded by sense is always correct as far as it goes. In epistemological respect, everything is above all what it appears to be but besides that always something different and immensely more.

⁵Facts are largely useless until reason can fit them into their correct contexts. Facts turn into fictions when ignorance puts them into wrong contexts. Contexts are systems. All thinking is based on principles and systems, whether people know about it or not. All explanations that are not supported by sufficient facts are fictions.

⁶Thinking man, striving for clarity, seeks to determine principles and systems in order to comprehend. The system affords him a survey of facts, enables him to rightly apprehend the grounds and consequences of subjective facts and the causes and effects of objective facts. The quality of the system indicates the individual's level of development, his power of apprehension, and his knowledge of facts. Ignorance of existence, reality, and life is so profound that the dogmatic systems of theology, the speculative systems of philosophy, and the hypothetic systems of science have been accepted as rational and correct explanations.

⁷Fictions are conceptions that have no counterpart in reality. Fictions include vagaries, imaginings, suppositions, conjectures, the assumptions of arbitrariness, false facts, dogmas, hypotheses, facts in wrong contexts, ideas taken out of their systems, the part taken to be the whole. Fictions thus include all ideas, conceptions, concepts, and systems that mislead, that falsify reality. More than 90 per cent of the intellectual life of most people is made up of fictions. This sort of life was what the ancients called "living in appearances".

⁸Fictions are individual and collective. Collective fictions include the prejudice, idiosyncrasies, ideologies, etc., of one's family, class, nation, or of mankind. They can be classified into religious, moral, philosophical, scientific, and social fictions. All exoteric world views and life views are fiction systems.

⁹"We see just what we already know", more exactly: what we believe we know, which is something quite different. We perceive reality through our false systems. Therefore, reason is restlessly occupied with constructing new systems as new facts are added. Only stupid dictatorships imagine that they are able to stop people from thinking, falsify facts, force people to accept systems that do not agree with reality. Errors, whether intentional or unintentional, will all be corrected sooner or later.

¹⁰The superiority of the esoteric mental system appears in the fact that new facts can be fitted into the system without constraint. Education does not consist in being crammed with the disordered facts of encyclopedias, but in having facts put into systems and into systems of systems. That is the way we orient ourselves in reality.

¹¹Systems have a suggestive power, which is immense until they have proved to be fiction systems. But even afterwards, systems once inoculated into the individual lead their own lives in his subconscious. If in addition they have been woven into emotional illusions, they are practically ineradicable for that incarnation. In fanatics, fiction systems have engraved themselves so strongly that their effects can extend over several lives, if they have opportunities to be revived through a renewed contact. Then they are received as

“revelations”. Fanaticism destroys the sense of reality, makes impersonal judgement impossible, which is demonstrated by such phenomena as Jesuits, moralists, Marxists, Nazis, Freudians, etc.

¹²Exoteric learning is the result of research and speculation. Research yields facts. Speculation constructs the system that is to afford meaning to facts. The more facts that enter into the systems, the better the latter are as systems of orientation, indicating how far research has advanced, making it possible for the successors to follow on where their predecessors left off. It is through the endless series of fiction systems that science advances. Fiction systems will be necessary until a connection has been made with the esoteric mental system. Even the esoteric system will become richer with constantly added facts. That system need never be remade, however, since the framework of basic facts is given once and for all. Moreover, without the esoteric system it is impracticable to determine the reality content of fictions. It is below ten per cent in most cases.

¹³Exoteric systems generally are the results either of processes of synthesization in the subconscious or of contact with superconscious thought forms in the mental world, concretizations of Platonic ideas. Those who occupy themselves intensively with a certain problem can suddenly, in their waking consciousness, experience the idea that affords the solution.

¹⁴Illusions can be mainly assigned to life view; fictions, to both world view and life view.

