

THE CHINESE GNOSIS

A COMMENTARY ON
PART I OF LAO TZU'S
TAO TE CHING

BY

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AND

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Preface

In 1823 the first translation into a Western language of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching was published by the French author, Abel Remusat. He made this ancient Chinese text known to the Western world, and since then, an almost unending stream of translations and commentaries have been produced in attempts to make its brief but very profound contents intelligible for Western people.

Nevertheless, as far as we know, there has never been a commentary on the Tao Te Ching like the one you are now about to read, in which the Tao Te Ching is seen as a gnostic text and is interpreted on the basis of gnostic insight. This explains the title of the book: *The Chinese Gnosis*.

What is Gnosis? In one of their earlier works, *The Universal Gnosis**, the authors describe it as follows: 'Originally, the Gnosis was the sum and substance of the ancient wisdom, the compendium of all knowledge having a direct relation to the original divine life of a truly unearthly divine human life-wave. The Hierophants of the Gnosis were, and still are, the messengers of the Immovable Kingdom. They convey the divine wisdom to lost humankind and point out the way to those who, as prodigal sons, want to return to the original land of the Father.'

This description makes it clear that, contrary to what people often say these days, true Gnosis — the original divine Knowledge which gives access to the path of liberation — is never limited to one particular country or nation. Gnosis is universal and intended for the whole human race, and wherever in the world the Messengers of the Light may work, it

* Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, The Netherlands, 1980, p. 9.

will always be revealed. That is why it was manifested not only in the Middle East, but also in ancient China, in the form of the *Tao Te Ching*, a book still treated with veneration in China today. The wisdom set down in the *Tao Te Ching* is every bit as relevant now as it was in Lao Tzu's time. Take this verse from chapter 31, for instance:

*The finest weapons are instruments of disaster.
Those who possess Tao will have nothing to do with them.*

Or this verse, from chapter 33:

*He who overcomes others is strong, but
he who overcomes himself is omnipotent.*

The authors' interpretation of this verse is as follows: 'being omnipotent means unlocking and participating in the core essence, the nuclear power, of the Godhead'. In a few simple words, this summarises the whole, magnificent task underlying human existence.

The Chinese Gnosis not only explains this task, but also shows how it can be accomplished. Then, say the authors, 'we will see the whole world, the whole of humankind and the whole of our society change'.

*Those who from delusion's grasp break free,
find the path to inner reality.
Those who unto not-doing attain, are
linked as one, forever, in the Chain.*

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Introduction

The sublime wisdom of Lao Tzu

If you are a student of esoteric literature, you may have read about a remarkable mystery involving the medieval inhabitants of the South of France. There, in the land of Sabartez, the cradle of the Cathars — praised be their name! — a supernatural power was possessed, the power of the *consolamentum*. By means of the consolamentum it was possible to bring about a separation between animal-man and spirit-man, between the human being of this earth and the original being, in the form it possessed before time began.

The consolamentum was more than a sacramental seal. It was more than simply a magical outpouring of power, because for the Cathars it involved a definitive break with dialectical life. So those who had received the consolamentum were no longer inhabitants of the earth in the absolute sense. In the true sense of the words, they were *in* the world, but no longer *of* the world.

Researchers have often wondered about the identity of the spiritual instigators behind this movement in medieval France. They could see quite clearly that this spiritual awakening, if it could have evolved without interference, would have embraced the whole of Europe in a way hitherto unknown. Who were the initiates who inspired the movement, and had such an effect on tens of thousands of people, that the church turned against them with a bloody and terrible hatred?

These initiates were world-citizens in the best sense of the word, who literally loved the whole of humankind and who even now move and appear among us, wherever an opportunity presents itself. Their traces are to be found from east to

west, and from north to south. And if one studies world history, one can detect the connections between all the various events and developments they have brought about.

Even so, from earliest times until the present, they have always remained in the background, cloaked in mystery. There is a hermetic veil between them and the masses, and all attempts of self-willed science to trace the source of the mystery must and will always fail.

For the knowledge, the art and the abilities of the Cathars were universal. Their source was not to be found on earth, but only in the Immovable Kingdom itself.

There are authors who deplore the destruction — or rather the apparent destruction — of the Cathars, and lament the loss of their wisdom and power. But this sorrow is misplaced, because any power, any sublime wisdom whose origin is the universal life itself, can never be lost. It is nothing less than the breath of God, which passes over human beings time and time again in its loving efforts to save them, withdrawing again whenever, in their hatred and blood-lust, material and mortal human beings attempt to violate it.

We wanted to consider this European contact with the universal power of love as a prelude to our reflections on a similar divine contact that took place in the Far East — a contact embodied in the sublime being known as Lao Tzu.

It is not known whether he really lived, or whether he was one person or several. Countless legends surround him like a veil. But one thing is certain — that he, in his wisdom, could have dispelled all the sorrow of the observers and researchers of that medieval drama in the South of France. Because the mystery of the consolamentum can also be referred to as the mystery of *Tao*.

Tao comes not and was not; Tao *is!* But, says Lao Tzu:

*People old in experience, who knew Tao
Did not speak of this most secret sanctuary,
Well-knowing that the profane incline towards
darkness,
Converting powers of life into destruction.*

*If certain powers awaken in the human being
And he becomes conscious of his great strength
Without breaking away from his lower self-seeking,
The fire smothers in its own cinders.*

*So do not reveal the mystery to the profane;
Is not the naked eye blinded by too much light?
To govern a nation means to fulfil a great task:
That of giving light whilst standing in the
shadow.**

It is said that the Cathars possessed secret books expounding the true life and the Universal Doctrine, which were destroyed by the priesthood of those times. However, the true hidden book of the Cathars is the unwritten book, the same as the book of Tao, and the book 'M' of Christian Rosycross, and the book sealed with seven seals mentioned in the Revelation of John. This book, this universal knowledge, is unwritten and hidden from the profane. But it is open, and revealed in fiery, radiant letters, to those who have broken away from their lower self-seeking.

* The quotations used in this chapter are translated from the Dutch: *Teh, universele bewustwording, 319 parafrazen op de Tao Teh King van Lao Tse*, by C. van Dijk, Amsterdam, 1934.

That is why, for the Cathars, the consolamentum was preceded by the *endure*. The *endura* is a 'dying as to nature'; it means freeing oneself of the I-being and making oneself ready for rebirth.

To the extent that you, too, are engaged in this process, you no longer need to waste time and energy searching for books and manuscripts on which you pin all your hopes of liberation. Tao can neither be spoken nor written. Tao, the way, the path, can only be *experienced*.

This single sentence reveals the poverty of intellectual knowledge and understanding and the foolishness of the brain-consciousness, in all their nakedness. You can only know anything worth knowing, you can only possess anything worth possessing, you can only understand anything worth understanding, when you have died as to nature, when the so deadly I-delusion has been extinguished from your microcosm. Until you begin this process, you will remain profane, godless, immature, staring into the darkness of your reason and possessing nothing, nothing at all.

What you will have, however, is the sorrow, the searing woe of life in dialectics, a terrible, raging fire that is repeatedly smothered in its own cinders, only to blaze up yet again. To remain subject to dialectics means to be consumed by a hellish pain without end, from which you can only obtain freedom by following the path, the way, Tao. You need to pass through the *endura*, through the self-neutralisation of the lower nature.

But you cannot do it alone, and neither do you need to, because the power you need to help you really does exist! And the liberating words really are there to be heard! If only you will leave behind everything you possess, then, like Lao Tzu, you will see:

*The hidden power, O mystery, inviolate eternally,
O clear and tranquil fountain, true life's source:
In deepest essence, are we truly one with you;
For, from the One, the multitude flows forth.*

Many pupils of the Spiritual School seem unable to see this one, true life, this one essential thing, even though they are searching and yearning for it.

This must have a reason, and it can only lie in the fact that many are still clinging too tightly to the things of the old life, and expect divine revelation simply to penetrate the innermost parts of their earthly being and awaken the one true life within their microcosms, without their needing to follow any process.

But that is not so! If you want to travel to the new, promised land, you yourself will have to cast off the many heavy anchors you have driven into the shores of your life. And the fact that this is possible is confirmed by the holy language, which says: 'He that calls you is nearby.' Yes, even nearer than hands and feet. So:

*The pilgrim on the path to liberation from his lower self
Casts off all his desires as useless ballast;
Naked he enters the temple of the highest initiation:
The tabernacle's portal is the grave.*

As a pupil, or someone who is interested in the Gnosis, you know the need to become a freemason and build the holy cathedral stone by stone. The holy mountain, Mont Salvat, is invisible in matter, yet, by passing through the grave of the lower nature, you may enter there and join the master-masons as an apprentice. Learn, then, from Lao Tzu, your

fundamental impediments and the key to Tao:

The highest knowledge is to acknowledge that we know nothing.

This not-knowing makes us tranquil and devout.

In letters we may know more than illiterates,

But as to the profound mystery of life and death, we know not one jot more.

Man's real illness lies in 'not knowing that he does not know'. Yet you should not think Lao Tzu is recommending some kind of negative, mystical dependence, some kind of mystical rejection of the fruits of understanding. No, Lao Tzu is simply saying that the mentality is like a dam, preventing the flow of the spirit, and that is the reason why your way of thinking must be set aside.

Just ask yourself what, in fact, you are doing with your thinking faculty. You are intellectualising gnostic thoughts and your heart is mystified by your emotional thoughts. In this way you erect a dam, preventing the influx of the spirit. Yet doesn't universal wisdom teach that heart and head must form a unity?

Besides, as long as we refuse to acknowledge that we know nothing, the highest reality will remain, at most, a beautiful dream, and only we ourselves can remedy this lack of new consciousness.

He who recognises this sick spot is already healed thereby.

Recognition is the arcanum of this dark disease.

The essence cannot be touched by intellectual thinking.

Neither can the sublime ideal be attained by human deeds.

Here is another concept pertaining to the new reality,

held by brothers and sisters throughout the ages, which has always been difficult to understand: the rejection of dialectical actions. These enlightened brothers and sisters knew of another mode of action than that of the dialectical human being, a quite different form of idealism, another humanity. They knew only the living, vibrant activity of life in the new reality, an activity which, to human beings of this earth, seems to be a limitless void, with neither purpose nor form.

*The many, hermetically, seal themselves off,
And, though having eyes, they blindly go their way.
For them, all roads lead from the cradle to the grave,
Their lot in life is more a curse than a blessing.*

All who live in the twentieth century are conscious of experiencing life as a curse. But alas, the more accursed life becomes, the more people seem to cling to it and try to wring from it the blessings they desire. Understandably, though, the results are minimal.

The blessings pass by like ships in the night, because the essence of the Universal Doctrine is not understood and, consequently, one is unable to act in the right way. That is why the sage of 2500 years ago says:

*One simple line will tell my teaching; My acts to it are
strictly bound.
Yet, interpreted in many ways by man, The core in one
great tangle is obscured.*

And it is true, isn't it, that the one, simple, essential truth, the key to the true life, is so often obscured in a great tangle of pseudo-wisdom and verbosity. But Lao Tzu says:

*Yet I who through the labyrinth can find my way,
Will not by erring lights be led astray.
I hold the thread that leads me to the core;
Peacefully I watch where others uselessly make war.*

*On the world's stage I play no part at all,
To the vain, therefore, do I seem insignificant and small.
And while they strive to gain some part in multiplicity,
Mine is the All; 0 true felicity!*

You see, that is the most important thing — to gain the All. This may sound rather strange to western ears, but it means the same as the Christian idea of 'sanctification', a term expressing the magical power of a spirit made holy in Christ. The word 'holy' is derived from the concept of 'becoming whole'. So to gain the All means to become whole, or holy once more. The Universal Doctrine shows the pupil that his microcosm is no longer whole, but badly damaged. Under the curse of this damaged state he strives to gain something for himself from the multiplicity of things, and that is why the curse can never turn into a blessing. That is why he becomes more and more entangled in matter.

When the pupil realises the uselessness of all this activity and gives it up, when he has become convinced that higher expectations can never be realised on the basis of his ego, he will be forging for himself an impenetrable spiritual armour, and he will be able to follow the path, the way, Tao, because the I-delusion within him has been killed. Then the microcosm will be restored to its original condition and the entity concerned will participate in the All.

So we can see how the message of the present-day Rosycross is and has been the message of all times since the Fall; and it is the message of Lao Tzu, proclaimed more than

INTRODUCTION

2500 years ago. This message will go on resounding until the seeker sees clearly the road before him and says to the universal sages:

*I wish to live according to your great and wise example,
To know that I am linked with the divine plan of
creation.*

One last point: the seeker will only see the path, he will only see Tao when he discovers that 'he is suffering in the ego', as Lao Tzu puts it; when he discovers that nothing and no one can heal him of this pain, that no one can put out this fire, until he himself says farewell to his I-being. Then, 'the great lamp of the All-consciousness' will begin to burn for the pilgrim, and he will be imbued with this divine radiance which, as a consolamentum, will raise him up out of the night of his suffering.

*Could Tao be spoken, it would not be the eternal Tao.
Could the name be named, it would not be the eternal name.*

As not-being, it can be described as the foundation of all that exists. As being, it is the Mother of all things.

Therefore, if the heart constantly 'is not' — that is, if it is free of all earthly aspirations and desires — one can behold the mystery of Tao's spiritual essence. If the heart constantly 'is' — that is, if it is full of desires and earthly aspirations — one can only behold limited, finite forms.

Both, being and not-being, spring from the same source, but differ in their goals and effects.

Both are full of mystery, and this mystery is the gate unto life.

Tao Te Ching, chapter 1

I

Being and not-being

The Tao Te Ching could rightly be called the Chinese Bible. The author carries the same signature as all the great teachers of humankind. Many legends surround Lao Tzu, but they have no historical foundation, so we do not want to repeat them here. The whole question of whether Lao Tzu even existed is shrouded in mist. There are those who deny his existence, and there are those who assert it with equal vehemence. So it is just the same as with Buddha, Jesus the Lord and Hermes Trismegistus. But we do not have to dwell on all this, because we need only remind ourselves of the words of Silesius: 'Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born and not within yourself, you will yet be forlorn.'

The important thing is that we possess the Tao Te Ching. And it bears the signature of the Universal Brotherhood and its Doctrine, revealed to humankind with incomparable love. The entity responsible for revealing this ray of love did not want to vaunt himself in any way. He lost himself in the impersonal; he came, and he went. His kingdom was not of this world. Six hundred years before Christ, the Word descended into China, and afterwards, the bringer of that Word withdrew 'across the borders'; he crossed the borders of the world of dialectics and returned to the one Fatherland.

We can take it that this holy language has been mutilated only slightly or not at all. This is because very few people have been able to understand the Tao Te Ching, owing to the fact that it was written in Chinese characters. It was written in a compact, very veiled way, and consists of only eighty-one

verses or aphorisms. These aphorisms are divided into two sections: the Tao, and the Te. We would like to describe *Tao* as 'the path of liberation', and *Te* as 'the benefit and the results of the path of liberation', while the word *Ching* indicates that the Tao and the Te together comprise the *method* of liberation.

We will not be giving a literal translation of the Tao Te Ching (we are not Chinese scholars), but a paraphrase. Incidentally, it has to be said that hardly any Chinese scholars are in agreement about the translation of either the title or the text. We will more or less be following Henri Borel's translation, for there are reasons why we consider this translation the most reliable.

The Tao Te Ching has not been known in Europe for very long — one and a half centuries or so at the most. The first European translation appeared in French in 1823, and since then many books have been written about it. And now we, too, are going to write about the Tao Te Ching. The reason lies in the fact that a new, mighty Taoist Brotherhood is rising in the east. It is a Brotherhood, a School, with the same signature and aims as ours, a Brotherhood that, like us, consecrated its temple in December 1951 and that, like us, has taken its place in the Chain of Seven. And in the time which has now dawned, it will be natural for all participants in that sevenfold Chain of the Brotherhood to grow towards each other. East and west, north and south, will meet each other as newly-awakened children of God, who will need to recognise each other not only in signature but also in inner language.

That is why you need to know and taste Tao, and all other wisdom-teachings, so that you can live, speak and act from their synthesis, freeing yourself of your own particular national characteristics in order to become a true world-citizen of the universal people of God. So what we have to say here

should serve, among other things, as a preparation for contact between all those who will be gathered together from the corners of the earth. This preparation is a task that needs to be fulfilled, and we would like to offer you our heartfelt invitation to join us in it. Join us in bringing this task to a good end!

There have never been many people who understood Tao. The greatest nonsense has been written about it. So are we to be counted among those who say they *do* understand and, full of self-confidence, tell you: 'we can easily explain its profound meaning'? No, we want to offer our efforts in the deepest humility, mindful of the last verse of the Chinese Bible: *Those who know Tao are not learned; those who are learned do not know Tao* (verse 81). If only the soul is receptive to the new life, we will certainly understand! The first chapter of the Tao Te Ching reads as follows:

The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.

As not-being, it can be described as the foundation of all that exists. As being, it is the Mother of all things.

Therefore, if the heart constantly 'is not' — that is, if it is free of all earthly aspirations and desires — one can behold the mystery of Tao's spiritual essence. If the heart constantly 'is' — that is, if it is full of desires and earthly aspirations — one can only behold limited, finite forms.

Both, being and not-being, spring from the same source, but differ in their goals and effects.

Both are full of mystery, and this mystery is the gate unto life.

The first chapter of the Tao Te Ching delineates the main characteristics of the Universal Doctrine, which have always

been the same. The original foundation of all things Lao Tzu calls *Tao*. This word could also be translated simply as our word 'God' or, as John does, by the term 'The Word': 'In the beginning was the Word, to which everything must return'. So it is a stream, a current — the way.

This Word, this Tao, cannot be spoken. It cannot be perfectly described by any mortal. At most it can be hinted at, or approximated. 'No man has ever seen God', says John, echoing the words of Lao Tzu. If Tao could be spoken in full, intellectually or philosophically expounded, it would not be the eternal Tao. Something can only be expressed fully in words if it lies within the limits of this world of duality. This statement alone is sufficient to show quite clearly the limitations of the earthly human being. No one has ever seen God, not one single mortal is capable of seeing Him; only the Son, who is in the heart of the Father, can make Him known, and he does so by manifesting Him from within his own being.

Who is this Son? This Son is a historical figure and at the same time an actual, living reality. The primordial atom is the Son in embryonic form, and He has been revealed in many, not only in the past, but also in the living present. The Son is always the one who awakens the primordial atom, the rose, the divine seed. Such a one will meet God; he will approach the Gnosis, just as the Gnosis, Tao, will approach him.

If you are a pupil of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross, you will know the key to this mystery of sanctification. 2500 years ago, Lao Tzu had already placed it in the hands of humankind.

If the heart constantly 'is not' — that is, if it is free of all earthly aspirations and desires — one can behold the mystery of Tao's spiritual essence.

Hasn't the Spiritual School often told you that if you open

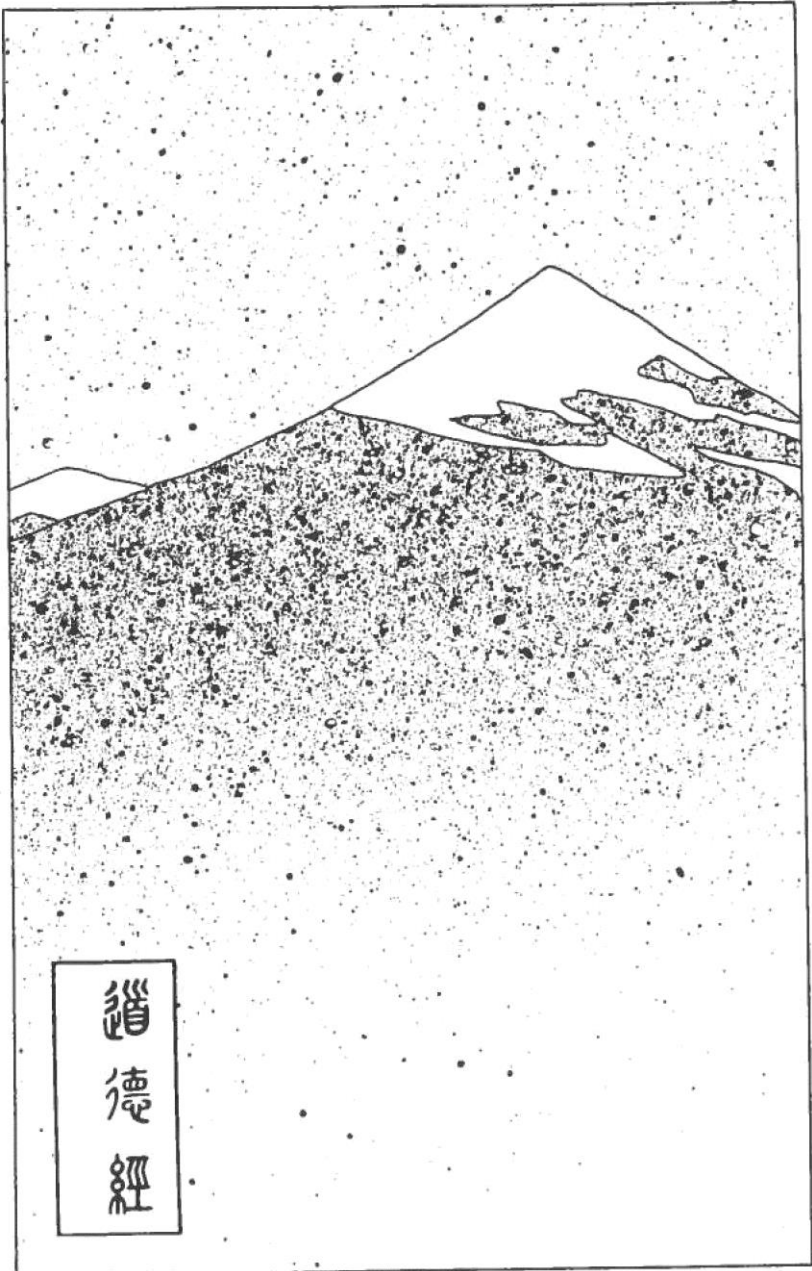
your heart sanctuary to the radiation-power of the new life, you will be touched by the spiritual essence? The heart must exist in the state of *not-being*. If it is in the state of *being*, it will be filled with a thousand and one worries, desires and concerns of ordinary nature. Just as the mind is constantly being agitated by thoughts, so the heart is filled to bursting point with all kinds of feelings and desires.

Thinking, willing, feeling and desiring together form one of the sides of the earthly light-triangle. And who among us can say he has entered total silence in that respect? Who has entered the stillness of not-being, of not-doing? All the turmoil of existence in the world of antitheses, and our incessant preoccupation with mental activity on that level, impede the functioning of the primordial atom. Only by entering the stillness of not-doing, only by withdrawing from dialectics, can one clear a path through the desert of this life. The stillness is the precursor of Tao's spiritual essence, just as John is the precursor of Jesus. Through stillness, the primordial atom is awakened from its sleep of aeons.

What is the aim of that awakening? Well, it concerns the new, the original life. Lao Tzu calls it: the path leads to not-being, *and* to being. Not-being is the foundation of all that exists; being is the Mother of all things. Not-being does not mean not existing, or non-being in the sense of a total absence of being; it is the absolute, original state, the original, immortal glory. It is a 'new-being', in the original state of the Immovable Kingdom. Being as we know it is the being of death, suffering and tears. That kind of being cannot arise from Tao. That is why there is also an original being, arising from the same source of the absolute, as true not-being.

Lao Tzu gave this message to humankind several thousand years ago, and it sounds very familiar, because it is still being proclaimed today. From Tao, from the Gnosis, there

arises a source, a fount, from which not-being and being arise. An eternal, irresistible power, in the midst of which the Immovable Kingdom stands like a rock. And the heart that has entered the stillness experiences the pulsation of Tao's spiritual essence. Such a heart forms the mystery of the 'gate unto life'.



道徳經

All under heaven know so well that beauty is 'beautiful', that it splits into ugliness. All know so well that goodness is 'good', that it splits into evil.

Being and not-being give birth to one another.

Difficult and easy beget one another. Long and short generate one another. High and low bring forth one another. The tone and the voice harmonise one another. Before and after follow one another.

That is why the sage engages in not-doing; he carries out the teachings without words.

When the work is completed, he is not attached to it. Precisely because he is not attached to it, it will not leave him.

Tao Te Ching, chapter 2

2

Wu wei

We would like to focus on the following words, taken from the quotation opposite: *That is why the sage engages in not-doing; he carries out the teachings without words.*

The second chapter of this archaic Chinese gospel builds on the foundations laid in the first, and reveals even more clearly the essence underlying the world of antitheses, or what we call 'the dialectical nature-order'. It shows that all entities belonging to this nature-order help to maintain it by obeying and feeding the law of antitheses in everything they do. Lao Tzu shows that everything in this nature-order is a delusion, unreal in relation to the essential, the absolute, the divine. No doubt it could be said that dialectics possesses a certain kind of reality, but it is a reality which can in no way be compared with the absolute, the original.

Lao Tzu explains that since, in this world, everything is subject to the law of antitheses and hence to change, it is senseless to cling to the phenomena arising from it, because they are transitory. But in this world of fundamental unreality, people refuse to accept its laws, and they try to make it into something real, despite their invariable experience that whatever they have tried to do always turns into its opposite.

Everyone has a certain concept of what constitutes beauty, for instance. Yet our impressions of beauty, the things we consider to be beautiful, differ widely. They are not only influenced by the period in which one lives, by nationality and race, customs and manners, education and culture, but above all, they are extremely personal. In addition, our views on what is beautiful are often influenced by authorities, such

as teachers, parents and artists. And that is why fierce quarrels can arise, when one person expresses dislike for what another person finds beautiful. But whether a thing is truly beautiful, no one knows.

That is how it can happen that you become attached to certain things you find beautiful, even to the extent, as it were, that you luxuriate in them every day, just because you enjoy them so much. And you would be most disappointed, and even shocked, if someone were to say to you, possibly in all innocence, 'I don't like that at all. How could you?' Possibly, you would feel injured to the depths of your soul. Why? Because you feel intuitively that beauty in this dialectical nature is only a semblance. You do not know the reality of beauty, with which your impressions of it could be compared.

You might be inclined to see beauty in nature, in a forest, for instance. But if you look more closely, it is no exaggeration to say that you will find much to be desired. You see some scenery, and exclaim enthusiastically, 'Oh, how beautiful!' but when you come closer and observe it objectively, you are bound to see ugliness in it as well, sometimes even to such an extent that you turn away in disappointment. Travelling through the mountains, one sometimes comes across a beautiful valley whose colours and form fill one with wonder. Edgar Allen Poe once wrote about such a valley in one of his stories, in his own inimitable and penetrating way. The visitors to the valley, when they went down into the village, found that literally everything in it was in conflict with beauty and harmony. They then had to submit to the harsh reality of ugliness.

As regards true Beauty, humankind is utterly destitute, and that is why he is so attached to illusion. Because of his miserable condition, he tries to lie ugliness out of existence. But that doesn't work, because if one build's one's life on delu-

sion, on what is unreal, one provokes counter-reactions. If you discover that something is wrong with a particular situation — a situation you were formerly convinced was wonderful — you will probably be unwilling to accept your discovery at first. But the further you continue, the more the reality of the ugliness impresses itself upon you. And you see that you have been engrossed in a degeneration caused by delusion. Both the delusion of beauty and the delusion of goodness bring ugliness to the surface.

Now you may be thinking, 'If goodness and beauty in our nature are delusions, then surely you must say the same about badness and ugliness. Badness and ugliness must be delusions, too. If we carry that proposition to its logical conclusion, then we could call ugliness beautiful and evil good.' But that would be a mistake, a fallacy! There are people who hold such convictions, and there are various groups, such as the Christian Scientists, who try to deny the reality of ugliness, imperfection, illness and pain. They say: 'All this misery and ugliness is not real. If only you hold on firmly to that thought, it will turn into its opposite and you will recover.' But they also develop illnesses to which they succumb, sooner or later.

If we try to lie ugliness out of existence, we provoke unpleasant reactions, for beauty and ugliness, good and bad, are not equivalent. If we say that beauty is a delusion, one may not simply draw the conclusion that ugliness is a delusion as well. No, ugliness is proof of the delusion of beauty. If you are attached to a delusion, ugliness will appear, to reveal to you the fact that you were deluded. Ugliness is the proof that beauty is not beautiful, just as evil is the proof that goodness is not good. So beauty and goodness as the ego sees them are lies; the appearance of ugliness and evil proves this to us. So it could be said that ugliness and evil are essential in this nature-order, an inevitable part of this nature-order. In es-

sence, this world is characterised by the most wretched misery. Perhaps you don't agree with us about this; perhaps you haven't become conscious of it yet. But as you continue on your path through life, you are bound to see the truth of what we are saying in the end.

The beauty and goodness of this nature are lies. If this were not the case, beauty would bring forth beauty, and goodness would bring forth goodness. If you possessed anything genuinely good, do you think it could turn into bad? Or ugliness? Quite impossible! What you believe to be beauty is a delusion, and that is why it always brings ugliness to the surface.

There is one more question you might think of asking: 'If we were to combat ugliness and evil in this world, would we not be able to turn them into good? Could we not raise this society, this world, this order of existence, into the light?'

Humankind has made countless attempts to do this. But look at the results and you will see how, throughout the ages, they have always been negative. No, if you really want a solution, you will first need to relinquish all aspects of your delusion. When we put it like that, you may think what we are telling you is quite ordinary, and say without hesitation: 'Yes, of course. *That* is the solution. People are always trying to camouflage ugliness and evil, the essential aspects of our nature-order, in a cloak of delusion. So let us do away with all that pretence!' But when you have done that, when you have neutralised all the delusion in your everyday life, what will you have left? Nothing except ugliness! Loneliness, desolation, drabness — absolute, monotonous ugliness! Look around you, and you will see how people all over the world are jettisoning delusion. And what comes in its place? One great horror of dehumanisation and brutality!

Right there, at that point, is where Lao Tzu has driven us

into a corner. Many people are striving to overcome delusion in their lives. But inevitably, what they are left with is ugliness, unspeakable ugliness. So if you find yourself in that corner into which we are driven by the ancient Chinese Bible, if you have seen through all that delusion and outward show, and have experienced the bleak misery and hopelessness of this nature-order and recognised it for what it is, then only one solution will be open to you: that you detach yourself from this dualistic nature; that you turn away from this world of delusion and follow the path of transfiguristic revolution, the path of return to the House of the Father. Then, like the prodigal son, you will know that here you are among the swine, eating pigswill. And only one solution will remain — to rise up from this life of delusion and say, in life-renewing action: 'I shall return to the Father, to the Father's House, to the original Fatherland.'

This revolution must naturally have a beginning, a method that one uses at the start of the process. And this is what we would like to describe, aided by Lao Tzu's text. Lao Tzu called this method 'not-doing', or wu wei. We have talked about this before in the School, but at that time the majority of pupils did not understand what we meant. It is possible to describe this method intellectually. But what use would that be? How could that liberate you? So we would like to try once more to give you some understanding of the doctrine of not-doing, and to anchor it in your soul. We would like to try to deepen your understanding of wu wei, because the wise soul must engage in not-doing.

Let us put it this way: you enter the School of the Golden Rosycross as a beginning pupil, and inevitably, you are filled with enthusiasm and joy, and the best of intentions. And because of your enthusiasm, you fling yourself with great

energy into the teachings and into the life that the School seeks to reveal to you. But the behaviour resulting from this sparkling enthusiasm and dynamism, which we observe in almost every new pupil, is not at all in keeping with the liberating method of not-doing. Because by this typically dialectical behaviour you invoke the law of antitheses, you set it in motion. You find the School beautiful, you find it good, and you surround it in a golden glow. But in the world of dialectics, the beautiful and the good invariably bring forth ugliness and evil, thereby proving the delusion and unreality of what was perceived as beauty.

If you are an older pupil, who has perhaps been in the School for many years, may we ask you whether there are not times when all the things you thought to be beautiful seem dreary and ugly, so that you say, disconsolately, 'I have been doing my best for so many years, and what do I have to show for it?' And you are flung back to your starting point, back to the loneliness, the ugliness, the drabness. As a reaction to this, the thought often arises that something is wrong with the School. Yet that is not the right reaction! Because it is the law of antitheses that makes beauty turn into ugliness.

So your enthusiastic behaviour, the dynamic way in which you threw yourself into the work of the School, turns out not to have been a reality in the divine sense. In a way, your enthusiasm was a purely dialectical reaction, a reaction of your nature-born ego. That is why the time always comes when your joy reverts to disappointment, sorrow, loneliness and weariness, and you fall into habits, into a condition of crystallisation. Then a new impulse is often necessary to make you enthusiastic and joyful. Very often with the same result.

In this way, a kind of psychological cramp arises, full of ups and downs. And on you go. When you think about all this,

you will perhaps be bewildered, and ask yourself, or ask us: 'Am I not supposed to be joyful, then? Am I not meant to be enthusiastic about having found the School? May I not be pleased and grateful that I see the path of liberation before me? If this mercy, and the joy I feel because of it, give rise to such a downfall, what in heaven's name must I do?'

Well, no one, and least of all the Brotherhood of Salvation, wants to take that joy away from you. But we do need to advise you to change your psychological reactions to that joy in a fundamental way. Just think for a while about what people do when they are filled with feelings of joy and gratitude. In their enthusiasm, they feel like embracing everyone, and everything seems good and beautiful to them. They want to rush headlong into the liberating life. But that is a misguided and unintelligent reaction.

Instead, when what is holy enters your life, there should be what the Bible calls a tranquil joy, an *experiencing* of the doctrine, without words. Not-doing does not mean simply withdrawing from dialectics, as you may have thought. It does not mean just distancing yourself from ordinary life, so that you are not drawn into it any more. If your pupilship is genuine, you will do these things quite spontaneously. If you have recognised the ugliness, the emptiness, the delusion of dialectics, if you have tasted the nature of death in its deepest essence, then you will surely take leave of it, as a matter of course. No, the not-doing of Lao Tzu means that you do not grasp at the values, the forces, the essence of the Immovable Kingdom with your ego. 'Do not do that,' is what is being said to you. Do not touch! If you lay hold of the things of the Immovable Kingdom with your hands, if you pounce on them with your I, you will be thrown back.

'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.' The urge to possess is part of human nature, but the things of the

Immovable Kingdom cannot be grasped with one's fingers. Do not do that! It is simply not possible to possess the divine on the basis of one's natural state. So any attempt to do so is bound to end in trouble and disappointment. It may also be accompanied by illness, over-excitement, nervous disorders, disturbances of the endocrine system, and overshadowing. The new life comes neither into the I, nor for the I, nor through the I of this nature. With the I, only mysticism and occultism are possible. There are parts of the reflection sphere, the realm of the dead, in which various occult brotherhoods maintain themselves in a domain of delusion which they have created. One can certainly make a link with domains like these, but that will only mean one has been taken in by a delusion from which one will someday have to fall, having sustained serious damage.

In view of all this, even a child could understand that if a person yearns for genuine liberation from the nature of death, his ego must engage in not-doing, and must stop trying to grasp the new life, the Universal Brotherhood, and everything related to it in any way. That is what you must not do. So do not concentrate, do not meditate, and above all, do not fantasise. Keep to absolute 'not-doing'!

The method of not-doing is a still, tranquil joy. One goes forward in that joy, in total self-surrender to the Kingdom within you, the primordial atom. That is what is meant by 'engaging in not-doing'. That is what is meant by 'experiencing the doctrine without words'. 'Not I, but He, the Other One, who is more than I, must increase. And I must perish; I must sink into the Other One, into that Other Being, contained within the primordial atom.'

When a worker in the Spiritual School is given a task, he is undertaking the most difficult work of all. He will have to walk on a path as narrow as a razor's edge. For the worker will

not be able to carry out his task as an I-being. If he tries to do so, he will plummet like a meteor. No one else makes him do that. He is not expelled from the School, as is sometimes believed. No, he does it to himself. For the worker who wishes to serve, only one way is open, the way of not-doing. He serves in a state of tranquil joy, safeguarding the task in the heart, and in an attitude of profound modesty and absolute devotion to the mystery of the primordial atom. For it is from the temple of the primordial atom that the work must be fulfilled, after the manner of all great heralds of the Universal Doctrine, past and present, who did what they had to do and then vanished, as if into the mist. That is why the pupil who is fulfilling the work in his own being, in the service of others, will not be attached to that work; he will not cling to it with his ego.

Under no circumstances will the ego push itself forward. Attempts to push oneself to the forefront in the work, or to carry it out from the standpoint of one's ego, are evidence of the most pronounced egocentricity imaginable. Such attempts mean that one is misusing Jesus Christ to bring oneself to the top of the wall or over it. Clearly, grace will depart from such persons; it has no option but to flee.

That is why the sage engages in not-doing; he carries out the teachings without words.

That is the mystery of salvation: *precisely because he is not attached to it, it will not leave him.* If you follow the path in self-surrender, as a silent observer, you will discover that even though, inwardly, you always remain detached, the new life will shine over you. The new life is not of you, but of the Other One, in whom your own dialectical self melts entirely away. And that is the meaning of not-doing. That is the Way, the Path. That is Tao.

Do not attach status to worthiness, then the people will not quarrel.

Do not attach high value to goods difficult to obtain, then the people will not steal.

Do not cherish earthly desires, then the people's hearts will not be confused.

Therefore, the sage rules by emptying hearts of desire, filling bellies, weakening bad tendencies, and strengthening the bones.

Always, he sees to it that the people remain innocent and without desires.

If that does not entirely succeed, he ensures that those who are not innocent do not dare to agitate.

He practises wu wei, and then there is nothing in which he does not rule well.

Tao Te Ching chapter 3

Do not attach status to worthiness

Read superficially, this paragraph of the Tao Te Ching seems to be all about a social order whose dictates are way out of date for people of the twentieth century. A modern professor of social politics would just give a shrug, shake his head and say, 'As far as I'm concerned, you can put the Tao Te Ching back in your bookcase. It's antiquated, and far too conservative for modern times.'

We wouldn't follow this advice, however. Because when we look more closely at what is said, we understand that this third chapter is addressed to rulers; rulers of a kind no longer known in our modern times, rulers who belonged to and lived entirely on the basis of the new life. The Tao Te Ching proposes a system of government that would be impossible to apply in our era, a system no one would want to use and against which people would rebel.

We are concerned, here, with a system of government, a socio-political strategy belonging to a period, long ago, when China could still genuinely be called the 'Heavenly Realm'. It is a system we believe was last used (and that in an experimental way) by the mysterious Akhenaten in ancient Egypt. Akhenaten's reign, however, did not last very long. It was destroyed by the intrigues of an evil priesthood. Anyway, though not obsolete, this socio-political paragraph from the Tao is no longer applicable in our times, unless, perhaps, as guidelines for parents to use in the bringing up of their children.

Even so, we would like to make an analysis of the third chapter, because it gives such a clear image of a prehistoric

period in the development of the human life-wave, a period much further back than 2500 years ago when the Tao is reputed to have been written down. This is proof that the Tao is many thousands of years old.

Let us return, then, to the beginning of the most recent epoch, the Aryan epoch, at which time the remnant of fallen humanity was again brought into manifestation in the world of antitheses. This remnant was the group of those whom it had not been possible to liberate during the previous epoch, and who therefore could not be brought back to the original life.

Though we speak of a remnant, we are nevertheless concerned with people who were, once, children of God. Foundations therefore had to be laid to provide a possibility of returning to that former state, and that is why this 'remnant' was surrounded by the Universal Brotherhood with the greatest concern and care at the dawn of its new existence in the nature of death. Many messengers of the Universal Brotherhood, many of those who had already been saved, therefore mingled with humankind at this time of new beginning, appearing as kings, rulers and priests. All these authorities together formed a sublime Brotherhood, in the service of 'the last remnant'. All the participants in this Brotherhood were linked internationally and they governed humankind in its new endeavour in keeping with an internationally coordinated system, the socio-political system described in the third chapter of the Tao.

Suppose you were such a ruler. Then you would be aware of the grave dangers inherent in delusion and the law of antitheses. When a person seeks liberation on the horizontal level and these efforts reveal to him the reality of his imprisonment, yet he nevertheless persists in his activities, he will accelerate the interchange of antitheses. Then he will work

his way even deeper into the morass of death and crystallisation. He will entangle himself even more in the essence of self-preservation and conflict. So, imagine a group of people had been entrusted to your guidance, people you knew had just awoken from a cosmic night after a terrible fall, people you knew possessed a rosebud, while you understood from experience the delusions and pitfalls of dialectics. What would you have done?