5.10 The Fictitiousness of Mental Consciousness

¹Mental matter is even more easily affected by consciousness than emotional matter. In addition, it is more difficult to free oneself from fictions than from illusions, unless illusions are reinforced by fictions. At the stage of humanity, emotionality is controlled with mentality. Liberation from the power of mentality, however, requires causal consciousness, permanently accessible only at the stage of ideality.

²At the conclusion of his incarnation, the normal individual leaves his organism and etheric envelope in the physical world, his emotional envelope in the emotional world, and his mental envelope in the mental world. In the mental world, he leads a life of absolutely subjective consciousness without any possibility of objectivity. He is wholly unaware of the fact that his immensely intensive experiences in that world are his own productions made from the materials of imagination he gathered while living in the physical world.

³Anyone who acquired mental objective consciousness while living in the physical world can, when in the mental world, explore the properties of mental matter. This presupposes subjective causal consciousness and instruction by some member of the planetary hierarchy. A long training is required before mental consciousness has learnt to tell the different compositions of mental matter apart.

⁴Therefore, the majority of people in the mental world are incapable of judging the reality content of their fictions. It is clear from this how meaningless it is to try to acquire clairvoyance before the individual has become a causal self. If he did, he would become the defenceless victim of his own fictions. Our elder brothers in higher worlds warn us against those abilities so eagerly strived for by the ignorant.

⁵In the following, just a few of the religious, philosophical, and scientific fictions of the present time are discussed. Since the life of exoteric thought consists of fictions, these are of course innumerable.

5.11 Religious Fictions

¹We incarnate in order to explore the physical world and to acquire the qualities and abilities that will enable us to reach the next higher natural kingdom.

²Therefore, the purpose of religion should to teach people a conception of right or the knowledge of the laws of life, instruct people in how to think and feel for expedient self-realization.

³Any life that is led in accord with the Law is a religious or “spiritual” life. What world view or creed the individual has or what work he does is in this very respect unimportant. Any work is spiritual work, when it is done in the right spirit. Anyone who has faithfully fulfilled his task in life, however small it seems to people, has led a spiritual life.

⁴The dogmatic systems of the religions are the fictions of life ignorance. Even if belief is emotional by nature, the religions are based on some sort of explanation of the world, however primitive this may be.

⁵In emotional respect, religions can be divided into higher and lower ones. The ideals of higher religions are part of the consciousness domains of emotional attraction.

⁶The religion that has succeeded in preserving the teachings of its author in a least distorted state is Buddhism. It teaches the existence of higher worlds, the pre-existence of the soul, and rebirth, as well as the law of sowing and reaping. Since only esotericians are able to interpret the teaching of the Buddha correctly, it was inevitable that this teaching was misunderstood. Reincarnation became metempsychosis, karma a law of reaping applied without meaning, and nirvana was turned into a world too easily accessible.

⁷No exoterists (prophets or theologians) even suspected the existence of our planetary hierarchy. The Buddha as well as Christos were the highest representatives of the hierarchy. The Buddha incarnated for the last time to liberate mankind from religious illusions, and Christos the last time to save us from fictions. Of their teachings, only the Buddha’s teachings on the noble middle path between asceticism and indifference to individual development, on the four noble truths, and on the noble eightfold path have been preserved in their pristine purity.

⁸Christianity was born from gnostics, which was the original teaching of Christos, adapted to suit the possibility of understanding that then existed. Whatever in church history has been given out as gnostics are the misconceptions of right reverend fathers of the church. Christos imparted his teaching only to those who were initiated into the secret knowledge order of the gnosticians. To the people he spoke only in parables, since they were unable to comprehend the esoteric symbols. The Christian dogmas are proof of how right he was in doing so. Some of those dogmas are discussed below.

⁹Dogma: Christianity is the unadulterated teaching of Christ.

¹⁰Truth: There is hardly anything left in Christianity of the original teaching of Christos.

¹¹Dogma: Sin is a crime against an infinite being, and therefore requires an infinite punishment. God can forgive sins only for Christ’s sake.