Surely, you would have done your best to ensure that their culture did not develop along dialectical lines. With your utmost care, you would have guided the people in the direction you saw as the only one possible. You would have protected them from the archons of the aeons, from the influences of the nature of death. In everything you did for the people, you would have kept your eyes fixed on that one, primary goal: the return home.

But the people would not have been aware of that goal, any more than a child who had just entered the world once again. The people would only have been aware of: 'I am', 'I am alive'. And they would have had to live out of their soul-state; as such, they would have been sufficient unto themselves.

Now suppose you were such a person and, in the Spiritual School, separated from matter, you had been entrusted to our care. What would we do? As far as possible, we would try to keep you away from degeneration as it exists in the cosmos. We would not try to keep you ignorant, but we would try to keep you untouched by any temptation to fall, by encircling you with pure vibrations. And in this period we would try to bring about the great work of self-emptying in the service of the imperishable rose.

Now that the end of another Day of Manifestation has almost been reached once again, and an attempt is being

made to enable as many entities as possible to participate in the third magnetic field, our thoughts are naturally drawn to the beginning of this Day of Manifestation, when the Brotherhood, striking while the iron was hot, tried in the same way to help as many people as possible — and with great success! In the mystery temples of the Brotherhood of Shamballa, tens of thousands were helped on the path of liberation.

The third chapter of the Tao contains instructions for the kings, priests and rulers who worked at the dawn of the Aryan manifestation:

Do not attach status to worthiness, then the people will not quarrel.

Fame and honour are common incentives to action. It is usually very easy to trade on human ambition. The depths to which our so-called civilisation has descended can be measured by all the titles and knighthoods, all the rewards for successes achieved by ambition. And look at the quarrels caused by ambitious people, all jostling with each other to gain some prize or other. Economic methods are based on such competition, and wars are caused by it. That is why humankind's original leaders would never have exalted themselves on account of any individual merit they may have possessed. They took care to avoid anything that could have given rise to jealousy. Merit, genuine merit, can only be spiritual, and the way to that merit is open to all.

Neither was any value attached to things like precious metals, for instance, that were difficult to come by. It is known that ancient peoples had no lust for gold — the metal of the sun — purely and simply because nothing could be had in exchange for it. Rarity was never made into the basis of an economic system and in this way, theft was prevented; in

those times, theft was unknown. No member of the Brotherhood cherished any earthly desires, and thus no child-human being could be confused by a bad example. By such measures, the sages kept hearts empty of desire. They took care that the products necessary for bodily sustenance were shared out fairly, and careful eye was kept on each person's inclinations. Any influences originating from discarnate forces were neutralised, and people's health was cared for assiduously.

Poverty and disease were unknown, and in the temples care was taken to ensure that the powerfield emitted a good atmosphere. In this way the people were preserved from any possible degeneration, and at the same time all harmful desires were neutralised. Any enemy was powerless. Thus, for thousands of years, a state of life was preserved which, seen from a dialectical point of view, was ideal. The few entities in those times who were in the grip of the forces of degeneration were unable to cause any disturbance in that powerfield. Thus the Brotherhood of Shamballa lived in the daily practice of not-doing, and the results were wholly beneficial.

But those times have passed. After the great harvest that took place at the dawn of the Aryan epoch, matters took their ordinary course, until now. The Brotherhood always adapted itself to every situation, so as to continue with its work of salvation until this very hour.

We may be very thankful that the method of not-doing, as practised by us, has lost none of its power, because it means we can apply this social paragraph to our present situation in the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross. If, as workers, we keep to these guidelines, then together we will be able to lead the pupils to the goal with the minimum of trouble.

It must be emphasised that this ancient gospel, this compendium of the Universal Doctrine, is still valid as a practical guide to the holy work. Just as it has been throughout all the ages, so it is now! That is why we want to draw your attention to the final verses of the third chapter:

Always he sees to it that the people remain innocent and without desires.

If this does not entirely succeed, he ensures that those who are not innocent do not dare to agitate.

He practises wu wei, and then there is nothing in which he does not rule well.

In practice, this means that bona fide pupils of the Spiritual School are kept together and nourished by a properly functioning powerfield. As regards the state of their pupilship and its results, they are protected by the powerfield. In view of all this, the guardians of the powerfield do not permit alien influences hostile to the work to enter the powerfield. Any who dare to attack the powerfield from within are ejected without compunction. And if those who remain within the powerfield harbour any hostile intentions, care is taken that they neither dare nor are able to give vent to them.

One might ask whether something could be judged as hostile when in fact it was not, or when it may even have been in the interests of the powerfield. One might also wonder whether the position adopted by the leaders and guardians of the powerfield is too authoritarian.

But if the guardians of the powerfield stand in wu wei, in not-doing, in impersonal service to the Brotherhood, there

DO NOT ATTACH STATUS TO WORTHINESS

can be nothing in which they do not rule well, and any ensuing situation will not be dialectical, but positive, in the new, esoteric sense.

What will prove that this is the case? The facts, the results. Look at the facts, and you will know.

Tao is empty, and in its radiations and activities, it is inexhaustible.

Oh, the depth of it. It is the Original Father of all things. It softens its sharpness, simplifies its complexity, tempers its blinding radiance and makes itself akin to the dust.

Oh, the tranquillity of it. It exists eternally.

I know not whose Child it is. Ere the highest God was, it was.

Tao Te Ching chapter 4

4

Tao is empty

The Tao Te Ching is not intended for ordinary people, but for pupils on the path. It is not a mundane explanation of a philosophical system, but a collection of directives and laws which apply to those on the path. It contains not merely a few directions, but all the directions one needs to avoid every single pitfall there could possibly be. It is truly a royal law.

Neither are the contents intended only for very advanced entities, in which case they would be difficult for beginners to understand. On the contrary, this gospel has everything to say to the beginner. Is it not precisely that 'difficult beginning' which always plays tricks on us? Just one mistake can leave us so exhausted, so sick and so weak that we may be put out of action for some considerable time. That is why beginners, in particular, need to read, re-read and study the Tao Te Ching word by word. If you can understand the words of the Tao Te Ching, they will aid you in every danger.

Just take the first sentence of chapter four: *Tao is empty*. To our ordinary understanding, to our ordinary sensory faculties, the senses of touch, smell, taste and hearing, Tao is empty. It cannot be perceived. Neither can Tao be grasped with our thoughts, and anything we may imagine in this regard, however infinitesimal, is an error. And neither can Tao be attracted or controlled with the magnetic faculty of the will. To the dialectical state of being in all its aspects, Tao is absolutely empty. That is why the method of not-doing is not merely a recommended course of action, but the essential foundation for all genuinely liberating work. With the ego and its intel-

lectual and mystical faculties, nothing essential, nothing liberating, can be grasped. For the ego, Tao is empty.

The reason why Tao is empty to the dialectical faculties, to the ego and to the present state of the microcosm, lies in the fact that the vibration-field of Tao — the serene astral field of the Brotherhood — rises far above our ordinary field of life in subtlety, velocity and ability. Tao imparts itself to a magnetic astral field other than ours.

'That's not right,' you will be saying, 'because it says that *Tao makes itself akin to the dust.*' Now you should understand this to mean that Tao has endless love for fallen beings. But are you such a fallen being? No, you are not! You belong to this nature — you are of this nature — your beginning and your end can be traced and established precisely. You are only a manifestation of this nature, a being with a mortal soul. So why don't you feel at home here? Why do you feel so lonely and forsaken? Well, that is the reaction of the 'Other One' in you. That feeling is caused by the activity of the primordial atom, the rose, and what lies within it. Only to that Other One does Tao impart and reveal itself, but to you, as an ego, Tao is empty.

'So in that case, what have I to do with it all? Why should I concern myself with all these things?'

Well, that Other One, for whom Tao is intended, lies imprisoned within you, and only you can set him free, by allowing him to awaken in you, through self-surrender and your willingness to be completely dissolved for his sake. You must perform this work in wu wei, in the practice of not-doing, in self-surrender to the primordial atom in your microcosm. This should not be seen as some kind of melodramatic effort to destroy yourself. No, what happens through self-surrender is that the dialectical self fades into the Other One; something of the old I is replaced by the new I, and its rad-

iance can be perceived. That is why Paul could jubilate: 'Not I, but Christ in me.' But as long as the ego of ordinary nature has not surrendered itself to the Other One, as long as one does not know wu wei, Tao remains empty.

No two people are completely alike. Although all of us have followed the same descending path, this path has been coloured by personal experiences and occurrences and, throughout the microcosm's many incarnations, all this has had a tremendous influence on the state of the primordial atom, on the condition of the rosebud and its imprisonment. Accordingly, each of us has a different curriculum to follow with respect to the great work. So in that sense, when you enter the valley of death of self-surrender, you are on your own. What you have to do, no one can do for you, not even your friends.

However, that need not worry you, because listen to what the Tao Te Ching says next: when the pilgrim enters his personal valley of death, he discovers that Tao's radiations and activities are inexhaustible. This is a wonderful truth, and to experience it is even more wonderful.

Your personality exists in the midst of a magnetic field. We call it the magnetic field of the microcosm. By means of this magnetic field, the mortal soul is connected with the microcosm and with the macrocosm of the nature of death. All the electromagnetic radiations of the nature of death have etched a web of magnetic points into this field, and this magnetic web controls one's entire state of life. However, in principle, it is also scientifically possible for electromagnetic radiations of a higher order, of a higher vibration, to manifest themselves in this magnetic field. The Gnosis, too, can make its influence felt and leave its mark. But that can only happen as a result of self-surrender, via the process of the rose. Then the candidate will experience the felicity of a

new astral-magnetic bond.

Now the word `candidate', (from the Latin *candidus*, pure white) means: `clothed in white'. You are a pupil of the Spiritual School, but are you also a `candidate'? Are you clothed in the white purity of your motives, in a self-surrender that is not affected but totally genuine?

Only in that purity will Tao come to you; only in that purity will the power of the magnetic Living Body of the Spiritual School become your share.

The All-Manifestation does not love as humans do; it sees all things as straw dogs.

The sage does not love as humans do; he sees the people as straw clogs.

The All is like a bellows. It is empty and never exhausted. The more it moves, the more is brought into manifestation.

Many words lead only to depletion. It is better to retain self-control.

Tao Te Ching chapter 5

*The All-Manifestation does not
love as humans do*

Have you ever had the experience of knowing a certain truth in theory rather than practice for years and years, and then one day, suddenly discovering the reality behind that truth, and seeing it spread its light? That is how it is when, practising wu wei, you experience Tao's inexhaustibility. You suddenly discover that there is a gnostic activity which adapts itself to your own, individual state of being, and the tremendous realisation comes to you that this experience is not unique to you alone, that you are not the only one on whom grace is bestowed, but that, in the inexhaustibility of Tao's love-radiations, a bridge of liberation is provided for every individual via a magnetic link with the gnostic-astral forces. Hence Lao Tzu's jubilant words: *O, the depth of it. It is the Original Father of all things.*

And then think of all the countless experiences of the process of sanctification itself. Here you stand with your fallen microcosm. Who are you, in comparison with the immeasurable glory of Tao? And yet, that immeasurability concerns itself with you. It has discovered you, and touches you:

It softens its sharpness, simplifies its complexity, tempers its blinding radiance and makes itself akin to the dust.

It makes itself akin to you, and to all; it adapts itself to your own individual situation, provided you stand in self-surrender. What a wonderful grace, and also, what an insight, what a pure, scientific foundation! How else could you be helped?

No pupil is ever forced. The Gnosis adapts itself to every

situation. It adjusts itself to your pace and remains beside you at every step, provided you are a 'candidate'. Tao always makes itself completely akin to your natural state; it softens its sharpness, simplifies its complexity, and tempers its blinding radiance. No harm can come to you.

Suppose you were to discontinue the liberating work. Then Tao would immediately become empty to you again, but ... it would wait for you, in immeasurable love, for aeons if necessary. Hence the words: 'O, how tranquil is Tao, how unfathomable are the depths of its calm; its peace is inviolable.'

There is a certain sense of urgency in the Spiritual School and we often talk about the idea that 'The time has come', and this is understandable because this Day of Manifestation is coming to an end. The Brotherhood would like to rescue you before the night falls. Nevertheless, even in the midst of all this, the tranquillity of Tao remains undisturbed, for Tao is eternal. It has been waiting for you for an eternity, and it will go on waiting for you for as long as it takes. There will never be any time in which Tao does not exist; Tao is parentless. Before the highest God was, it was. There are many sublime beings, many illustrious brothers and sisters who are unimaginably far above us in the majesty of their development. But beyond them all, is Tao; above even the greatest of them, Tao is enthroned.

That same Tao seeks to become akin to your 'dust'; it tempers its blinding radiance, simplifies its complexity and softens its sharpness — if only you are willing to be a 'candidate'. So now let us look at the fifth chapter of the Tao Te Ching:

The All-Manifestation does not love as humans do; it sees all things as straw clogs.

The sage does not love as humans do; he sees the people as straw dogs.

The All is like a bellows. It is empty and never exhausted. The more it moves, the more is brought into manifestation.

Many words lead only to depletion. It is better to retain self-control.

The words: *the All-Manifestation does not love as humans do* may come as rather a shock to you. If they are true, they are likely to overturn your whole way of viewing life and the world. That is indeed the aim of that ancient revelation we know as the Tao Te Ching. When you understand what Lao Tzu really meant to convey, many of your preconceptions will be shot to pieces, for it tears apart the whole paradigm with which humankind has surrounded itself and which has been handed down from generation to generation since time immemorial.

You know what it is to love; in one form or radiation or another, you will have experienced the essence of love. Leaving aside all the lower aspects and manifestations of love, there still remains the love you have for your partner in life, for your children, for your family, or possibly for a group, nation or race. You have your friends for whom you bear feelings of love. You also have feelings for the whole of humankind, which make you want to work for those in need, or to improve the standards of human life in some way, or to work for this School, or some other cause.

Without all these aspirations and expressions of the loving human heart and their results, humankind could not live. The only thing that gives ordinary life even a spark of value is the expression of love, in whatever way it may be manifested. If such expressions of love were not possible, life

could not go on; it would be unbearable and unacceptable. The more evolved a person's character, the more beauty it spreads around it in the form of love and loving behaviour. There is no mortal on the face of the earth who does not know love in some form. World literature is filled with proof of it. Love makes the world go round.

But just think about it. If we say, 'love makes the world go round', then in fact we are also saying, 'love is what keeps the nature of death in existence'. But that's awful, surely! Is it really love, the core essence of our being, that keeps the nature of death in existence? Doesn't the Bible say, 'God is love'? Perhaps we accept that the way we love is limited and defiled, but still a caricatural remnant of the original, divine love, that will change as we walk the path.

No, says Tao: *The All-Manifestation does not love as humans do*. Full of despair, we look at each other and say, 'Where did we go wrong, then?' That question has been asked throughout the ages, and we must ask it too: 'Where did we go wrong?' Should our love be sexless or something? Should we make it more universal, or more cultivated?

No, says Tao: *The All-Manifestation does not love as humans do*. And hearing that, all your conceptions about life and the world crumble, and you feel utterly confused.

What must you do then? Nothing! The essence of your being is as it is, and you cannot do otherwise than react to it in whatever way determined by your psychological makeup. Any attempt to block your innate psychological processes would simply put you in an impossible position. The more normal your behaviour in this respect, as an entity of this nature, the better and more pure it will be. But that does not detract from the fact that Tao does not love as humans do!

So only one conclusion remains, that when the Bible speaks about love and says, 'God is love', it must mean

something entirely different from what we think it means. Divine love is not super-universal or sexless, or anything like that. It is something quite different. Let us try to explain.

In the second chapter of the Tao Te Ching it is said that beauty always brings forth ugliness. We explained that the presence of ugliness is the proof that beauty in this nature-order is an illusion, and that the reality of beauty is not to be found here. Similarly, one can also say that love, as we know it, brings forth hate. Hate is the proof that love is an unknown quantity whose reality is not to be found in this world. Our conceptions of it are a delusion.

The Bible tells us that love triumphs over all things; love liberates; love is the greatest power in the world. This idea has been taken as the theme of countless novels. There are people, families and groups without number who have made the words, 'love above everything' their motto, and put it into practice in their lives. In the course of time, this manifestation of love has grown so formidable in its scope, so cultivated and organised, that the vibration and power unleashed by it should surely have liberated our world long ago, and elevated it to the level of a divine heaven. For surely no one would admit that love as we know it is a lie, a deception?

But this love has not liberated the world. Beauty brings ugliness to the surface, and good brings forth evil, love brings forth hate. Love is an ember, hatred is a fire. Earthly expressions of love are attempts of the ego to maintain itself. They are an attempt of the ego to make its own state of being divine. That is why they arouse antitheses. Where you have embers, you will also have fire!

There are temples and centres where many people sit and try to send out loving thoughts and forces in order to elevate humankind, to protect it from harm and put an end to wars.

But in reality, these temples and centres are the breeding grounds of war, arousing and propagating hatred.

When people are loving towards you, you are pleased. When they approach you with hatred, you will be on your guard. Natural life oscillates between these two extremes. Love and hate keep each other going. If you say, 'But I do not hate. Hatred is unknown to me', we have to tell you that you *do* know hate; you could not do without it. Just as human love possesses a scale of vibrations with many gradations, so it is with hatred. You have your sympathies and your antipathies. Antipathy is spontaneous aversion, and it is a form of hatred. It is the opposite of sympathy, and hence the opposite of the emotion of natural love. Every day you can observe how you experience resentment, or behave in an irritable way because of feelings of indignation or some imagined injustice. At our conference centres you are sometimes together with a few hundred fellow-pupils. Yet there are those among them who deliberately avoid even glancing at each other. You have your indifference and your irritability. These are the antitheses of love.

If you observe the totality of your behaviour, you will know that nothing human is unfamiliar to you. Hatred can blaze up in fierce tongues of flame, but it can also take the form of a gently smouldering fire. And though, in this nature, you may be able to extinguish the fiercest flames, you will never put out the smouldering embers. As long as love is necessary in this nature, hatred will be its twin brother. There is no way around it! Anyone who cultivates love is also cultivating hatred; that is a law. Hatred is a means of protection in the nature of death, as essential and as I-central as love. The scales of love and hate are constantly in motion and can never be brought to a standstill. One moment your are amiability itself; the next the scales tip the other way. Look, and you will

see this oscillation happening all the time; it is an amazing but inescapable aspect of human nature. What wretches we are, consumed by love and hate. These two mighty fires are the hell into which we have been cast. Alternating one with the other, our love and our hatred in their many forms constantly add fuel to the flames of our hell. Do you now see why Tao does not take part in all that?

You cannot imagine a hatred-propagating Gnosis but, by the same token, neither should you imagine a love-propagating Gnosis. The Gnosis loves you, but not in keeping with your dialectical interpretation of the word. *The All-Manifestation does not love as humans do*, and sees all such perceptions as 'straw dogs', which in ancient China were used for sacrifices. In the same way, neither does the sage who participates in the All-Manifestation love as humans do; he sees the people as straw dogs, as animals.

So what does the Bible really mean when it says that 'God is love'? Well, it means something quite different, and if you want to understand anything at all about it, you will need to free yourself of all your preconceptions about love. You must shatter them, just as you must shatter all the other preconceptions that populate your pantheon.

The divine manifestation is governed by a certain rhythm, which is present even in the minutest atom. This state of being knows no antitheses, it casts no shadows, and always brings forth itself. Good is not set against evil there, nor beauty against ugliness, nor love against hatred, nor reality against delusion. The Gnosis does not have love; it does not radiate love; it *is* love! In other words, divine love is not something which has to be aimed at any goal; it does not know conflict; it does not make any effort. It simply *is*, in itself. That is why its power is boundless, and can be compared with a bellows.

If a bellows is pumped rhythmically, it generates a great deal of power. In the same way, the rhythm of the All-Manifestation generates an enormous power and nothing that conflicts with that rhythm can ever enter it.

Knowing this, you will understand better than ever before why the nature of death is so fundamentally irreparable, and you will resolve to waste as few words as possible on that hopelessness. You will not argue with people who do not understand. You will leave the world for what it is. In complete self-control and genuine service to God, you will focus only on that which is capable of assimilating the divine rhythm and which is of the same nature: the wondrous atom, the rose of the heart, the Kingdom not of this world.

The spirit of the valley never dies; she is called the mystic Mother.

The door of the mystic Mother is the source of reality.

This manifestation continues eternally and seems to exist without cessation.

Enter this stream of life and you will not need to move.