¹²Truth: There is no sin, no crime against any god. There are only mistakes in respect of the Law, which is the sum total of all laws of life known and unknown. The individual will gain a knowledge of those laws by experiencing their sowing and reaping.

¹³Dogma: The Mosaic ten commandments are dictated by god.

¹⁴Truth: God lays down no commands or prohibitions. God is the guide and supervisor of the process of manifestation.

¹⁵Dogma: God is wrath and punitive righteousness.

¹⁶Truth: God can neither be wrathful nor punish. God is perfect Law.

¹⁷Dogma: God needs to be atoned with man.

¹⁸Truth: God does not need to be atoned with man, but man needs to be atoned with god.

¹⁹Dogma: Christos is god’s only son.

²⁰Truth: Every monad is potentially divine and will some time in the process of cosmic manifestation attain the omniscience and omnipotence of the highest divine kingdom. That is the final goal of all beings. The path to the goal is called self-realization, the acquisition of all requisite qualities and abilities in the five natural kingdoms and the seven divine kingdoms. The envelopes that the monad is eventually invested with in ever higher kingdoms are intended to be serviceable tools for the gathering and working up of experiences in the different worlds. Evolution consists of a series of levels from the lowest kingdom to the highest, and each level is filled with beings on their way to the final goal.

²¹Dogma: The soul is created along with the body and dies with it.

²²Truth: There is no death, just dissolution of a form unfit for life. When the organism is left off, the self-consciousness of the monad moves to the next higher envelope of the monad.

²³Dogma: In the last day soul and body will be created anew by a miracle.

²⁴Truth: The so-called resurrection of the body is nothing else than reincarnation (not metempsychosis!).

²⁵Dogma: There is an everlasting hell.

²⁶Truth: The only hell there is are the regions in the physical and emotional worlds consisting of the three lowest molecular kinds, and reincarnation with a bad reaping. There is no other “punishment”, no other suffering, than the bad reaping resulting from bad sowing. Life is happiness when the bad sowing has been reaped.

²⁷Dogmas are characterized by their unchangingness. What ignorance in a certain epoch believed shall be regarded as knowledge for all times. “Orthodoxy refuses to receive any instruction or information.” In so doing dogmatism becomes an enemy of development.

²⁸The dogmas of the church are misinterpretations of gnostic symbols the right interpretation of which was made exoteric only in our times. “Salvation” originally had three meanings: liberation from bad reaping (illness and poverty), acquisition of esoteric knowledge, entry into the fifth natural kingdom. “The sin against the holy spirit” meant idiotization of common sense through acceptance of absurdities, contempt of the good, true, and beautiful, as well as conscious opposition to evolution.

²⁹The power of the church rests upon the dogma of sin and forgiveness of sins. That dogma is the biggest lie of the church and makes people indifferent to their development. Since all people are thought to be irremediable and they are all guaranteed forgiveness in beforehand for all conceivable misdeeds, nobody needs to strive to improve. The Italian bandit’s worry about the scientific researcher’s soul was typical of the pertaining fictitiousness “Not that I have anything against an honest robbery or, if that were the case, making a hole in the head of a priest, but I am careful with my soul and would never make a pact with Satan.” Since people knew that they could always do penance and receive absolution, sin added zest to things. A renaissance lady, for instance, whose cook had surprised her with a new dessert, said that “the only thing that was missing in the perfection of that course was that it was not sinful to eat it as well.”

³⁰The simplest common sense and humaneness make it clear that no omnipotence of love can condemn innocent people to be born with sin and all manner of weaknesses, lead a life in suffering in the physical world, and then a life in eternal hell. The simplest sense of justice tells us that nobody must suffer for other people’s misdeeds without deserving it.

³¹In 1958, a commission of British bishops sought a way out of these difficulties by asserting that the “dogmas contain a kernel of truth.” Using that argument, however, you can defend most lies. They always contain some percentage of truth.