Tao Te Ching chapter 6

6

The spirit of the valley never dies

The spirit of the valley is the symbol of the heart-sanctuary, the centre of the microcosm. She is the mystic Mother, the rose-bud, the primordial atom. This idea is not an invention of ours; it is often used in the Bible, too. For instance, it appears very clearly in Ezekiel, chapter 3, where it says: 'So I arose and went forth into the valley and, lo, the glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory which I had seen beside the river Chebar'. Chebar is the aorta, so the meaning of these words is clear. And if you look more closely at the Bible, you will find this imagery repeated time and time again. Elsewhere in the book of Ezekiel, the valley of dry bones is mentioned. When the prophet goes down into this valley, he sees how true life is quite dead, and how it can be restored through divine power.

The valley-spirit never dies. All who possess a rose-bud, a primordial atom, bear immortality within them. The spirit of the valley is a Seven-Spirit, just as the primordial atom, too, is sevenfold.

The Universal Doctrine explains that the heart is the most important organ in the body. The heart is called 'the king of the body'. With care, the heart can stay alive for quite some time after the death of the body, and the small part of the heart that dies last is the seat of life. We need to see this dying as the withdrawal of something immortal. And that seat of life is the 'spirit of the valley'.

The primordial atom, the rose-bud, the seat of true life, contains mind, life, energy and will, and it radiates fiery, opalescent, prismatic colours. Insiders know this, and can tell from the radiation of the rose, from the intensity of its

opalescence, whether the rose-bud has indeed opened. If it has, then God, the spirit of the valley, can speak to us. God can communicate with us in the valley.

The state in which 'God speaks in the valley' also involves a link with the gnostic magnetic field, a connection with the new life-field; and the prismatic, fiery, opalescent radiations, which are capable of turning the whole microcosm into a blaze of light, interpret to us the essence and the power of the Gnosis. God speaks to, and in, the dialectical human being. And it is from this speaking, this radiation, that the whole transfiguristic reversal is to be explained.

All true healing arises from the work of the seat of true life, so it is clear why the Tao Te Ching speaks of the mystic Mother. Just as the mother gives birth to the child, so the seat of life will bring forth the new human being. Thus the door of the mystic Mother is the origin of reality.

The new thinking, the new life, the new life-energy and the new will must therefore be born in the heart. What originates in the head-sanctuary can never be renewing or liberating. You need to be aware that when you think or want, conceive or consider in the ordinary way, even when you have the best of intentions, it is an activity arising from the ego and its ordinary source of life. Only in the heart is God revealed to us, the God of whom Jesus the Lord said: 'The Kingdom of God is within you'. That is why the head must be conquered by the heart.

If you were to want to find the path in any other way, in the opposite way, you would be following the route of occultism, the path that will nail you to the wheel of birth and death. That is why the whole consciousness of ordinary nature must be surrendered to the God revealed in us, the mystic Mother.

When Jesus the Lord says, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock', he means the door in the heart sanctuary, in the valley

of life. If you are unwilling to open this door, you are chaining yourself to this nature. God will not be able to speak to you in the valley.

The pupil who enters by the one door, the door of the mystic Mother, will find not only that behind it lies the source of reality, but also that the manifestation originating there lasts eternally. This will lead him to certain inescapable conclusions.

Some people think of 'eternity' as being 'everlasting time'. But when we pass through the door of the mystic Mother, we experience a complete freedom from time and space. We experience entry into a totally different electromagnetic field, a hence a totally different life-field. So you need to understand that you possess a *spirit in the valley*, which is immortal, and lasts throughout time as long as you continue to wander in time and space. It is the God in chains, Prometheus bound. This God-in-you wants to be your mystic Mother. And now you know: the door to her is the source of reality, and gives freedom, eternally, from time and space.

The spirit of the valley speaks to you, for it contains mind, life, energy and will. Perfectly organised, it speaks to you in its imprisonment, just as the Sphinx did to Prince Tothmes: 'My son, behold my chains!'. It awakens you to the anguish of your sinful, wretched existence.

The voice of conscience comes from the heart; it is the voice of the valley-spirit. And now only one invitation, only one possibility is appropriate, and that invitation is conveyed to you by the Tao Te Ching: *Enter this stream of life and you will not need to move.*

Do you want to understand these pre-eminently liberating words? Join us, then, on our journey to the heart, the king of the body, and surrender your biological ego, your animal I-

being in its totality, to the seat of life in the valley. A stream of life flows from this seat, a fiery, opalescent current in which all colours are contained, but which emits a predominantly bluish-golden radiance. Plunge into this stream in self-surrender. Do not allow the animal ego to speak and govern in your microcosm, but the divine being within you. Then you will not need to move.

This is how you need to see it: in your personality there are two organisms of consciousness, an organism you know, that makes you say 'I', and a much mightier one, that you do not know. You need to transfer the guidance of your system to that other I, that alter-ego, the soul. You are able to do so. And if you do, you will no longer need to move. All those exhausting tensions of life, the whole vast surge of woe and misery will then drop from you; your problems will be resolved in quite another way. You, the nature-born ego, will not need to move; the Other One will act in you.

This should not be understood in the negative sense of being lazy or letting things slide, but in the sense of the Sermon on the Mount: 'Seek first the Kingdom of God' — which is within you — 'and all things will be added unto you'. You will live and experience life in a new way; you will be *in* the world, and yet not *of* the world.

Through the door of the mystic Mother you will enter and encounter a new reality, and you will belong to the new race: the people of God.

The macrocosm lasts eternally. It can last eternally because it does not live for itself

That is why the sage subordinates himself to the Other One and so becomes one with the First.

He makes himself free from his body and hence retains his hotly.

It is because he knows no egoism.

By his lack of egoism, he promotes his own interests.

Tao Te Ching chapter 7

The macrocosm lasts eternally

The macrocosm, the All-Manifestation, *lasts eternally*. Phenomena within it may well be subject to change, but this alteration is never a reversion to an initial state. Things do not have to start all over again from the beginning, as they do in the world of dialectics. The All-Manifestation progresses, evolves. Every change that occurs within it is a change for the better, a progression from one step to another, higher, broader one. Only in eternity is there evolution.

Underlying this is an unknown, divine law, a law of a nature-order unfamiliar to us, where the unfoldment of things is not circular, like a wheel turning, but spiral. A law of nature creates an order, a combination of aspects and activities. If we study that order and learn about how the various processes going on within it are interconnected, and then comply with its laws, then that order will become alive, active. By complying with its laws we enter that order, we begin to participate in it, and we leave behind the former system and its laws.

From this it follows that it is possible, in any state of being, to shift immediately from one nature-order with its laws to another, and hence to experience eternity in time, existentially, in a fraction of a second. One shifts from the time-spatial to the eternal. And if one does experience this existentially — now, for instance — at this moment, then naturally there will be consequences, for every realm has its own phenomena and vehicles. The vehicles of time and space differ from those of eternity. In other words, one can belong to the new realm immediately, but transfiguration, rebirth, must necessarily follow. Transfiguration is possible only when one belongs to

a new realm of nature. So what happens is not transfiguration, followed by participation in eternity, but first the formation of a link with the new realm and afterwards the great transformation. Some knowledge of natural science will help you understand what we mean.

If you are with us so far, we can make another point by asking a question: 'Why are the two realms, the dialectical realm and the kingdom of God, different?' Why is the former governed by the law of never-ending return to the point of departure? Why is it bound to a circular course, to the turning of the wheel, while the law of the other realm is progression, continuation and ascent from power to power and from glory to glory?'

The obvious answer would be: 'Because in our realm we are separated from the Gnosis'. But by saying that we are only describing the result, not the cause. The cause lies partly in the orientation of the consciousness. The way the consciousness is orientated differs in the two realms. Lao Tzu is pointing to this difference when he says that eternity *does not live for itself*:

Hearing that, a person might say: 'Oh, I know that; I live for my family, my relatives, my ideals; I am sacrificing myself completely'. Such 'not living for oneself' is certainly wonderful and worthy of respect, but still it is imitation with the animal ego of the mode of consciousness indicated by Lao Tzu. The animal ego is an I-central consciousness; it is a very sophisticated 'I am', capable of imitating a great deal of beauty, goodness and love. But that kind of beauty, goodness and love is only proof of ugliness, evil, and hate.

In many respects, this is a rather peculiar situation, because the animal ego very much wants to do good; in many cases it really does want divine life. The urge towards these things is, as it were, inborn in it. So why doesn't it succeed?

Why can't the animal ego convert the time-spatial into the eternal, which is what the occultist believes is possible?

The answer is that the animal ego is an organic being; it is an organism. The personality is an organism; you are a vehicular human being, as distinct from a divine human being. What is an organic human being? He is a mechanical being, governed by a higher intelligence, although he himself possesses a certain organic intelligence. The organic, vehicular human being, the ordinary personality, is able to use energy and act in a human way — or maybe a divine way — because of his imitative ability, and because of his origin. Raging around like a madman, he is constantly brought back to his starting point because of the law of his runaway condition. Just as a motorcar possesses a mechanical intelligence and, once started, keeps going, but can only function correctly when there is a governing intelligence at the wheel, so the personality and its animal intelligence can only serve their purpose if they are under the guidance of the God-within, the highest centre of life in the heart. If this is not the case, then the organic human being, the vehicular human being, is at the mercy of himself, with all the attendant consequences.

It is possible to keep on bringing the organic human being back into manifestation by means of the dialectical reproductive process, but if the true ruler does not take charge, things will keep on going wrong; the human being of nature will be subject to countless degenerations and will follow a road of suffering in a realm to which he nevertheless belongs. The vehicular human being is no longer even a shadow of his former self. The human being of nature thinks he is the true human being, and believes he is capable of attaining what is truly human. He pats himself on the chest and says: 'I am it, I am doing it, I want it.' He is continually imitating and experimenting, yet naturally without any success.

If you take the time to examine what we are trying to say, you will find it amply confirmed in the Bible, in the Universal Doctrine, and in myths, legends and fairy tales. The vehicular human being had a Genesis, a beginning, and a fall, a breaking away in self-conceit from his God. The organic human being has but one, consuming need: to maintain himself. Self-preservation is his biological urge. He lives on death and ruin. The poor wretch has no choice but to do so, because he exists. He must live for himself. That is his fate, because he would perish otherwise. He is in danger. He is not being preserved; he is preserving himself, because of his nature. And here the curse of Paradise comes to mind.

There are nations and races who have made this attitude of 'eat or be eaten' into a virtue. If you, too, think and live in that way, you are on the wrong track.

In the beginning, the personality, the vehicular human being, was an instrumentarium, created in order to give the guiding intelligence an opportunity to gather experience, to perfect the All, to serve the Gnosis. The guiding intelligence is the true human being, the only God. But the instrumentarium has gone out of control and calls itself man. The vehicular consciousness is derived from a ray of the inner, divine consciousness. The true divine human being does not live for himself; he is not a self-preserver; he does not live in danger and has no need to live for himself. He conforms to the laws of a different nature and possesses an eternity-consciousness. He is existentially one with the All, with the All-Manifestation, and is sustained by the prana of life.

Was it a mistake, then, when this only God created the personality-being? It is pointless to ask, because the personality-being exists in any case. There is a God, a true human being, and a personality with a consciousness, with an ego. So

what has to happen to the class of dual beings to which you belong?

Well, let us suppose that, through bitter experience, you have become wise; you have become a sage. What must you do now? The sage subordinates himself to the Other One, to the only God in him. As a creature, he makes himself subject to the God in him. In total self-surrender he lets himself sink down into the valley of life. What happens then? He merges with that First One, the Superior One, the All-Governing One, and enters into glorious tranquillity. He detaches himself from his body, his personality. The beast withdraws. And what happens now? The personality, as an instrument, is preserved. It is transfigured. How? Always well, very well, under divine guidance. Perhaps the personality is indeed superfluous, but what will it matter? You are freed from the wheel, you have returned to your Creator, to your God; you have been raised into eternity!

You have said farewell to your animal egoism, and because of that the interests of the divine man's true being have been advanced. They enter into fulfilment. Tothmes and the Sphinx are united.

If you are willing to accept this understanding of the seventh chapter of the Tao Te Ching, you will see how laughable are the attempts of Chinese scholars to place their own interpretation on Lao Tzu's words, translating them with phrases such as: 'be humble, give way politely, and you are sure to get your own way in the end'.

The right approach to life is like water.

Water is everywhere and exists in all places.

It flows even in places that men reject.

That is why the sage approximates Tao.

*He dwells in the right place. His heart is as deep as an abyss.
His love is perfect. He abides in the truth and he does the truth.
Destined to govern, he maintains order. He performs his
actions well, and acts at the right time.*

*Since he does not quarrel or contend with others, there is no
guilt in him.*

Tao Te Ching chapter 8

The sage's heart is as deep as an abyss

One can see why chapter eight of the Tao Te Ching compares the way of life to be followed by the liberation-seeking personality with water. Water is a sublime, universal symbol of the power-radiations of the new life. Just as the ordinary human being lives and moves in the electromagnetic radiation-field of dialectics, so the pupil who, through the sacrifice of the self, has established a liberating link with the spirit of the valley, the God in him, will enter and live in the new electromagnetic radiation-field.

This is the true, living water, which is poured out over him and fills every corner of his existence. In this stream of new power he becomes a new creation, a new creature. He undergoes a new Genesis, a new beginning. This process can be compared with the first Genesis, when the spirit of God moved over the face of the waters and created a firmament in their midst, for when the living water is poured out over the candidate he, too, gains a new firmament. It is the new lipika, a new magnetic system which imparts to him a quite new and different personality-consciousness. He is again ensouled by his only God, who works for his salvation.

If we shift our attention from the individual, microcosmic level to the level of the cosmos and macrocosm, we can see that the same concepts must apply there, too. For obviously, the God in us, the true, divine human being, the source of true life in the heart sanctuary, does not live in isolation from other human Gods. Just as the earthly human being experiences and is conscious in the nature of death, so, by the law of analogy, the divine human being must exist in a nature of life, a quite

different, divine universe. The life-substance, the radiation-substance of that divine universe is living water, the pure, divine, primordial substance.

This divine universe, this divine primordial substance, is not separated from us by time or distance; it is here and now, interpenetrating everything, nearer than hands and feet. The living water is everywhere, and there is no place where it is not. It is even in places scorned by man. The sage knows this, and that is what makes him say, in the words of Psalm 139:

If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!

If I descend into the realm of the dead, thou art there!

If I take the wings of the morning and go and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say: 'Let darkness cover me', the night shall be a light about me; even the darkness is not dark to thee. The night is a bright as the day, for darkness is as light with thee.

Now what we are telling you about here, what we are inviting you to share in, is very much an aim of the Rosycross. We are expressing these ideas in the language of the ancients, using the words of the Tao Te Ching as a guide, but our activity among you is as ultra-modern as can be. Though in keeping with the most ancient tradition of all, it is utterly contemporaneous. For what are we suggesting? Nothing else, surely, than reunification with your divine Other One? We are inviting you to celebrate a marriage, a spiritual marriage with the spirit of the valley, the spirit of the primordial atom, the rose.

Is this any different from the alchemical wedding of Christian Rosycross, as described by Johann Valentin Andreae? The rosebud in the heart-sanctuary, the true seat of life, the spirit in the valley — *that* is your bride or bridegroom. And whatever your point of view as regards gender, that spirit is saying to you, in the words of Revelation 22, which are pure, Rosicrucian words:

The spirit and the bride say: Come!

And let him who is thirsty come.

Let him who desires take the water of life without price.

Without price! But the condition is thirst! From a desperate inner need, arising from experience, your soul must begin to thirst. That thirst is yearning for salvation: 'My soul thirsts for you', as it says in Psalm 63.

And we can also think of the words of Isaiah chapter 55: 'All you who suffer thirst, come to the waters, and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy and eat wine and milk, without money and without payment. Why do you spend your money on that which is not bread, and labour for that which cannot satisfy? Hearken to me, that you may eat what is good and delight your soul in plenteousness. Incline your ear and come to me, that your soul may live, and I shall make with you an eternal covenant. [...] Instead of the thorn, the cypress shall spring up; instead of the brier, the myrtle shall flourish.' What astoundingly beautiful imagery!

No priest — nor any Spiritual School — can stand between you and the valley-spirit, between you and the God in you. That covenant must be forged by you yourself, in self-authority, and the Spiritual School is there to help you in whatever way

it can. The School possesses a powerfield, which is filled with the living water, and its purpose is to amplify that call of your only God, which is expressed in the words: 'Incline your ear to me'. The School tries to be a guide to your animal-ego. Lost and wandering as you are, it wants to lead you back to true happiness. At the same time, in group unity, as a Living Body, the School actually constitutes a mighty, magical aid to reaching the goal. So if, now, you have reached maturity and are weary of strife, you are free to reach for that absolute happiness. And when you do so, the stream of living water will flood over you from that moment onwards. Thus you will become wise, so wise that others will be able to comfort and warm themselves in the light of your glory. You will become a light on the path, in the service of the Brotherhood, helping the straying and the lonely to find their Lord. That is how the sage approximates Tao.

The eighth chapter continues with a more detailed description of the approach to life of the person in whom this connection has been established. This approach could be called 'the way of life of the living water':

The sage dwells in the right place

Since he is linked with the truth, he is always orientated towards the goal and is always in the right place. The sage is the truly serving brother or sister, and living in the right place also means that, when such a servant appears in the life of a seeker and tells of his truth, it will always be at precisely the right moment. Not too early, not too late, but always just in time!

There may have been times when you heard liberating words but they made no impression on you. In that case, there will have been others for whom the words were in-

tended, and who really did hear them from within. Yet one day, sooner or later, you too will hear in the right way, and then — at the right time — you will recognise the servant, *your* servant. Then, for you, he will be, he will live, in the right place, and you will be able to enter the temple-dwelling as a welcome guest.

The sage's heart is as deep as an abyss

This means that in the sage there gradually matures a perfect understanding — great in its compassion and unfathomable in its love — of each individual's state of sin, each person's boundless misery. This does not mean that the servant of the Brotherhood becomes a father-confessor whose heart is just a vast repository for anything and everything people want to get rid of. Neither does it mean that he is supposed to sit down and lend an ear while you pour out your whole life-history as a mortal soul, for one life-story is much like any other. The details may differ, but the beginning and the end are the same. No, when we say that the sage's heart is fathomless, we mean that when one enters the valley of the heart to meet the spirit, the entire robot-like state of being falls away. And because of that, the sage does not judge any mortal by the sins he has committed, but by his true thirst.

He who thirsts, receives the water of life freely. That is a magnetic law. He who has become pure in this way possesses, as his signature, a heart of fathomless depth. That is why his love is perfect. It is rooted in the new radiation-field, and emanates from there. That kind of love can never generate hate or vengeance. It is a love that has accompanied fallen man for an unimaginably long time, through thick and thin, never forsaking him. It goes out to 'save that which is lost'. And if you do not want to be saved now, but you do in a thou-

sand years' time, then after those thousand long years of woe you will still see that same love waiting for you. Then, too, you will hear the call: 'Come unto me all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest'.

He abides in the truth and he does the truth

It is easy to understand that the sage is someone who abides in the truth and lives by it. Truth is a life-field. Do you see that this is why a dialectical human being can never be true; why dialectical truth is always a lie? Just as ugliness proves the delusion of what you call beauty, and goodness and love are displaced by the reality of antitheses, so it is with what people ordinarily call truth. You may think someone is truthful and honest, but all that really means, sadly, is that they are trying to be truthful and honest, and do not consciously, deliberately, tell lies. That kind of truth has no foundation in the Gnosis, in the All-Manifestation, in the God in us. That is why it is speculative, partial; it arouses confusion, dispute and conflict; it makes war. Fierce insistence on that kind of truth can cause the greatest misery, and tomorrow it may turn out to have been quite untrue.

Someone who abides in the Gnosis, however, abides in divine truth. That truth is a vibration, a state of being, from which the sage lives and is. Does he deposit this truth in the midst of this dark world? Only in a certain sense! He vibrates in that truth, he radiates it.

If you seek truth in the sense of the Rosycross, there will come a moment during your search for Tao when you taste and recognise the radiation of that truth. Only then will it really be possible to talk to you about it. As for the rest, do not think the sage will enter into disputes with you about what truth really is. If someone proves to be unsusceptible, as

yet, to a certain ray of truth, the sage will never argue with him. He will withdraw, creating a vacuum.

Destined to govern, he maintains order

The sage's life is ordered by the laws of the living field of the living truth. A sage is a servant of the Brotherhood, and in his ministry as servant he has to gather together people who are seeking. If he is to succeed, he will need to create a certain order in his field of work; his work will need to follow a system. This system can be spoken about and discussed, and it is founded on love, truth and Gnosis, the spiritual laws of the Brotherhood.

All who are seeking are welcome, but there are also those who are determined to act against the spiritual order. The sage will try to help them and put them on the right track, but if it still proves impossible for them to understand the radiation of the field of the living truth, the sage will let them go for the time being, and love will wait for them until they have made enough progress to be able to move a step further. In other words, spiritual laws are irrefutable and therefore they simply cannot be opposed; it is all or nothing.

The sage performs his actions well, and acts at the right time

These virtues, like the others, need not amaze us. If you do not live in the robot-consciousness any longer, but participate in the consciousness of the Gnosis, you gain the ability to act in a new way, which is attuned in every detail to the essence of the holy work, to Tao.

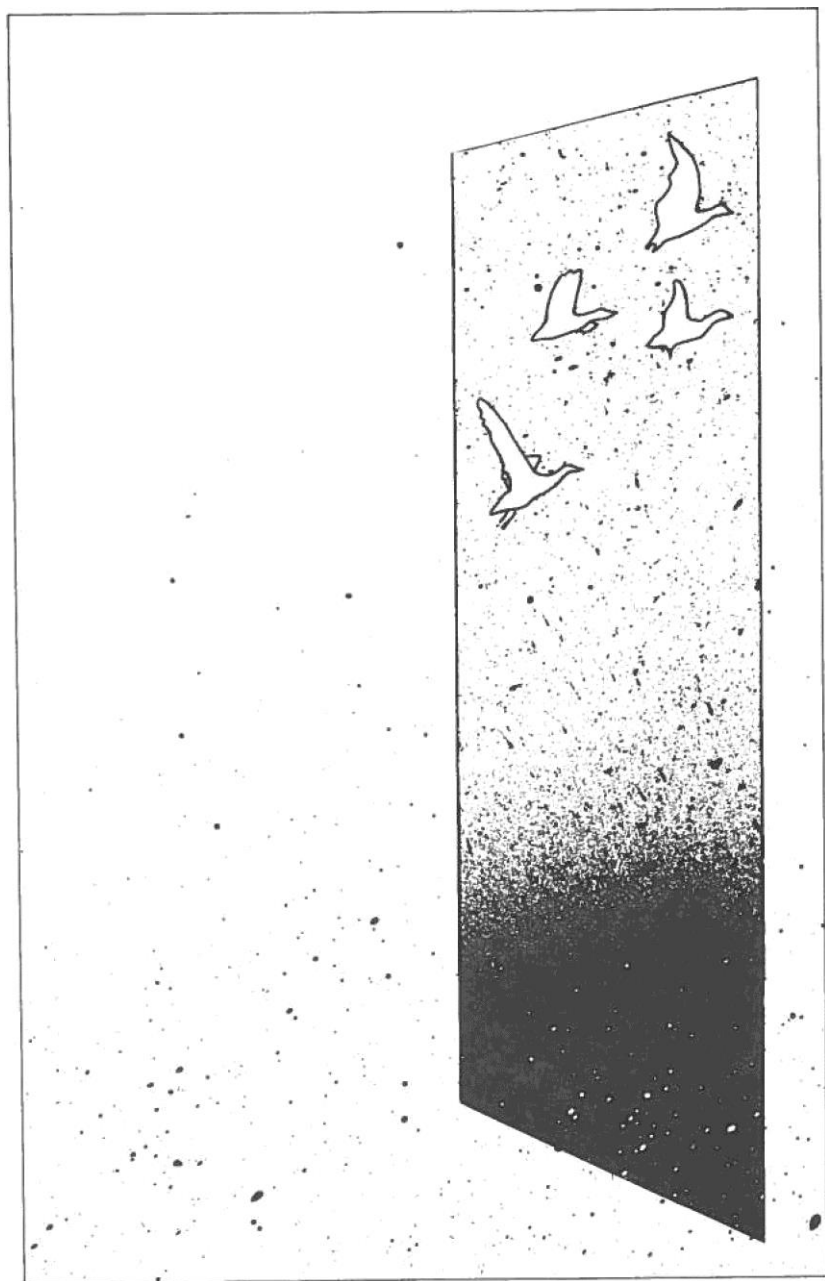
If we look at these gifts of grace in the light of Paul's words, you will perhaps understand them even better. Paul often mentions in his letters that it is not his intention to glorify himself, and he says: 'Not I, but Christ in me'.

So we have tried to shed some light on the way of life of the sage who is following the path of liberation. It is our daily prayer that you, too, may walk this path.

See the path — *Tao*.

Follow the path — *Te*.

Understand the path — *Ching*.



Do not touch the filled vase.

Do not touch the sharp edge of the blade.

Do not desire to preserve the room full of gold and precious stones.

He who is proud of his wealth will suffer misfortune.

When the work is done and the name is made, one should withdraw. This is the way of heaven.

Tao Te Ching chapter 9

Do not touch the filled vase

The translation of chapter nine of the Tao Te Ching seems to have given sinologists a great deal of trouble. This can be attributed to their lack of any key to the true meaning of Lao Tzu's words.

One translation reads: 'It is better to carry no vase at all, than to carry a filled vase on both sides' — an absurd rendering if one accepts that the Chinese text is referring to a water-vessel. The ancients did not have water mains, so filled water-jugs must have been essential to them. Therefore they would surely have been only too eager to carry them, trying not to spill a single drop of the much-needed fluid. Another translator saw the significance of this point about spilling the water, and put forward the following translation: 'He who fills a vase to the brim and tries to carry it along with both hands, will spill it'.

Having seen what the previous chapters of the Tao contained, we realise that Lao Tzu must have meant something quite different. The difficulty for translators is that, in fact, the Tao Te Ching cannot be translated. The alphabet we use today is fixed, and enables us to look at a combination of letters and know exactly what the word is and what it means. But the ancient Chinese pictograms in which the Tao Te Ching was written down are not like that. Take the word 'tree' for instance. A modern author can write: 'I see a tree', and although we may not know what kind of tree, we know it is a tree he can see. But the ancient Chinese pictograms, even more so than Hebrew, for instance, carried a variety of meanings, at least seven, in fact. And a Chinese person of any

standing had the freedom to add his own nuances to a character, after he had painted its basic shape on parchment or silk.

So without a formula, without a method, ancient Chinese characters are virtually a secret code. In practice, owing to the needs of commerce and social intercourse, people adopted the habit of using the same characters to represent particular concepts simply so that, if a person wasn't there to speak to, it would be possible to communicate by letter. Even so, the sender and receiver always needed to know in advance the meaning of the characters being used. That is why, although many words in ancient Chinese can be read, many more cannot, as a result of which the context is lost. And in any case, the language of the ancient Chinese Bible was not intended for sinologists who might possibly wish to translate it at some later date. Their translations differ hopelessly, and no wonder. The Tao Te Ching was intended solely for pupils on the transfiguristic path, and the author knew for certain, even though he wrote thousands of years ago, that a servant of the Brotherhood, even though only a beginner, would be able to read the Tao Te Ching quite easily untold years later.

'How is that possible?' you may ask. 'You don't know any Chinese, and even if you did, surely you would be faced with the same difficulties as the sinologists?'

The answer is really quite simple. Throughout all ages, the Universal Brotherhood has designed its words, whether spoken or written, to appeal to the imaginative consciousness of those who are inwardly ready to understand them. In every line of such language lies a key which, if the reader is able to identify and understand it, easily unlocks the rest of the meaning. If the reader is not able to identify the key, he will understand nothing and will not be able to translate the true meaning, even if he is the most educated person of all time.

Here, too, the biblical words apply, that what remains hidden from the wise and learned of ordinary nature is revealed to the children of God (Matthew 11:25).

We do not think it is pride that makes us say 'we are children of God'. You are, too; you also possess that childship. Some people are rather more conscious of this than others, but we are all equal, and perfection is waiting for every one of us. So now let us try together to find the key to chapter nine, guided by our awareness of being children of God.

The first thing we notice is that chapter nine opens with a reference to some kind of filled vase or vessel. All translators are in agreement on that point. They also agree that there is something one must definitely not do with that vase.

Now what does a vase contain? Water, of course. So one translator concludes that what one must not do is spill any of the water. 'That's true,' says another, 'but such a vase is heavy, so it would be better not to carry it.' 'Of course one must not spill the water; that is clear, but in my opinion Lao Tzu meant that it is not possible to hold on to the vase and fill it at the same time.' 'Well, we can do that nowadays, of course, because all we need to do is turn on the tap, but the ancients did not have any water mains.' 'Yes, but they did have waterfalls.'

And so the discussion continues. But where does it lead? Nowhere, because everyone has overlooked the key. But the part of your mind that thinks in pictures will have absorbed the key long ago, for the image of the filled vessel or vase is very familiar to you.

We see before us a seventeenth-century Rosicrucian symbol. A sage, old and grey, sits in a chamber in a tower. Three steps lead into it, bearing the words 'the steps to wisdom'. When we climb these three steps leading into the tower-room, we notice that the entrance is flanked by two pillars, and our

attention is drawn by the aphorism inscribed on the right-hand pillar. It says: 'Stay close to the vase to make its colours known'.

In Isaiah chapter 52 we read these words: 'Depart, depart, go out thence, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.' In Acts chapter 10 we read of a very unholy vessel descending from the heavens. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul says: 'If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the Lord.' (2 Timothy 2:21). We also remember the many symbolic stories about the grail-cup, open like the calyx of a lily, and we hear Lao Tzu say: *Do not touch the filled vase.*

And now we know: that is the key! The child of God possesses a filled vase, the seven-petalled rose, the seven-petalled calyx of the lily, the grail-cup of the heart. The child of God *is* a child of God precisely because he possesses that holy cup. It constitutes the entire Kingdom of God in us; a whole universe is contained within the primordial atom. In that atom lies the All.

However, the dialectical self presents an extreme danger as far as these things are concerned. Your ego is not the child of God; your dialectical consciousness has nothing to do with it. Your ego is a robot-consciousness, quite incapable of liberation. You occupy a microcosm in which the divine being lies enclosed, and the Tao Te Ching says to you: 'Please keep your fingers off that filled vase!' The grail-cup is filled with the blood of the lamb, with the pure, living water, and not one drop of the unholy nature may be added to it. So do not go near it; keep your distance, in absolute self-surrender. Please refrain from saying 'I' — with the emphasis on the I — 'am a child of God'. You are only very close to the child of God. It is in the same microcosm as you. The Other

One was there long before you, and will be there long after. You must diminish and the Other One must increase. Do not touch the filled vase of the Lord! You, with your mystical or occult delusion, must not lay hands on the holy vessel. This grail-cup contains the wine of the Lord, and this wine, this living water, must touch you; it must quench your thirst. This power must descend into your soul like a sword.

Continuing with the same metaphor, Lao Tzu says: *Do not touch the sharp edge of the blade*. Do not render it powerless with unholy hands, and do not say: 'The sword will descend into me in such and such a way, under my guidance.' Empty the cup extended to you by the inner Christ; accept it, full of joy.

Have you never read or heard that the Masters of the Grail placed the grail-cup in a beautiful temple? In a sanctuary filled with gold and jewels? And that this sanctuary of the wondrous rose was filled with the most precious, glorious riches imaginable? Well, there is such a sanctuary in your microcosm. 'Rejoice and be glad; the Kingdom of God is within you', it is the new Jerusalem with its twelve gates.

But you need to realise the danger inherent in the ego's insane lust for possession. Do you want to keep that hall filled with gold and jewels for yourself? You? Do you want to give free rein to your pride of possession as a mystic or occultist? If you do, you will experience all the misfortune of that continued turning of the wheel, for the new city with its pearly gates can only descend when the old city has disappeared.

See the way of heaven before you. When the time has come, and your preparatory work has been completed, and your new name conceived for the Book of Life, you — with your whole dialectical soul-state — will need to withdraw, as expressed in those tremendous words of John, which contain the key to the path of liberation: 'He, the Other One, must

increase, and I must diminish'. You will need to withdraw, with the sword of the Master of the Grail in your soul, having emptied his cup to the last drop, so that the holy city may come down out of heaven from God.

Now let us return to the treasure chamber of the classical Rosicrucians, where we can see the pillar on which are the words: 'Stay close to the vase to make its colours known'. When the Rosicrucians said: 'Stay close to the vase', they meant: 'Devote yourself, as an I-being, humbly and quietly, in forbearance and self-sacrifice, to the inner Grail, to the city of God that will one day descend out of heaven'. This is the only right attitude to have with respect to the 'vase' and, if we adopt it, then there is the possibility that, in the service of the 'vase', we may be permitted to make the holy words known to those who have gone astray and are seeking. We may be allowed to make the beautiful, serene colours and aspects of the vase known, so that seekers, comforted by this glorious promise, will one day be able to follow the same path.

The words quoted from Isaiah chapter 52 are a call to all spirit-spark bearers to say farewell to the world of dialectics by undergoing the endura. 'Go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.' That is why Paul says that when you follow the path of self-emptying, a new soul-state becomes possible through the Grail-cup, 'consecrated and useful to the Lord'. And in Acts chapter 10, Peter undergoes a very archetypal test. The forces of the reflection sphere offer him the false cup, but when he sees its contents, he realises the danger straight away and rejects it firmly. His resolve is more steadfast than ever: he stays close to the vase of the heart to make its colours known.

That is the signature of the Rosicrucian, the servant of the Universal Brotherhood. He stays close to the vase of the heart to make its colours known. He, himself, will never take the

credit for this. Though he has become immeasurably rich, he will never indulge in pride on account of it, because *he who is proud of his wealth will suffer misfortune*. Pride is showing off, pride is love of ostentation, pride makes concessions to I-centrality. It spoils the radiance of the vase, making it dull and colourless once more.

When, through the practical application of the fivefold universal Gnosis, true riches are gained, then the great work must be fulfilled. Then admittance is granted to the immeasurable treasure-chambers of the universal life. Then one speaks in the plural. Then the words are spoken: 'You who bear the vessels of the Lord'. Then we discover that the Living Body, which is formed by its many members, receives the same treasures in its powerfield by means of its liberating magic. What is within us becomes at the same time what is outside us. Boundaries fall away and we experience the unity of the universal, in the universal.

In this way, the light is carried out into the night, to awaken those who are of the night. In this way, in the night, the light is born. In this way, those who are chosen keep together, to make the colours of the light known in all their immeasurable diversity.

But those who do not want to let go of the night are perturbed, for they do not want to see the colours of the vase, and hence they tumble into confusion. From confusion, doubt arises, and they say: 'Yesterday you said it was green and today you say it is blue'. They do not understand that though the ocean, like the aquamarine, has many colours, it still remains the ocean. They shun the light, and do not yet have eyes to see.

Nevertheless, the apostolic work continues, for the colours of the vase *must* be made known. The apostolic work is universal. It goes on in the sewers of the night, as well as in the

bright light of day. It has its origin in the broad field of the Apostolic Brotherhood, and begins in the thirty-two who dare to make the attempt to put the work into practice.

The night-dwellers and those who shun the light ask mockingly, 'Where are you now with your apostolic light?' We say, 'Just observe coming events, for just as the lightning rends the darkness and makes people quake and tremble, so the divine astralis in the prepared serpent-fire canal will make itself known to the whole body as a heavenly fire. The work will be fulfilled and the new name made. And when the labour is done, those who performed it will withdraw, leaving the night to the night.'

He who subordinates the animal-ego to the spiritual can keep his will focused on Tao. He will not be divided.

He controls his vital energy until it is as docile as a new-born child.

He will make his inner vision clear and pure and so be freed from moral failings.

He will rule the kingdom with love, and be capable of being wholly wu wei.

He will abide in perfect tranquillity, while the doors go on opening and closing.

Since his light penetrates everywhere, he can be as if ignorant.

He gives birth to things and nourishes them. He gives birth but does not possess. He increases and multiplies but does not expect reward. He rules but does not consider himself the master. That is what is called the mysterious virtue.

Tao Te Ching chapter 10

10-i

He who subordinates the ego will rule the kingdom with love

The more we have studied the sublime wisdom of Lao Tzu, the more we have discovered an extending range of revelations and possibilities open to those who truly walk the path in the transfiguristic sense. Now, in chapter 10, some of the most striking consequences of the path are highlighted. These consequences do not concern some future state of the divine human being, but relate to the present state of being of those who, whilst standing on the path and fulfilling the law, remain for the time being in dialectics. This point alone means that the contents of chapter ten are of the utmost significance for us, because they are not attributes to be realised in some distant future, but can be achieved in the immediate present by any serious seeker.

That is why it gives us so much happiness to be able to describe for you the type of person we would like to call the 'new Noachite', the person who is travelling in the new life-field, on a voyage from the nature of death to the new, yet original, kingdom. Such a person is in the process of joining the new race, which knows no nationalities and no borders. He is travelling in the classical and yet so contemporary celestial ship, towards a new and joyful future. If you want to take part in this journey, all that is asked is that you put the lessons you are given into practice and demonstrate that you are following the craft of the true freemason.

He who subordinates the animal-ego to the spiritual can keep his will focused on Tao. He will not be divided.

That is how the mason's craft begins. That is the first step. If

you are not able to take that first step, you will certainly not be able to take the next. As a pupil of Tao, you need to give your animal-ego, in total surrender, to the primordial atom, the kingdom within you, the rose of the heart. That is your most important task. And you do it not in devotion to an outer God, with all the natural-religious and occult consequences, but with a 'Lord, your will be done', before the only God within you, the kingdom within you. It is with this Johannine practice that the pupil's path must begin. In the desert of his life, he must make straight the paths for his God.

Let us assume, for the moment, that you understand this and are really subordinating the animal-I to the spiritual I. Then your ordinary personality will undergo remarkable changes because, in response to your self-surrender, the vase, the grail-cup, will be poured out over you and in this way a new soul-being, a new serpent-fire, will be born. The first thing you will notice then is that your will is able to remain, and indeed *will* remain, constantly aimed towards Tao, towards the path. Why? For the simple reason that when the rose of the heart governs your being and determines your soul-state, the magnetic status of the new nature rather than the old nature will be active within you.

If your will, as a magical constant, is to be explained entirely from this nature, you will still be able now and then to raise it up so as to deal with new problems in your life, and even to perform magnificent deeds, but from time to time the will is bound to show its true nature, its origin. In consequence, the will is certain to be divided, and that will cause you considerable suffering. The ordinary will, however much it is developed by mystical or scientific practices, can never be liberating, neither for the self, nor for others. But if the personality-being, the soul-state, is engrossed in the rose and the inner Christ begins to rule you, if this Jesus

within you begins to live, then the John in you will be beheaded. In that state, your will operates in a new nature and quite naturally, without the need for any compulsion, speculation or self-suggestion, it remains focused on Tao by day and by night. Then you are in this world, **but** essentially no longer of this world.

He controls his vital energy until it is as docile as a new-born child.

Vital energy streams from the head sanctuary to all the personality's organs of action. Every action requires energy, which often needs to be in a much transformed state. And often, for one action to be performed, several different energy-vibrations have to be utilised at the same time. For instance, there are actions that simultaneously require the exertion of the intelligence — and hence mental energy — and of the feelings and will. Such actions are debilitating. They wreak havoc in the personality because they often attune the autonomic nervous system in such a way that deplorable deeds we loathe are nevertheless done by us. The energy we waste! The energy we simply throw away! We pay a high price for it, too, in the form of deteriorating health and, worse still, by remaining chained to the wheel.

However, if the John in you has been beheaded, and you have been born in Jesus the Lord, so that you begin to live according to a new soul-state, you will have control of your vital energy. The sources and channels of your vital energy will become as docile as a new born child. 'How is that possible?' you might ask. 'Surely, even with the best of intentions, mistakes will be made occasionally, and hence energy will be wasted?' But no. To the extent to which the transformation we are describing has been realised, energy will not be wasted any longer. Energy wastage might well be

possible in theory, but the candidate would simply not permit it. To understand why, we need to refer to the third verse of chapter 10:

He will make his inner vision clear and pure and so be freed from moral failings.

We are meant to think, here, of the seven cerebral cavities, which are to become perfect mirrors of the consciousness and its inner vision. The more these mirrors are cleaned and polished by the new soul-state, the more they will clarify and purify the inner vision. There are a few observations we would like to make about this. Perhaps you know about these mirrors, especially if you have some occult knowledge and have attempted occult training in the past. But you should realise that any occult training of these seven mirrors is a surrogate and a serious abuse of your personality-state. It is possible through occult training to extend the range of your ordinary inner vision to all the planes of the reflection sphere. But what do you gain from it? Does it make you any happier? Does it liberate you, even for one single second?