5.12 The Fictions of European Philosophy

¹The task of philosophy should be to afford mankind a system of thought useful for orientation, a system of the facts of research about reality and life.

²European philosophy, about 2500 years old, has been a speculation of ignorance and has largely occupied itself with pseudo-problems. Philosophy in the proper sense started with the sophists. Before them, no philosophy was needed, because all serious seekers after truth were initiated into esoteric knowledge orders, which have always been instituted in all countries where there were people possessed of a capacity for reflection and ideality. Along with political decline and democratization went the lowering of the cultural standard and the dissolution of the concepts of right, and that was why ever fewer seekers came up to the entrance requirements. What historians believe they know about pre-sophist philosophy are assumptions on the basis of a few fragments of symbolic writings and philosophical legends in the form of myth. The sophists, who were realists and rationalists, grasped nothing of this but started speculating on their own using the learning that was common property. Like all other speculation without the requisite facts, sophistry, too, had to end in skepticism. It was superseded by the Christian dogmatic system with its tyranny of opinion.

³As the church declined during the renaissance, when even popes became skeptics, speculation could gain ground anew and has been impossible to check ever since. The one system after the other was concocted, until the culmination was reached with the Hegelian system, which knew everything – about nothing. About the year 1830, incipient natural research had made such advancements that scientists could tear the imaginative constructions of the philosophers to pieces. Since then, philosophy has mainly occupied itself with so-called epistemology (the theory of knowledge), and new pseudo-problems. It wonders whether existence is a figment of the imagination, whether matter is real, whether there is a material external world. It doubts the objective perception of reality by sense, has more confidence in the sophisms of subjective reason. Using so-called conceptual analysis it tries to examine whether concepts have any reality content, not understanding that this presupposes the very knowledge of existence that philosophers do not possess.

⁴Scientific research coupled with common sense has been able to level a devastating criticism against both the philosophical and the theological systems. Nuclear physics has not merely split the chemical atom but has also broken up the foundation of the scientific view: the hypothesis of the indestructibility of matter. In the process, mankind has slipped into a new skeptic period. There are risks to dissolving all old systems without putting more rational ones in their stead. The purge was certainly necessary. Philosophy with its irrational doubts about the results of natural research, theology with its refusal to adjust its dogmas to the facts of science, moral fictionalism with its taboos divorced from reality and hostile to life, had outlived their day. Being deprived of those systems, however, people have lost the certainty they need not to live in a mental chaos. The conception of right emanates from the life view, which in its turn is based upon the world view. The general dissolution of systems has brought about a dissolution of concepts of right, general lawlessness, and arbitrary legislation, resulting in a contempt for laws of any kind. Bertrand Russell rightly points out that “people feel profoundly insecure about what is right and wrong. They are even uncertain whether right and wrong are anything but old superstition.”

⁵Scientists who have understood the present emergency work energetically at new systems. They are indubitably fully qualified for such work nowadays. Philosophers, on the other hand, have gone out of work. Philosophy, such as it is still pursued, could without loss be transferred to the history of exploded views.

⁶Still philosophers are not prepared to assume the task of working out systems that could mediate the transition from exoteric systems to the esoteric mental system.

5.13 The Fictions of Indian Philosophy

¹It is typical of the self-sufficiency of Occidental philosophy that it has never concerned itself with the Indian systems of thought.

²There is a great number of such systems. Those attracting the greatest interest of Westerners are vedanta, sankhya, and yoga.

³Sankhya with *purusha* (consciousness) and *prakriti* (matter) is a dualist system. Vedanta leads a theoretical double life, being monist as well as dualist. The monist variety (*advaita*) is subjectivist, denies the existence of matter and the material external world. Whenever it has to present a rational explanation of existence, however, concern itself with such a degrading thing as prosaic reality, it must in any case step down into dualism, making *mahat* (universal soul) emanate *akasha* (matter) and *prana* (motion, force, energy). Being acted upon by *prana*, *akasha* produces the universe. The yoga philosophy, originating from Patanjali, incorporates vedanta as well as sankhya.