The transfigurist does not train himself, and yet he still possesses seven pure, shining mirrors of inner vision. He does nothing to achieve them; he does not exert his will in that direction, and yet he receives them, purely and solely because he has given himself away in self-surrender to the Other One. The seven mirrors of inner vision are a faculty, an organ of the new human being. With their help, the candidate will be able to free himself of all moral failings.

By moral behaviour we mean everything a dialectical person does in terms of thinking, feeling and doing. The moral state of the dialectical human being is always seriously impaired. Yours is, too. Why is that? Are you so bad? Are you doing it on purpose? No, it is just that you lack the right per-

spective, you lack self-knowledge, and you need to maintain yourself in this world, which in turn means that you have to speculate. You are feeling your way in the darkness, and the consequence is that your morality is wounded and impaired. But when the new mirrors of inner vision are clear and shining, you will be freed of moral shortcomings, because you will choose your way correctly; it will no longer be possible for you to go astray, for you will have but one desire: to reach your true home.

He will rule the kingdom with love, and be capable of being wholly wu wei.

Those who are following the path of the rose, by abiding in the Other One, know that the first steps in the new life must still be taken in the old personality-being and that transfiguration has only just begun. That is why the Rosicrucians of former times said that once the candidate had received Jesus the Lord he would have to be submerged in Him. Knowing and professing this without any reservation, the candidate rules his kingdom with love and does not sigh, as people so often do, 'Oh, if only I were out of all this; if only I had finished with it all'. We are so often overcome by melancholy, by the feeling that everything is too much, because the damage done through stupidity is so overwhelming. But if you have to row across a raging torrent with only a plank to help you instead of an oar, you will not complain, but be glad you have the plank. You will use it with love, and it will bring you to the other shore.

So the transfigurist does not say, 'I can't', he does not talk about his 'weak body', but without conceit he joyfully exclaims, 'I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength'. He will be capable of being wholly wu wei. Wu wei means: 'Not I, but the Christ in me. Not I, but the King-

dom in me'. He who, like John, has laid his head on the block and is allowing the Other One to rule, can therefore be wholly wu wei.

10-II

The sage abides in perfect tranquillity

Chapter ten of the Tao Te Ching continues as follows:

He abides in perfect tranquillity, while the doors go on opening and closing.

Since his light penetrates everywhere, he can be as if ignorant.

We have seen that the dialectical will is divided and cannot possibly be constantly focused on one purpose if that purpose is essentially foreign to dialectical nature. That is why the will of the striving person of this nature always displays a wide variety of aspects: at one moment it will be aimed towards the new life, and at the next it will be focused on banalities; at the next moment it will be directed towards goodness, and the next towards evil. The will oscillates to and fro between these four aspects until the time comes when the candidate sets foot on the path in self-surrender, in wu wei, by not doing.

A new soul-state which belongs to and lives in a new electromagnetic field then develops, and also a new will which, because of its nature, is capable of remaining focused on Tao without the need to force it in any way. In fact, such a will would be forcing itself if it were not to aim at Tao. As a result of this new state, one's vital energy becomes docile and one becomes free of moral shortcomings, because the sevenfold inner vision has become clear and pure. The faculty of inner vision is related to the top or nucleus of the new soul-state. It is sensorially one with the new life and is capable of seeing on

that level. When it is there, the moral failings and conflicts inherent in dialectical nature become things of the past.

Even though transfiguration has scarcely begun and the person in this state still has available and must use his old material vehicle, he will nevertheless be able to rule the far from perfect kingdom with love, and walk the path of renewal in wu wei — which means: not I-centrally — guided by the new soul-state.

It would be good to clarify what we mean by this 'not I-central' state. The consciousness ordinary human beings know and possess is by nature egocentric. It has a focus and is therefore an ego in the absolute sense. It is not possible for such a human being to imagine another kind of consciousness, transcending the human.

Even so, another kind of consciousness really is possible. The consciousness of what we call the 'new human being' is constituted quite differently. It is not I-central. It is fundamentally I-less, not in a moral or ethical sense, but absolutely, for it does not possess a focus. It could be described as being seated in the microcosm as a whole, a consciousness which is microcosmically all-embracing.

This microcosmic consciousness develops further, expanding into a cosmically conscious state, and then into a macro-cosmically conscious state. One can best describe this state as consciousness in the self, and simultaneously consciousness in all other things, in all other beings. Scientifically, then, it is clear that all separateness must eventually fall away.

Wu wei, or not-doing, is intended to be a dialectical approximation of the new, divine consciousness. This approximation is advised in order to reduce as much as possible the enormous difference between the two expressions of consciousness, and in this way to create a basis for the unfoldment of

the new consciousness-powers potentially present in the rose of the heart. So the I becomes desireless, and does not wish to be attached to anything. The I tries to neutralise itself as much as possible so that the Other One can gain the upper hand. Gladly entering into this process of approximation, we experience a stream of merciful gnostic radiations that convey the whole ego into a state of absolute tranquillity. In this way, we *abide in perfect tranquillity, while the doors go on opening and closing.*

What does the ordinary human being know of tranquillity? In waking life there are a few isolated moments at most, and those usually come about by accident. Or there is the tranquillity of oblivion. After a tiring day before exhaustion descends upon you, you may sometimes enjoy a few hours of rest. But usually there are things in your life that spoil your tranquillity, things like unfinished work, conflicts, anxiety, worry and fear, physical problems and moral deficiencies. Also, you become increasingly restless the nearer you come to the limits of dialectics. This restlessness then becomes a fundamental part of you and, because of your state of alienation, you can no longer find rest anywhere. The stress-curve escalates daily. And in the end, as many pupils have often told us, 'The only time we experience rest is when we are with others in a temple of the Spiritual School, and we hear about the kingdom of the Father'.

What is rest? Have you ever wondered about that? It is surely something more than just the nightly sleep of your body, or your time off after a day's work or during the week-end or your annual holiday, or the freedom from mental activities modern society seems to think so desirable? And surely you don't equate it with the so-called rest that will ensue when your life's journey is over?

The rest meant by Lao Tzu is entirely an inner state, an

essential signature of the new human being, the peace that typifies the people of God. This state is present by day and by night; it is a constant condition.

Why are people restless? Because they belong to dialectical nature, which is governed by antitheses, by opposition. Physical rest does not take that restlessness away. That is why people are unable to be tranquil. True rest only comes when the new soul begins to take control in our lives. Then we enter a state of life which is not typified by strife but by tranquillity. And that tranquillity does not come only after perfection has been reached. It comes as soon as the first definitive link has been made with the inner kingdom, after the first self-surrender.

Just as the new will abides immovably in the Gnosis, so the candidate who has gained participation in the Grail abides in an atmosphere of perfect tranquillity. He is not perfect by any means, but he breathes in the Gnosis *while the doors go on opening and closing*. Such a person is taking leave of the nature of death and is on his way to the new life. He is a true emigrant. In that process, the doors of the past are closed one after the other, and the doors of renewal are gradually opened.

How? Does one need to make a tremendous effort to do or not to do certain things? No, *the sage abides in perfect tranquillity, while the doors go on opening and closing* with clock-like regularity.

Have you ever seen a statue of a Lohan? Such a statue breathes tranquillity; it is tranquillity. Tranquillity and this person are one. Tranquillity in the world of dialectics is at best a vacuum in turmoil, and generally means only that the body is at rest. The tranquillity of the advancing pupil is participation in the new life-field.

If his light penetrates everywhere, he can be as if ignorant.

On the face of it, these words are scarcely to be understood, but if one looks more deeply, they are so unbelievably beautiful, glorious, divine and magnificent that we are resolved to do our very best to help you understand them. These words have their funny side, too, because they turn all the values of this nature upside down.

The word 'ignorance' sounds derogatory to most people. People have to *know*. Everything must be known and understood, otherwise things will go wrong. That is the motive underlying all education. Someone may ask a pupil: 'Tell me, what is the School of the Rosycross?' The enquirer feels he is ignorant of what the School is. So the pupil brings him into contact with the School and the attempt is made to alleviate his ignorance as much as possible. And thus it may happen that the once 'ignorant' enquirer becomes a pupil and starts attending services and conferences. The School is constantly trying to supply enquirers and seekers with information about its task, and thus to relieve their ignorance somewhat — with varying results.

Is the pupil stupid, then? No, he has intelligence by the standards of this nature, and has had a reasonable education and so on, but the ignorance of the dialectical human being is fundamental. It can be lessened in many respects, but knowledge has its limits. That is why scientific research is constantly used to try and extend the limits of knowledge. There are many areas in which these efforts succeed, too, albeit slowly and imperfectly, since the knowledge gained in this way is often lost later on.

But there is a mystery underlying the work of our School because, even though appearances may seem to indicate the opposite, for we have no option but to approach you with

information to establish contact with you, it is not at all our aim to increase your knowledge. Remember the words of Ecclesiastes: 'He who increases knowledge, increases sorrow'. Now you will be saying, 'I see what you mean. I will be able to gain knowledge in quite another way if I follow the path.' But that is only partly true. Let us understand one another; if we do not, mistakes may arise.

We have told you about the seven cerebral cavities, the mirrors of the new soul-consciousness, of the inner vision which is clear and pure. These mirrors function automatically in the ordinary human being, and caricaturally in the trained occultist, who succeeds in bringing a degree of life — albeit utterly defective — to the cerebral cavity connected with the pineal gland. The normal person is dependent on the senses of ordinary nature and on the quality of the grey matter and the convolutions of the brain. His senses — the five known ones plus two more which are not yet fully active — are for him the seven mirrors with the aid of which he acquires knowledge and tries to retain it. Of all the knowledge gained in this way it can be said, 'He who increases knowledge, increases sorrow', or, 'The sum of all knowledge is that we know nothing'.

But could you say of a real sage, that 'he has increased sorrow and knows nothing'? Of course not, because his wisdom enables him to share in a great, glorious and imperishable value.

Scientific knowledge is external knowledge; it does not give access to the inner core of things. With this kind of knowledge, we certainly do try to grasp the essence of things, but we never quite succeed. Such knowledge is imperfect; it is not capable of being absolute, and that is why it causes suffering. Hypotheses must constantly be changed and, time and time again, it is necessary to start all over again from the beginning.

But such knowledge will never make us wise. To be wise means to know and understand totally, right to the deepest depths. The sage described by Lao Tzu is able to use the seven mirrors, the seven heads and eyes of the new soul-state. These seven mirrors can be focused on any chosen object so that in that same second one will know and experience it completely. So there are seven totally new and different senses and faculties, the intelligence organs of the new, true human being, the intelligence organs of the people of God.

Now, perhaps, we can understand these words: *If his light penetrates everywhere, he can be as if ignorant.* They refer to the displacement of the intelligence organs of ordinary nature and the development of the new intelligence organs. Initially, the School of the Rosycross appeals to your old intelligence organs, because it has to work for you and with you up to a certain point. You have no option but to approach the School with your ordinary intelligence faculties. But if you follow the transfiguristic path of self-surrender, you will need to become ignorant with respect to that knowledge, and you will develop a new cognitive faculty, the cognitive faculty of wisdom. Then the seven new candles will be lit. You will walk amid the seven golden candlesticks, holding the seven stars of the new intelligence organs in your right hand.

Then you will be able to write your letter of living wisdom to the community of Ephesia, to those who dwell on the border, and you will say to them, 'O seekers of the one knowledge, toiling that you may understand, come to the one life. Then your light will penetrate everywhere and, as regards everything else, you can be as if ignorant'.

10-iii
The mysterious virtue

We would now like to look at the last part of chapter ten of the Tao Te Ching:

He gives birth to things and nourishes them. He gives birth but does not possess. He increases and multiplies but does not expect reward. He rules but does not consider himself the master. That is what is called the mysterious virtue.

Our task now is to uncover what is meant by the *mysterious virtue* — an exceptionally accurate formulation of the state of being of the Taoist, the transfigurist.

We first need to consider what virtue is meant, and why it is called mysterious. The virtue referred to here is the ultimate state of liberation, of tranquillity, of not-being. What is mysterious is the way in which this liberation comes about, because it cannot be grasped by the dialectical understanding.

In our nature, the various stages of any person's development can be traced in detail, but the development of the transfigurist presents us with an enigma. The life of a mystic, who withdraws from the world to engage in a life of pious meditation, devotion and penance, is quite transparent. It is easy to describe his life and trace what has happened to him and why. The way an occultist's life unfolds, too, can easily be understood by anyone familiar with the occult mentality and practices. There is nothing mysterious about it. A person whose intellect has been trained, who goes to university and afterwards becomes a specialist in some subject or other, is a person whose life can be known and understood, regardless of

what specialism he has chosen. The course of such lives follows a programme, one could say.

The more successfully the programme is followed, the more eminent, famous and admired these persons become. They become historical figures, held up as examples to all. But their virtue cannot be called mysterious; it is a very open, very clear virtue, and its development has followed a clearly discernible programme: he started out like that — then he did this — and he became that. All quite clear.

But the development of the transfigurist cannot be traced. There are results that can be observed with remarkable clarity, but how they came about no one can say. The way a transfigurist's life develops is not apparent to the world.

An example can be found in the life of Jacob Boehme, who was a shoemaker. He cobbled shoes *and* he fathomed the divine All-Manifestation. His understanding of reality, of eternity, was so profound that all the professors in the world wouldn't be able to match him in a thousand years. Mysterious virtue, mysterious liberation, mysterious even for Jacob Boehme himself!

That is the signature. Listen to Paul's words: 'Whether it is outside the body or inside the body, I know not, but it is there'. The mysterious virtue!

Have such entities cultivated virtue, or studied it? No one knows! They do not even know themselves. They are ignorant. But their light penetrates everywhere, and that is why they can remain ignorant. Virtue is present, its attributes are there, but the way they came to be there is a great and glorious miracle! Not one centimetre of that way can be 'willed', 'mysticised', 'cultivated' or 'studied'. One must even remain quite 'ignorant' of it.

Is it not wrong, then, to speak about that way? Well, there is just one, very positive thing that can be shown you of the

path, and that is its beginning. The path — Tao — must begin with the self-surrender of the dialectical ego to the Kingdom within you. And if the ego has given itself away like this, what more can it do? It is no longer there!

If such a beginning is made, just watch what happens next! Time and time again, you will see virtue descending on the path in all its wondrous glory, and it will be just as mysterious to you as to everyone else. And it will remain mysterious, even when you continue along that path. For the mysterious virtue means becoming one with the other nature, with another soul-state, and what do you know of that?

High up a mountain you discover a hidden spring. You strike a rock and the spring gushes open. Can you tell in advance what course the stream of water will take as it seeks and finds its way down the mountainside? Can you tell how it will reach the sea?

You are living your everyday life and you have your place in it, in an office perhaps, or a shop, or a house or somewhere like that. Many people know you — where you live — what you are worth — what you do for a living. They know your abilities and shortcomings, and any limitations you may have. Some of them may have known you from your schooldays, as a child of average ability. You didn't know much then, and you still don't, and you don't feel you are in any way special.

Now, driven by inner need, and at the suggestion of the School of the Rosycross, you are on the point of making the glorious, Johannine sacrifice of self. That mediocre I of yours, that many people know so well, brings you to the spirit in the valley, and in total surrender you empty yourself for the Other One who must grow in you.

Suppose you really do that. Suppose Mr or Mrs Average

actually does that. What happens then? You strike the rock and a stream of living water comes gushing out and flows on its way.

And what then? In the eyes of the world, in the eyes of those who know you so well, you will initially remain the same Mr or Mrs Average. You go on doing your job, whatever it may be, and you go on living in the same place, in the same street. But you are no longer there. You have gone, like the central character in Gustav Meyrink's novel, *The White Dominican*.

A miracle now unfolds: the stream of the new soul-state, whose outpouring you made possible by your total self-sacrifice, now flows along a certain course, carrying with it the 'house you left behind'. The result is the manifestation of remarkable new accents and facts in your life, much to the amazement of all those who knew you so well: 'How is it possible?' they ask themselves. Mysterious virtue!

The being who was formerly you smiles and is silent; he continues with his everyday work for as long as is necessary, typing invoices, selling merchandise, meeting clients, or anything else that might be required. And all the while the Other One is giving birth to things in you and nourishing them.

How is that possible? It is possible because, as the great sacrifice of self unfolds, it turns out that your animal I, your biological ego, is really a fragment, a scrap, a spark, a tiny ray of the great Being of the Heart or, at least, is connected with it. This gives rise to a certain sensation, a certain experience; it is as if the old I is observing the whole new development from a corner, from a distance, as an interested party who nonetheless exerts no influence on the proceedings. It is as if the Other One in you speaks to you from time to time as an

exalted relative: 'See, brother, see, sister, everything is as it should be; things are being done as they have to be done', and, filled with devotion, you bow your head.

The signature of the new consciousness is a totally different awareness. It is not an I-consciousness but a collective consciousness. It is the Other One who gives birth to things in you and nourishes them. He it is who gives birth to them, so, having reached that state, how could you ever claim possession of them for yourself?

The Other One in you is the builder of the new soul-house, and you watch what is going on, you experience it, but you do not possess it. The Other One in you increases and multiplies virtue. The stream widens and deepens. Though you share in the results of the work, you do not do any of it yourself, so how could you ever wish for any reward? What reward would you want? What reward would still be possible?

The pace of development gathers momentum, virtue increases, and the being in which you formerly stood as lord and master towers miles above the former Mr or Mrs Average. The Other One rules: 'Not I, but Christ in me'. It would be absurd, wouldn't it, if you were to see yourself as master? Never in a million years would you say: 'I am the initiate, I am the master, I am the envoy of the Brotherhood, I have the mandate. Look at me, I am the man'.

There is one signature by which you can always recognise people who want to infiltrate your ranks but do not want to follow the path of the mysterious virtue: they always place the dialectical ego in the forefront, they always bring their I into things. They are forever fighting a battle, just as battles are always fought in this nature.

However, if you allow the I to fall silent and follow the path of wisdom, there will be a growth, a development, a going forward from power to power and from glory to glory which

no child of man will ever be able to stop. Then, whatever catastrophes happen in this world, you will rise above them, and above the orgy of conflict that characterises this nature. The Kingdom of God within you will open and will gain dominion over you. Yet its dominion will be imperceptible; no compulsion will be exerted, because it responds to an totally different fundamental principle and is of an entirely other nature.

In ordinary nature one ego rules over another, and there is compulsion ... indeed, there must be! In the new life-field, such a thing is impossible! So one day, it will be possible to say:

Who are you, brother?

Who are you, sister?

We are no one!

We have departed for ever; we are dead and we live. And we behold the great and glorious miracle, the miracle people call the mysterious virtue.

The thirty spokes of a wheel unite around the hub, but only because of its empty space is it of use.

The vase has been moulded from clay, but only because of its empty space is it of use.

Doors and windows are made for the benefit of the house under construction, but only because of their empty space are they of use.

Therefore: being — that which is material — has its merits, but true usefulness depends on not-being, on that which is immaterial.

Tao Te Ching chapter 11

11

There is no empty space

Chapter eleven of the Tao Te Ching draws attention to some things it is very important to know about. It deals primarily with what we generally think of as 'empty' space. It talks of a wheel, a vase and a house, all of which, it says, are only useful because of the empty space they contain. Our thoughts are spontaneously drawn to the tomb of Christian Rosycross. Several maxims are engraved on the tombstone, one of which says, 'There is no empty space'. Naturally, Lao Tzu came to the same conclusion, because what is really empty cannot be useful.

There is a manifestation known to us as the universe of death. Its background, which is invisible to human beings, is more important than its visible aspects. The immaterial, invisible side of dialectical nature determines its material, visible side. The visible aspects have a function and a purpose; these are to be explained from the invisible side of things. If one examines the functions and aims of things in the world of dialectics and discovers that everything is trouble and sorrow, one is bound to lose all respect for the 'empty space', the invisible background underlying all these things and phenomena, because it is that invisible side of things which has determined the visible.

The aeons and archons, and all the forces seething in the 'empty' space, the invisible side of the nature of death, know that the cause can always be deduced from the results. That is why they do their best to disguise their true functions and aims. That is why the whole of dialectics operates in such a way as to conceal the real character of the nature of death. But

these efforts are only partly successful, because all phenomena must invariably reveal their true nature in the end.