⁴Thus not even Indian philosophy has solved the basic problem of existence, the problem of the trinity of reality. On the other hand, yoga philosophy has crossed the border of immanent transcendental philosophy and become a philosophy of transcendence. It asserts that there are higher worlds and undertakes to prove this to everyone willing to submit to its methods of training. It is to be observed that the yoga philosophy strictly adheres to the demand for the objectivity of sense also where higher worlds are concerned.

⁵The yoga philosophy can be divided into two main forms: hatha and raja yoga. Hatha yoga occupies itself mainly with the physical world (the visible and the etheric) in order to gain command of physical matter. Raja yoga is more interested in the superphysical world, striving by concentration, meditation, contemplation, and illumination to enter nirvana, which it thinks the yogi can attain by following the three different paths in succession: karma yoga or the path of physical service, bhakti yoga or the path of emotional devotion, and jnana yoga or the path of reason.

⁶That raja yogi, who has received his training in some one of the many secret yoga schools, each one of which possesses its own eclectic system, receives a methodical training affording him the opportunity of acquiring physical etheric and emotional clairvoyance.

⁷It should be clear from what has been said here that the yoga philosophy, despite its incomparable superiority to Occidental philosophy, has its great limitation. It knows nothing about the true make-up the cosmos, about the individual ultimate self (the monad), about the hierarchy of our planet. It uses terms which it has once borrowed from esoterics. Its explanations of *manas*, *buddhi*, *atma* or *nirvana*, rebirth, and karma are positively erroneous in essential respects.

⁸For a system to stand a chance of being generally accepted by the Hindus, it is required that it affords a boundless scope for never-ending imaginative speculation. Such a system must not be made up of facts only. That is why Buddhism has scant prospects of ever being recognized in India as the superb religion it is. The Buddha's demands for common sense and for the restriction of thought to the possibilities of human experience within the physical, emotional, and mental worlds meet with very little appreciation. The worlds of the fifth natural kingdom (*buddhi* and *nirvana*), of which no human being can know anything from his own experience, are much more interesting. This sentiment finds it all too easy to see an avatar in every fantast.

⁹Ever since Ramakrishna (who died in 1886) broke with secrecy and taught yoga openly, many yogis have publicized certain methods of meditation, breathing exercises, etc. This has proved disastrous. Not even all Indians have the necessary physiological preconditions for those methods. The victims are legion. Tampering with one's breath can entail tuberculosis or disturbances of the nervous system. Meditation on the envelope centres (*chakras*) results in tumours. The esoterician warns emphatically of all the pertaining methods. The esoteric

methods are simple and sovereign. They remain esoteric. Objective consciousness in lower worlds without esoteric knowledge only strengthens maya, illusions, and fictions.

5.14 The Fictions of Science

¹The task of science is to explore the physical world and physical matter and give us the knowledge resulting from this exploration, make man the master of the forces of physical nature, enable him to abolish disease, poverty, and material want, grant him a physical existence fit for a human being.

²It is not the task of science to formulate a world view. This requires a knowledge of higher worlds as well, worlds that cannot be explored with physical methods.

³Science ascertains physical facts and describes physical reality. The physical outlook is of old called materialism. The correct term is physicalism, because all the higher worlds are made up of matter as well.

⁴In order to comprehend right you need as system that puts facts into their right contexts. The only system that will endure in the long run is the esoteric hylozoic system. Hylozoics is the only system that clarifies the trinity of existence, its three equivalent aspects: the aspects of matter, motion, and consciousness.

⁵The physicalists, regarding the visible world to be the only one existing, have hitherto considered it beneath their dignity to investigate without prejudice phenomena they cannot explain. They bestow a smile of pity upon what Bacon called “practical metaphysics” (magic), which is the application of the esoteric knowledge of the ability of consciousness to direct etheric material energies in accord with physical etheric laws of nature and in so doing to produce “phenomena” or measurable changes in visible matter.

⁶In the following, some of the many scientific fictions are enumerated which still haunt scientific literature like dogmas. The fact that several of them contradict each other is due to the fact that the new fictions of nuclear physics occur along with older fictions.

⁷Hypothesis: Science has almost explored the nature of matter.

⁸Truth: Science, reduced as it is to the visible physical world, can explore only about one per cent of the matter aspect of existence.

⁹Hypothesis: Science has ascertained almost all the laws of nature and explored almost all the forces of nature. Therefore, science can determine a priori whether so-called unknown phenomena are possible or not, decide whether they “conflict with the laws of nature”.

¹⁰Truth: Science still lacks a knowledge of approximately 99 per cent of all laws of nature and forces of nature.

¹¹Hypothesis: There are no laws of nature, there are only frequency phenomena or statistical laws.

¹²Truth: The entire cosmos is one single continuous law-abidingness. There are laws in everything and everything is expressive of law.

¹³Hypothesis: The visible physical world is the only world there is.

¹⁴Truth: The cosmos is made up of a series of interpenetrating worlds of different degrees of density.

¹⁵Hypothesis: There is no other matter than physical matter.

¹⁶Truth: There is a long, continuous series of successively higher states of aggregation that form a series of different worlds each one of which has its own kind of matter.

¹⁷Hypothesis: Physical matter consists of three states of aggregation: solid, liquid, and gaseous.

¹⁸Truth: Physical matter consists of seven different states of aggregation, four in addition to the three ones just mentioned: etheric, superetheric, subatomic, and atomic.

¹⁹Hypothesis: Nuclear physics engages in atomic fission.

²⁰Truth: The thing that nuclear physics calls the physical atom is the chemical atom, which esoterics calls an etheric molecule. The fission of the true physical atom yields 49 emotional atoms.

²¹Hypothesis: Matter and energy are phenomena of two basically different kinds.

²²Truth: Matter and energy are one and the same thing. There is only matter. All higher kinds of matter relate to lower kinds as energy to matter. Energy is matter.

²³Hypothesis: Physical matter is indestructible.

²⁴Truth: Physical matter can be dissolved and changed into emotional matter. The same is true of higher kinds of matter. Only primordial atoms are indestructible.

²⁵Matter dissolves into energy.

²⁶Truth: As has already been said, all energy is matter. There is originally only one energy: the dynamic energy of primordial matter.

²⁷Hypothesis: The cosmos is an eternally indestructible perpetuum mobile.

²⁸Truth: All manifested matter has once been formed out of primordial atoms and will some time return to the primordial atomic state, in which process all the primordial atoms (monads) will have acquired actualized active consciousness and omniscience in all the different worlds of the cosmos.

²⁹Hypothesis: Consciousness is a property of organic matter only.

³⁰Truth: All matter has either potential consciousness or some sort of actualized consciousness. Everything is simultaneously matter, motion, and consciousness. None of the three can exist without the other two.

5.15 THE WORLD OF KNOWLEDGE

¹The world of knowledge has been given various names: the world of Platonic ideas, the world of intuition, the causal world, the world of esoteric knowledge.

²By mentioning the world of ideas and affirming its existence, Platon came close to what was permissible, esoterically speaking. He gave the learned of posterity a hint which they took in many different ways except, of course, in the only right way: that knowledge has its own particular world and that mental speculation can only result in fictions.

³When attaining that world of knowledge, man can prepare himself to pass to the fifth natural kingdom. In the causal world, being the meeting-place for individuals of both the fourth and the fifth natural kingdom, he comes in contact with members of the hierarchy of our planet.