So isn't the masquerade rather futile? No, for by the time the true nature of things comes to light, it is generally too late to take adequate protective measures. The world is full of churches and places of worship whose apparent aim is to meet the metaphysical needs of humankind. But their real aim and function is to maintain this world as it is, and to keep from humankind any knowledge of the true character of the nature of death. If a person devotes himself magnetically and attunes his whole being to the institution that is promising him salvation, he will be demagnetised as far as any truly liberating, gnostic magnetic processes are concerned, and his system will no longer be capable of benefiting from them. So you can see how extremely important it is to study the empty spaces of the nature of death, for there lie the dangers; there lie the causes.

That is why the present-day Spiritual School never stops trying to unmask the invisible for you, the invisible that becomes visible in its phenomena. The cloying masks of the reflection sphere are torn aside. The contents of that space which, to us, is empty, are uncovered. And then you know what to think of them, and you know what conclusions are justified.

Every human being stands at the centre of a wheel. Every microcosm and every mortal soul stands at the centre of an All-Manifestation. The sun sends its rays to you; all the heavenly bodies send their rays to you. So you are standing at the centre of a wheel of fiery rays, and all of them are converging on you: *The thirty spokes of a wheel unite around the hub.*

The wheel is the astral light that drives you. You are the

hub of the wheel, because you are the focus on which the rays converge. Lao Tzu says there are thirty of them because thirty primary spokes or rays of the great fire-wheel are often alluded to in the Universal Doctrine. There are three major currents of astral fire, each of which contains a number of lines of force. These thirty rays do not originate from the visible universe, but from the invisible, the void, the empty space. The astral fire is invisible.

These rays or channels gather together all the forces and possibilities present throughout the space of the fiery wheel and drive them towards the hub. The wheel rotates around the hub, and the hub carries the wagon, the existence. This existence has a certain purpose, which derives its use or uselessness from the empty space, from the source of energy. That energy-source determines the quality, capacity and potency of the phenomena made visible by it.

Having made this point, Lao Tzu goes into more detail. He says: 'Think of the vase'. We have come to know this vase as the holy grail, the great fountain of the heart. In this grail cup a principle is hidden: the rose of the heart. But at the same time, the grail cup represents the whole heart sanctuary, which has such an important role to play in the grail process.

No one could deny that the heart sanctuary is kneaded from 'clay', from the substance of nature. It can only be of use to the pupil if he fills the empty space in the vase from the empty, invisible space of the Gnosis, if he fills the vase with the living water of the fiery wheel of salvation. And this in turn can only happen if the heart has been purified.

People are constantly trying to build, develop and equip their dwellings — their personalities — in every possible way. They are constantly preoccupied with the state of the windows and doors, which provide them with a view, and a way in and out. So now you need to ask yourself whether or not the

doors and windows of the house you are building face in the direction of the empty space of the Gnosis. In which fire-wheel are you standing? The wheel in which you are standing determines what function you can fulfil. What kind of usefulness does your house offer: is it useful to the nature of death, or to the nature of life?

You are the hub on which the thirty spokes converge; they are like thirty rivers, fed by countless streams from the empty space. But in which empty space are you standing?

You are standing in two spaces: the first is that of time and space; the second is that of eternity, of omnipresence. So, in an abstract sense, it is as if you can see two wheels of fire spinning round you. Towards which wheel do your windows face? Towards which fire do your doors open? Which wheel generated the plan you are following to build your house? Do you understand now that the real usefulness of what *is* depends on what *is not*? There is something you are not, and there is something you are, and what you are not you will have to become.

You are being something, you are manifesting something, throughout every second of your life. And what you manifest determines the immaterial sphere, the invisible space through which you live. So as soon as you look at the real results of your life, you will know which of the two fiery wheels revolving round you is the guiding factor in your life. The modern Spiritual School is the field in which you are taught and helped to restore the vase of the heart, the Grail from which all things must arise, to its proper use, and to build the house of renewal in the right way.

We want to bring these things close, very close to you. So we ask you to think of the carpet that you see on the floor in front of the place of service in our temple. You, as a pupil of the

Spiritual School, are the goal of the Spiritual School. The School's purpose is to enable you to reach the goal, so you are the pivot around which the wheel turns. So go and stand on the carpet for a moment. What do you see now? What do you experience now? You are standing at the centre of a circle, in a fiery wheel. Countless forces are converging on you. Like rivers welling up from the invisible, the living waters flood over you. The spokes of the wheel unite around you:

The thirty spokes of the wheel unite around the hub, but only because of its empty space is it of use.

You are also standing in a triangle. The thirty spokes of the wheel are now manifested in three main currents, seeking to fill the vase, the grail cup of the heart, to the brim with living water:

The vase has been moulded from clay, but only because of its empty space is it of use.

Finally you see you are standing in a square. On that square you must build your house, your new home, well-provided with doors and windows for transfigured souls:

Doors and windows are made for the benefit of the house under construction, but only because of their empty space are they of use.

Thus, out of the evangelical wisdom of Lao Tzu, which is thousands of years old, we can see the carpet of the present-day Spiritual School arising. Go and stand on that carpet, brother, sister, and it will guide you to the lands of eternal freedom. He who can understand, let him understand.

The five colours blind the eye, the five tones deafen the ear, the five flavours dull the taste.

*Frenzied rides and hunts lead the human heart astray.
Goods hard to come by induce man to pernicious deeds.*

Hence, the sage is guided by his inner being and not by his eyes.

He rejects everything coming from outside and longs for what is within.

Tao Te Ching chapter 12

The five colours blind the eye, the five tones deafen the ear, the five flavours dull the taste.

*Frenzied rides and hunts lead the human heart astray.
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Hence, the sage is guided by his inner being and not by his eyes.

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Tao Te Ching chapter 12

Sight, hearing, taste

The ancients distinguished five colours, five notes and five flavours. We identify seven colours, notes and flavours, and there are other people who perceive more or less than seven. So it is useful to understand how the faculties of sight, hearing and taste function. One important point is that the eye reacts primarily to astral forces, the sense of hearing to etheric forces, and the sense of taste to the combined effects of these astral and etheric forces.

This combination of effects in fact forms a building material consisting of astral and etheric energy-substance. When this building substance is increased in density and applied in a focused way, it differentiates into three aspects or elements, which we could call air, water and earth. These three aspects correspond to our respiration field, which is the atmosphere in which we live; our vital fluids such as the blood and the nerve fluid, which is our water of life; and our form-manifestation made up of the solid parts of our personality.

The eye is astrally sensitive; the ear is etherically sensitive. These two together determine the sense of taste, the kinds of foods we like to eat and the kinds of foods we are able to digest. Thus it is through the sense of taste that our life-atmosphere, vital fluids and physical form are determined, in the same way as air, water and earth were formed from the primordial waters or primordial air-substance. Another way of explaining these things would be to say that the personality possesses an apparatus with which it attracts and converts astral and etheric forces, the result determining

the personality. The eyes, the sense of hearing and the sense of taste are important parts of that apparatus.

This is the subject of chapter twelve of the Tao Te Ching. The way we see is determined by the astral forces we are involved with. The way we hear is determined by the etheric forces attracted by the astral magnetic light, and the resulting sustenance determines our whole disposition. Therefore, since we live in the nature of death, a conflict is bound to arise:

*The five colours blind the eye;
the five notes deafen the ear;
the five flavours spoil the taste.*

Once set in motion at birth, the apparatus goes on functioning until we reach the grave. Its blinding, deafening and dulling effect means that the Kingdom of God within us is obstructed as regards its potential for development. Seeing, we are blind; hearing, we are deaf. And the result of this handicap is that our form-being is subject to corruption, to crystallisation.

Every human being knows this intuitively. People feel threatened in every respect by the great conflict. Their lives, their health, their strength, are constantly in danger. That is why they are always experimenting — to avert the danger! But all their struggling only makes the situation worse because, whatever they do, it is done on the basis of their blindness and deafness. Their desires and yearnings, motivated as they are by self-preservation, disorganise the heart sanctuary. They make things more and more difficult not only for themselves, but also for others:

Frenzied rides and hunts lead the human heart astray. Goods hard to come by induce man to pernicious deeds.

What this means will now be clear. Do not interpret it on a superficial level, but understand that every dialectical human being has no choice but to engage in those frenzied rides and hunts in the process of self-preservation.

Let us now go back to what we were saying about the senses of sight, hearing and taste.

Not for nothing is it said that the eye is the mirror of the soul. Your soul is the light of your life, and it rules you. It is the astral fire that gives you consciousness. The eye reflects your state of being. By looking into the mirror of the eyes we can distinguish souls of various types. Every state of mind, every state of soul, every astral stirring can be read in the eyes. It is generally accepted that what we call light is caused by etheric vibrations. These vibrations are said to stimulate the complex apparatus of the eye. Then, via the optic nerves, they are transmitted to the brain where the impression of 'light' is born.

This idea is not quite right, in our opinion. It would be more accurate to say that the vibrations of the seven-branched astral candelabrum which burns in the head sanctuary are transmitted to the eye via the optic thalami in tiny magnetic waves. It is these impulses that determine the nature of our 'seeing'. What we see will be in keeping with our magnetic status. Or what we expect to see will be in keeping with our magnetic status. If there is a conflict between what we see and what we expect to see, our system acts to restore equilibrium between the inner and the outer. Hence all the frenzied rides and hunts.

The ear, too, is marvellously constructed and as you know has three main parts: a part that receives sounds, a part that conducts them, and a part that perceives them. It is via these three parts that the whole world of sound is communicated to

us. Sound is caused by etheric waves, etheric vibrations. Every etheric vibration is picked up by the ear, regardless of whether or not one is deaf. In that sense, one always `hears', in just the same way as a blind person always `sees'. Deafness is a condition in which sounds caused by vibrations in the air can no longer be perceived. In the same way, blindness prevents external seeing but not the astral-magnetic process explained earlier.

There is a part of the ear called the cochlea, which contains an instrument that could be compared with a miniature piano. It has 24,000 strings, all within dimensions smaller than those of a tiny pea. All the etheric vibrations coming to us are intercepted by this instrument and heard in a certain sense, analysed, and then transmitted to the consciousness with the aid of minute electrical impulses.

Now what we want to show you is this: around you, you create a magnetic field. This field does not function automatically, but is consciously controlled. The instrument of control is the eye. By means of this magnetic field you attract ethers. And the sounds, the etheric currents, that consequently come to you are assimilated by the ear. The ear then sorts them so that they can then be applied wherever needed in the system. The nervous system has a part to play in this, and the sense of taste operates throughout as a combining factor.

In this way, the eye first constructs and maintains an astral sphere, on the basis of which etheric forces are attracted. These are perceived and classified. Then the substance is inhaled, used: the sense of taste comes into play.

When a person becomes a pupil of the Spiritual School, the key to the great transformation lies in his soul-state, in his magnetic state. That is why the third verse of chapter twelve

says: *Hence, the sage is guided by his inner being and not by his eyes.*

The chain of cause and effect we have been explaining must be broken. See the human being as he is: a mighty instrumentarium within, and a world without, both of which are in a state of total conflict, even though in many respects they originate from the same order. Hence the frenzied rides and hunts to achieve equilibrium. But it is precisely this that keeps the whole conflict going, rotating wildly all the time. So the fire-wheel of the dialectical astralis keeps on spinning. That is why the sage focuses his attention on the primordial atom, the rose of the heart, his innermost being. He rejects everything coming from outside and desires only what is within, in the kingdom of the heart, and by that he breaks the chain of cause and effect.

From that moment onwards a different magnetic fluid is drawn into his system. In this way, his eyes will no longer see conflict in the world, but will only perceive a world in which he does not belong. Then the frenzied hunts on the horizontal plane will come to an end. The ears will hear and utilise other etheric forces, and the sense of taste will receive other sustenance. Thus the five soul-fluids will make possible that great transformation known as 'the alchemical wedding of Christian Rosycross'.

Favour and disfavour are things of fear. The body becomes a source of great calamity.

Why do men say this of favour and disfavour? Favour is something inferior. When one has gained it, one is afraid. If one loses it, one is afraid. That is why it is said: Favour and disfavour are things of fear.

Why do men say: The body is a source of great calamity? I suffer great affliction because I have a body.

If I had reached the stage at which I had no body, what affliction would I suffer?

Therefore, whosoever considers it to be a difficult task to rule the kingdom, to him the kingdom can be entrusted. Whosoever rejects the thought of ruling the kingdom, to him the government of the kingdom can be assigned.

Tao Te Ching chapter 13

Favour and disfavour are things of fear

The lust for power and prestige is a powerful spur to action in our society. The urge to climb the social ladder, to achieve a high position in society, or in the worlds of art, science or religion, or in some group or movement, is innate in human beings of this nature order. They are conditioned to be like that from childhood on.

Those who have achieved high favour usually occupy precarious positions. They are honoured, but also envied. They are intrigued against and opposed, not openly, but mostly by the spreading of slanderous rumours, venomous whisperings. So, in by far the majority of cases, high favour is a thing of fear. People in high favour live in the grip of fear, fear of losing their position, fear of falling from grace. For how rapidly one can plunge from a position of favour to the utmost ignominy. That is why the character of such people so often deteriorates; they become callous, ruthless, hitting out indiscriminately and unfeelingly, hazarding everything to hold their own.

We do not know whether you have ever had the opportunity to study all this and examine it psychologically. It is appalling, primitive, bestial in the extreme. It is worth examining the type of personality that usually characterises people in managerial positions, people who belong to the upper middle classes. They have taken over the cultural habits of the patricians of former times and have cultivated them to perfection. They are expert at smiling, and being amusing and jovial towards their boss's every client, whilst behaving haughtily and barking like bulldogs at minor employees.

They live well in the better middle class houses. You will know them, whole neighbourhoods full of them, in their thousands. But alas, the poor things live in fear, even the government officials among them, for although their salaries and pensions are assured, they are desperately afraid of losing their positions of authority. Their positions are their kingdoms, in which they rule as kings. And they really do rule, even when they are at home, ostentation being the means by which they prove to themselves and others how lordly they are. In just the same way as countries go to war with each other, so this type of person will risk everything if necessary to defend his territory. Fear gives boldness and courage; fear makes heroes. Yes, *favour and disfavour are things of fear*. You know this.

It is said that the Tao Te Ching was written in 600 BC. In fact this gospel originated long before that, and the words: *favour and disfavour are things of fear*, were just as apt then as they are now. People have always known it. You know it, too, just as we do. So what more is there to be said on the subject? Well, in the first verse of chapter thirteen, the Tao Te Ching goes on to say: *the body becomes a source of great calamity*.

That is the point! And it doesn't mean merely that those who are in high favour and are afraid of losing their positions work hard, excessively hard, until in the end they become physically exhausted and can easily be pushed aside. If only that were all! No, such people unleash a calamity that affects their personality and microcosm in a fundamental way. Worry, fear and dread are the sisters of hate. The Universal Doctrine emphasises that fear and hate are essentially one. Anyone who fears, hates, and anyone who hates, fears. And his body, his entire existence, becomes one great calamity, not only for himself but for all humankind.

In Proverbs chapter 26 there are some words which can help us to understand these things: 'Like the glaze covering an earthen vessel are burning lips with an evil heart. He who hates, dissembles with his lips and harbours deceit in his heart. When he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart. Though his hatred be covered with guile, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly'.

If you understand what this means, you will know what Lao Tzu meant in chapter thirteen. The seven abominations in the heart relate to a condition affecting the personality in a fundamental way. The heart sanctuary is divided into seven ventricles. The Universal Doctrine speaks of the seven brains of the heart. The condition of these organs affects one's state of being in a fundamental way. Their condition determines one's mentality and one's whole approach to life. That is why it can be said that 'what the heart does not want cannot enter the head'.

Once fear and dread have given rise to hate, a sevenfold fire of great unholiness begins to burn in the heart, and radiates outward via the sternum and the eyes. It is a malignant fire that stirs up everything unholy in nature and spurs it to action. It is that fire which makes the struggle for existence so lethal in its effects. It pollutes the whole of our field of existence. Hate is the opposite pole of earthly love, and the behaviour of a person who hates in many ways resembles that of a person who loves.

Love in this world can be expressed in a philanthropic way, embracing a large group of people or even the whole of humankind. Or it may be focused on just one person. When someone loves, he is helpful and caring, and tries to be of service to the object of his love. But when hatred arises, the object of it becomes the focus of conscious and intelligent

attention, all of it aimed at finding ways to injure him and bring about his downfall. So someone who hates concentrates just as much as someone who loves on the object of his attention. Clearly, this can present a deadly danger. The people who strive from childhood on to obtain prestige and success in life are prime sources of the hate that poisons every society.

These people are in fact very sick. Their bodies have become afflictions to them, and it is clear why many people who understand something of these things can be heard to sigh: *I suffer great affliction just because I have a body, or, If I had no body, what affliction would I suffer?*

Because if one is an object of hatred — and hatred, like love, is always intensely focused — one will suffer serious affliction. And even if, ultimately, one comes out of it unscathed, it is nevertheless a situation requiring the most vigilant caution, because one risks being injured not merely in the social sense, but in a moral, fundamental sense.

Hate is an astral radiation which, if you react to it, for instance by being afraid, immediately catches hold of you and links you with the sewers of the reflection sphere. Hate is an extremely contagious, deadly fire. Because of what he is aiming to do, a person who hates is very cunning. His lips, burning with the fire of hatred, are like a potsherd glazed with silver. If you are not careful, the sharp potsherd will wound you. So you need to see through the silver glaze. A person who hates dissembles with his lips, speaking words of love, sympathy, devotion and concern, whilst inwardly he harbours deceit.

There is one frequently recurring ploy you should be particularly careful of, and that is the tactic of isolation. If an attempt is being made to destroy a pupil on the path and to break his connection with the Gnosis, one of the main tactics

will be to isolate him. Carefully chosen strategies will be employed to bring him into a state of worry, fear and dread. And you know that anyone in such a state feels he has been forsaken by everything and everyone. He is isolated, and then the main attack is launched: destruction, or at least an attempt at it.

Clearly, the lone individual will be seriously at risk, and such people often suffer injury. This point underlines the enormous importance of group unity and unification with the Living Body of the School. Not for nothing does the wise poet of Proverbs say of the person who hates, that 'though his hatred be covered with guile, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.' In the threefold field of grace of the modern Spiritual School, every vibration of hatred is uncovered, unmasked and neutralised. Anyone who participates in the Living Body of the Spiritual School and who helps to build up that Body in the proper way will be adequately protected and will also be helping to protect others. But do take care. 'Let him who stands see to it that he does not fall.' For this is how the process unfolds:

First of all, a person wants or tries to gain favour. He wants an important position or special concessions for his ego. Next, worry, fear and dread make their appearance, whether or not the person's efforts succeed. For it is not only favour that breeds fear, but also disfavour. So even if the person does not win the prestige he desires, the results will be the same, and they can be observed in any social group.

Then, thirdly, criticism comes to the surface — the kind of undermining and destructive criticism that tears the other person to rags.

And fourthly, the seven abominations are engendered in the heart, binding the whole microcosm to a state of utter

ruination that can ultimately lead to its being split like an atom — disintegrated, destroyed, by the hellish fire of hatred burning within it.

Now that we have said all this, the way is paved for you to understand the fifth verse of the thirteenth chapter. If you have realised the implications of what we have been explaining, you will be feeling the need for a definition of the right approach to life. Lao Tzu gives it to us.

Favour and disfavour are things of fear, and they destroy your personality's ability to fulfil its one true purpose. So you need to detach yourself from all I-central ambitions and desires. 'Do not seek after prominence, but associate with the lowly', says Paul (Romans 12:16). 'Wu wei', says Lao Tzu.

In the eyes of many, a lowly person is merely unintelligent, unsophisticated. But in reality, that isn't so. Every pupil needs to become proficient in the fivefold universal Gnosis. He needs to perfect and purify his whole approach to life, both inwardly and outwardly. He will then be very humble.

So do not seek favour; disclaim it. Then you cannot be touched by disfavour, or by feelings of having been humiliated. Many pupils keep on saying, 'I am not capable of anything; I cannot achieve anything; I am nothing; I am no use at all.' But it is only their fear of humiliation that makes them say that. Stop all that worrying. We are all children of God; the treasure is present in every single one of us. Devote yourself to liberating that treasure; then, with Him, you will be free, and it will be as if you were a king. Throw all your fear overboard. Every pupil is gifted and, potentially, already free. Be a genuine freemason.