⁴The learned smile superciliously at esoterics. Nobody has taught them how to comprehend it. Therefore, it must be the fabrication of a charlatan. To those learned ones, the visible world is the only one existing, and possibly also something called the "spiritual world", whatever that is. They have no ideas of reality and life, the meaning and goal of existence, the higher worlds of our planet and the hierarchy ruling them. And it is not advisable to any academic authority to move too far away from academic notions of so-called truth. The undaunted pioneer, who dares to be ahead of his times and to defy academic opinion, slowly lagging behind, will unfailingly be regarded as a fantast, mentally disordered, or senile.

⁵In the causal world, there is no maya, illusoriness, or fictitiousness. It is only in that world that the individual can acquire a knowledge of reality and life; that he always knows if he knows or does not know, and not, as in lower worlds, just assumes or believes. Causal consciousness always thinks in accord with reality. Of course, causal intuition can refer only to lower worlds, not to higher worlds. However, even regarding the higher worlds and existence in general there is an enormous stock of knowledge mediated by the entire series of beings of ever higher kingdoms.

⁶To attain the causal world it is necessary to have acquired higher mental faculties: beyond ordinary inference thinking and principle thinking also perspective thinking and system thinking. Only then will you have a prospect of reaching up to the intuition.

5.16 THE WORLD OF UNITY

¹The essential world, or the world of unity, is the lowest world of the fifth natural kingdom. Anyone who wants to forge ahead of human evolution always has the possibility of doing so. To attain that world it is necessary to acquire the twelve essential qualities and to serve mankind, evolution, and life with one-pointed determination. Those qualities are described symbolically in the esoteric tale of the twelve labours of Hercules, which have been distorted in the exoteric legend, of course. It is unnecessary to speculate on those qualities. We must rest content with knowing that there is a law saying that when the individual is ripe for higher knowledge, then he will receive it for as a free gift in some manner.

²The essential self understands what is meant by freedom, that freedom is won through law and through expedient application of law. The so-called freedom of lower worlds consists in the arbitrariness of ignorance, bringing about chaos. Everything that has become law is perfect. Evolution is a continuous adaptation to the Law such as it works on the next higher level. There is no failure, there are only more or less necessary lessons. Much that is called evil is part of the necessary experiences of life.

³The essential self sees the truth of sayings such as: It is best as it is, was, will be. Whatever happens is in accord with the Law and existing conditions, the effect of pre-existent causes. Nothing can befall us that we have not deserved. The sufferings of the individual are his own work in the past. The talk of injustice in any respect whatsoever is the talk of ignorance and envy. There are no undeserved privileges. The fact that human beings do not know how to rightly use them only becomes a bad sowing for the future.

⁴Therefore, the path to knowledge and unity implies self-acquisition of all the qualities and abilities that make it possible for the individual to attain the next higher natural kingdom, the fifth kingdom, and in so doing become an ever more capable server of life and evolution.

Endnotes by the Translator

To 6.4. “Eifersucht ist eine Leidenschaft, die mit Eifer sucht, was Leiden schafft” means in a literal English translation, “Jealousy is a passion which eagerly seeks what brings suffering.” It is a German pun of extraordinary wittiness, regrettably lost in translation.

To 11.8 Gnostics and gnosticians. In accordance with Laurency’s usage, genuine esoteric doctrines or schools are denoted by names ending in -ics and their adherents, by names ending in -icians; thus we have gnostics (the teaching) and gnosticians (its students), hylozoics and hylozoicians, and, of course, esoterics and esotericians.

To 15.2. Platon. In my translations of Laurency’s texts, I consistently use the Greek forms of Greek names, not the Latinized forms established in English usage. Thus we have Platon instead of Plato and Aristoteles instead of Aristotle, etc.

The above text constitutes the essay *The Path to Knowledge and Unity* by Henry T. Laurency. The essay is part of the book *Knowledge of Life Five* by Henry T. Laurency. Translated from the Swedish by Lars Adelskog.

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