Perhaps you regard it as an arduous task to rule the kingdom, to fit your own microcosmic kingdom for entry into the community of God. But it is precisely because of this aware-

ness of your fundamental unsuitability for any work in the service of the Brotherhood and your resulting unwillingness to take on any such mission, knowing human nature and its wild rides and hunts as you do, that you will be entrusted with the government of the kingdom.

It is known that all genuine servants of the Gnosis were quite astounded when they were called to their tasks. They certainly had no ambitions or plans in that direction. But that is why they were successful. To the last second, they experienced their missions as arduous tasks for which they believed themselves unfit, because of their imperfections. For there was not the slightest I-attachment to the task. Nevertheless, they cheerfully overcame all the obstacles. There could be no fear in them, because they did not desire favour. And therefore, neither could there be any disfavour.

Look at Tao and you do not see it; men call it colourless. Listen to Tao and you do not hear it; men call it soundless. Reach for Tao and you do not touch it; men call it immaterial.

There are no words to express this threefold enigma.

That is why they blend into one.

Tao's above is not in the light; its below is not in the dark.

Tao is eternal and cannot be defined by any name; it always returns to not-being.

Approach Tao and you do not see its beginning. Follow it and you do not see its end.

To be able to govern the present you must fathom the Tao of antiquity. To know the beginning of the Original means to hold the thread of Tao in both hands.

Tao Te Ching chapter 14

14-i

Look at Tao and you do not see it

The fourteenth chapter of the Tao Te Ching draws attention to a rather weak spot in the transfigurist's armour concerning his relationship with the ordinary researcher. 'Where is that world-order of yours?', people ask. 'Where is the Immovable Kingdom? Show me one glimpse of it and I shall accept it and bear witness to it.'

This is an age-old question. You can read it in the Confessions of Augustine, who asked it of the Manichean Brothers. Receiving no answer, he left their ranks, to which he had belonged as a preparatory pupil, and went on to become one of the pillars and founders of the Roman Catholic Church. Augustine, who is also highly regarded in protestant circles, was a failed pupil of the transfiguristic Spiritual School.

*Look at Tao and you do not see it; men call it colourless.
Listen to Tao and you do not hear it; men call it soundless.
Reach for Tao and you do not touch it; men call it immaterial.*

Entering the transfiguristic Spiritual School is an uncertain venture. Do we have anything concrete to offer you as a starting point? Lao Tzu admits it openly: in terms of the reality of ordinary nature, no such starting point exists. We, too, say that nothing concrete can be proved on the basis of that reality. If people speak to us about empirical research and scientific proof we fall silent. For the existence of the realm we want to enter, the kingdom of Tao, can never be proved in those terms.

It would be very helpful if you were to impress this fact clearly on your mind. By all means consider the possibility

that we might be taking you for a ride. We would not blame you if you were to leave our ranks on those grounds, just like Augustine, who left the Manicheans and later wrote about how foolish they were to believe and affirm what they were never once able to prove, and what they could only explain in a very abstract, philosophical way. It would be good, very good if you were able to understand these things. We cannot prove the essence and the reality of Tao any more than the Manicheans could. In the eyes of many pupils we often read amazement and the unspoken question: 'How do you know the things you talk about? Why don't *we* know them? Give us something concrete to go by.'

Recently we were asked outright, 'Give me something tangible to go on. Does your information come from some book I don't know about? What is it called? Where can I find it?' We replied that our teachings are never drawn from books, although we often refer to world literature to illustrate the points we want to make. It was a vague answer; we were well aware of that. We said that one can only get to the bottom of these things by following the path. The enquirer became rather reserved. We could understand that. He was full of questions and disbelief. We doubt whether he will follow the path.

It is much easier for the religious and occult groups of this nature. The reflection sphere provides them with a rich source of proof, on which they can draw to provide evidence of anything they like. The nature-aeons furnish those who try to maintain themselves in the reflection sphere with everything they need to gain credence. There Augustine was able to find plenty of what he wanted — proof of another kingdom — like picking flowers in a meadow. There is certainly no shortage of reflection sphere brotherhoods ready to help your I-being. You can meet such masters in any shape or form you wish.

All tastes are catered for. They will be only too pleased to appear before you.

The majority of them are certainly not deceiving you on purpose. On the contrary, they possess much that is good in the dialectical sense. They are trying to make this nature-order acceptable. So much effort they put into it, so much work! It is only that they are victims of circumstance, just like the others. They, too, have looked at Tao but not seen it; they, too, have listened but not heard, touched but not felt. Just like Augustine. How could they do anything else than deny its existence, just as he did? Could you be blamed if you denied it as well? Better a bird in the hand than ten in the bush. Countless reflection sphere figures, all of them splendid, exemplary types, are offering you their `other kingdom' — that exists, and whose existence can be proved. `So there's no need to believe what those Taoists or modern transfigurists say. With us, you can come and see it for yourself. We can put you in touch with a whole host of accomplished adepts. We challenge you to produce any transfigurist adept who could compare with them, just one!'

But there isn't one, not even one! We can only point to historical figures like Lao Tzu and many others from earlier or much later times. We can only say that these entities apparently did not die, because the microcosms with which they were connected cannot be found, either in the material sphere or in the reflection sphere.

`Well,' say those who want to oppose or deny, `isn't that proof enough that these entities never existed? Otherwise, surely all those distinguished adepts would know about them? So what you are saying must be pure fantasy.'

Yes, in dialectical terms, our case is weak in the extreme. Indeed, no words exist that could express the threefold enigma of Tao. That was true a hundred thousand years

before our era, and long before that. So let us not even try to define what cannot be defined; *they blend together into one.*

Somewhere in his writings, Lao Tzu says that defining the word 'Tao' is like striking a blow at nothingness. *Tao's above is not in the light; its below is not in the dark.* So Tao is shadowless. *Tao is eternal and cannot be defined by any name; it always returns to not-being,* to an absolute silence. It is the image of the imageless and the form of the formless. It is an absolute mystery. *Approach Tao and you do not see its beginning. Follow it and you do not see its end.*

Are these words enough to satisfy the modern person of the twentieth century? You approach and you see nothing. You listen and you hear nothing. You touch and you feel nothing! So if you want to belong to this Spiritual School, you will have to make the choice on your own, and it will be your own responsibility. In brief, it is like this: we are making a pilgrimage, a carefully planned, methodical journey. We no longer want to die, and neither do we want to live; we no longer wish to be found, anywhere. In other words, our destination lies neither in the reflection sphere, nor in the material sphere, but in 'the Eternal Nothingness', as it is called by the dialectical world and all its aeons and entities.

If you think all this over carefully, you will surely sense that behind this Spiritual School there is a tremendous power. In your own way, you will surely have experienced that power. Now the most one can say about this, is that it is the thread of Tao, the thread of Ariadne. How did we get hold of that thread? We will gladly tell you.

Is the thread we hold the beginning? No, for there is no beginning! You do not see its beginning and you do not see its end. Just like you, we too searched throughout dialectical nature. We were able to do that because we are *of* this nature.

With our I-being we were able to try and test everything this world had to offer. And lo and behold, everything was trouble and sorrow. We found out that this nature is a nature of death, and we had no desire to jubilate with the blessed before the throne; neither did we want to strive to make this accursed order acceptable in any way whatever. After years of trying and testing, we came to the conclusion that this could not be the true meaning of existence, and that it would not be good to go on having any part in deluding people in the nature of death.

One can draw such conclusions, but afterwards, one has to make a decision. The time must come when one has to 'govern one's present existence'. So we had no option but to fathom the Tao of antiquity, not with the aid of authorities, but objectively. Can such a thing be done? Yes, oh divine rapture, it can, although we soon found out that on all sides, everything was (and is) being done to hinder these discoveries. Many sources had been ruined; others were inaccessible, because they had been locked away in deep cellars beyond human reach. The rest, without exception, had been terribly mutilated.

We began with the few fragments of the holy language that had survived. From these, it became clear to us that there exists an original kingdom, another order of nature, a realm far beyond the highest nirvanic plane, a realm quite separate from the nature of death and its two spheres.

Once we had realised this, we set out to discover whether there had been people, or groups of people, who had striven to find that other realm, what their lives had been like, and what features distinguished them from others. We tried to find out whether such people, although widely separated from each other in space and time, had followed the same pathways. We discovered that the efforts of all these people and groups fol-

lowed the same basic pattern. We hoped to make contact with those who had gone before us, and in our efforts to do so we exhausted our entire arsenal of magical capabilities — but not one faint glimmer of the Brothers did we obtain in response.

Now we can laugh at all those attempts, for were we not seeking the image of the imageless, the form of the formless? If the Brothers had revealed themselves, they would have been dethroned. They would have been inhabitants of the reflection sphere. But they had disappeared forever; they had not died. Countless were the invitations we received during that period, invitations from numerous brotherhoods: 'Come and join us, and give up your useless efforts'.

Then we immersed ourselves in self-freemasonry, because: *he who knows the beginning of the Original has the thread of Tao in his hands.*

What is the beginning — not *of* the original, but what is the beginning that leads *to* the original, the beginning that all our predecessors had found? What else could it be but the practice of the fivefold universal Gnosis:

insight
yearning for salvation
self-surrender
the new way of life
and through it, fifthly,
revelation,
the thread of Tao.

Not a communication in the personal sense, but an electromagnetic connection with the Gnosis through which the soul, the wholly Other One, is awakened and becomes conscious. *That* is the thread of Tao. That is what it means to be linked with the chain of the Universal Brotherhood. Anyone who holds that thread in his hands will proceed from power to

LOOK AT TAO AND YOU DO NOT SEE IT

power and from glory to glory, and he will be following in the footsteps of those glorious, divine Brothers who have vanished from the earth.

Such a person will then begin to invite others to take hold of the same thread, to follow the same method, to build with him, according to the design of the original beginning. And together, all the companions who join in and take up the thread form a new brotherhood, a Living Body, and all bear the magnetic sign of the Son of Man on their foreheads.

The first gift of grace received in this state of being is the experience of being able to 'govern one's present existence'. Such people have been freed. They are strangers on earth, travelling to the true Fatherland. What is hidden to the wise and understanding of this world is revealed to the children of God.

He who knows the beginning of the Original has the thread of Tao in his hands.

14-11

The thread of Tao

As we said in the last chapter, the path to the original kingdom involves the application of the fivefold universal Gnosis. Those who are not yet walking this path and have therefore not yet found the thread of Tao often demonstrate moral disequilibrium and mood swings due to the turbulent sea of their emotions. One moment they are cheerful, the next very miserable. One moment they are very purposeful and positive, the next they are filled with despair and feel as though they might as well give up everything. One day they are strong, the next day quite the opposite. We are all familiar with these oscillations. They characterise dialectical nature.

You can read about this in the works of Chuang Tzu. They portray a pupil who is earnestly trying to make something of his life in the sense meant by our School. All day long he agonises over how to rid himself of what torments him and to cultivate what he loves, but success eludes him.

Lao Tzu says to him: 'You must purify yourself completely, but I see by your sadness that something is stopping you still.' He then advises: 'If the hindrances from outside become too great, you must not attempt to overcome them by fighting against them, but you should shut your mind to them. If they come from within, you must not try to repress them, but rather keep yourself out of the way of temptation. If even a master in Tao and virtue is incapable of resisting these two influences in combination, how much less can one who is striving after Tao.'

Happily, there are many pupils in the Spiritual School who are striving after the new life. They are trying to make the

essence of the Gnosis into a virtue in themselves. Through the intermediary of the Mystery School, such efforts always result in a link with Tao; something of the magnetic current of the Gnosis is imparted to the pupil's being. The pupil is brought close to the thread of Tao, and now he is advised to hold onto that thread, so that he may possess it.

Clearly, any pupil who attempts to do this will find himself in a difficult situation, in which the magnetic currents of two realms are being transmitted to him: the current of the new nature and the current of the old nature of death, by which the pupil lives. This results in tremendous inner conflicts. Great, unbridgeable antitheses are felt, and it cannot be otherwise. If someone is fundamentally of the darkness, and he is placed in the light, he will feel terrible. His own darkness will be revealed to him more than ever before. In addition, his microcosm, in which he is the current personality, has an immeasurably long past in the world of time and space, and his blood and his soul are conditioned by that past. So there is total equilibrium between the past and the present, and together they determine his future.

This natural process — and it is nothing more than that — conditions one's whole life and character, and is experienced by the pupil as darkness, as a great burden, as temptations that hinder his pupilship. He starts talking about the devil, or about being influenced by the reflection sphere and so on. But you need to realise that such influences are always side-effects, and never first causes. In reality, the dialectical influences affecting the personality from outside originate from the other parts of the microcosm, while the influences affecting the personality from within originate in the blood. These are the temptations from outside and from within.

Lao Tzu advises: 'Do not fight against these natural processes, and do not try to get the better of them in that way, for

THE THREAD OF TAO

you will never succeed.' As regards the influences from outside, he says, 'close your mind to them,' and as regards the influences from within, his advice is to 'keep yourself outwardly out of the way of temptation; do not act on these influences'.

You may not always be able to tell straight away whether an influence is coming from outside or from within; whether it originates in the magnetic sphere of your being or in the blood. But that won't matter. All you need to do is cultivate the following approach:

As soon as you notice that a particular influence is tending to disturb the steady unfoldment of your pupilship, divert your thoughts immediately, or try to dispel the influence by engaging in some intense activity. Do not give it a second's attention. If the influence arises from your blood, and all kinds of inclinations are stirring and boiling within you, just let your blood spend itself and avoid any outer action, whether in reality or in thought.

If you apply this twofold method, you will notice that your strength as a pupil will constantly grow, and that you can grasp the thread of Tao more and more firmly. If you fail — and there is no reason why you should — you will find you keep on having to start all over again from the beginning, which will weaken your body, increase your burden, and make your life hell.

So we hope you will take this ancient, classical advice to heart.

In antiquity the good philosophers who devoted themselves to Tao were slight, subtle, dark and penetrative. They were so deep that it cannot be understood.

But because it cannot be understood, I will try to give an impression of it.

They were circumspect, like one who wades across a stream in winter. They were watchful, like one who has cause to fear his neighbours. They were attentive, like a guest to his host. They disappeared, like ice when it melts. They were simple, like uncarved wood. They were empty, like a valley. They were like cloudy water.

Who can purify into peace the impurities of his heart? Who can be born gradually into Tao by the prolonged practice of calm? He who retains Tao does not wish to be full. Precisely because he is not full he is forever secure against change.

Tao Te Ching chapter 15

The five characteristics of good philosophers

A philosopher is a seeker of wisdom. In the original sense, a philosopher is someone who strives for divine wisdom. This divine wisdom is not knowledge in some specialised form. It is not some baffling, complicated system enciphered in an ancient, forgotten language, only accessible to the few who are conversant with its hieroglyphs, and who dole out tiny snippets of it, crumb by crumb, in modern literature. The conduct of academics whose job it is to analyse ancient manuscripts when they are discovered in archaeological excavations is a case in point.

But no, the wisdom which is Gnosis is omnipresent. It is an atmosphere incorporating numerous forces, elements and radiations. The divine wisdom is contained — in a fundamental sense — in a radiation-field. And anyone who lives in that radiation-field and possesses a living soul-principle draws from it not only life-force and the substance necessary for transfiguration, but also wisdom.

Wisdom is an aspect of the divine life-force, of the divine spirit of love. When it was said of Jesus the Lord that he grew in knowledge and wisdom, and in grace and favour with God and man, this is not a reference to his upbringing or education. It means that Jesus the Lord grew in the gnostic life-field, and that this brought about its maturation and perfection.

If you think about this, you will discover how much such a developmental process differs from development in the world of dialectics. The maturation and growth of a child into an adult does not involve the development of wisdom, but only

the development of the intellectual apparatus. People use all kinds of child-rearing techniques and educational methods, many of which are essential to give the human being at least a semblance of humanity.

It is only because of what people are made to learn at school, and all the things they learn from experience, that they are able to tolerate life. We do not want to devalue earthly knowledge by saying this, or to suggest it is not necessary, but only to compare it with Gnosis. Biologically speaking, the human being is utterly deficient. So he has no choice but to resort to theoretical education in order to seem something, and to survive the struggle for existence. Biologically speaking, the human system can take in nothing but solid food and the astral breath of death. And apart from perpetuating his bondage to nature, this breath gives him nothing at all. When a person becomes aware of this impasse and is profoundly conscious of a feeling of imprisonment, then he may become a philosopher in the ordinary sense, because he will start searching for the meaning of existence. On the basis of his dialectical state of being, he will start trying to penetrate right to the essence of things. But he will not succeed, because only one possibility is open to him, and that is to apply dialectical methods of investigation combined with experience.

Suppose there is a book in an ancient language. Some people find it and say to each other, 'This book is full of wisdom. We must find out what it says because we want to understand the meaning of existence.' But none of them know how to read the ancient language, so they elect one person to learn it so that he can tell the others what is in the book. The chosen person then stands before the others as a teacher, but not a teacher of wisdom, for he is only talking about something he has read in a book. That kind of knowledge is only an

intellectual definition of wisdom, but it can never be wisdom itself, because *the* wisdom is not to be found in a book.

Intellectual definitions of wisdom always tend to give rise to misunderstandings and differences of opinion, and hence to the variety of philosophical systems known today. Some originators of such systems meet with success; their works become fashionable, especially if they can be utilised in any educational system, and their career is made. But when you realise that divine wisdom cannot possibly be obtained in this manner, you will see how sad it is that all this intellectual effort is expended to no avail.

Divine wisdom cannot possibly be attained in this way. If you want wisdom, if you want genuine Gnosis, you will need to change direction entirely. You will need to start walking the path of rebirth, the path of transfiguration. This path involves a death — of the self — and a new birth — of the rose-nucleus within you. This brings with it a new biological state, and hence a new process of maturation, which makes it possible to 'grow in knowledge and wisdom'. And that is the new state of consciousness. With every breath of the new magnetic forces that can be retained in your system, you will be inhaling wisdom.

To possess the wisdom which is of God does not mean, as some people believe, to possess theoretical knowledge without having studied it. It means to inhale the Gnosis via a new biological state of being. As a result, this wisdom, which is one with the breath of life, pervades the entire being, imbuing it with new faculties.

Imagine how it would be if we said to you: 'We have a book here that contains all the information you need to know. You must read it. But unfortunately, the book is written in a dead language from the remote past. We are therefore

suggesting that you learn the language, and we reckon it will take you about three years.' No doubt you would start studying straight away.

But you can participate in the divine Gnosis with far less effort and in much less time. If only you are willing to walk the rose-path in complete surrender, it will lead to your growing in knowledge and wisdom, and in grace and favour with God and man. And the result of your complete surrender will not be that you acquire knowledge you did not possess before, but that you make use of knowledge and abilities you already possess, and have possessed for a long time.

You possess the divine principle, the rosebud, in your heart. If you give yourself in complete surrender to that kingdom within you, you will gain five new attributes:

you will become slight,
subtle,
dark,
penetrative,
and deep.

In terms of dialectical nature you will become slight, insignificant. In terms of the new nature your sensitivity will become extremely subtle, because of the new soul-state developing within you. As regards dialectical nature you will become dark, inscrutable. As regards the new nature you will penetrate the unfathomable depths of the universal life and become immersed in the boundless ocean of the divine manifestation.

This new approach to life passes all mortal understanding. Nevertheless, you are given an image of it, and not a fantasy one, but an actual, concrete representation of what the new approach to life is like.

The person who walks this path and progresses from power to power is: *circumspect, like one who fords a stream in winter*. Modesty and circumspection come naturally to him, for is he not like a newborn child giving its first cry in the new life-state?

He is *on his guard, like one who fears his neighbours*; he is alert by day and by night, for, as a newborn child, he lies in the stable of the nature of death, and is Herod not lying in wait to kill the child? He is a stranger in a strange land, and he always needs to exercise the utmost caution to avoid being harmed in that land, to which he does not belong.

He is *attentive, like a guest to his host*; he is dedicated to the Spiritual School and its essence and always considerate towards everyone he meets.

He disappears, *like ice when it melts*; day by day, he is undergoing a process of constant change, a clearly demonstrable process of practical new life which involves the disappearance of his former character-type.

He is *simple, like uncarved wood*; simplicity is the distinguishing feature of his life, and ostentation is completely foreign to him.

He is *empty, like a valley*; he is free of earthly desires, for his heart sanctuary has been emptied of them.

To those who do not share his inner state, he is *like cloudy water*; he makes no attempt to display his true state of being, or to radiate his light just for the sake of it. Why should he cast roses before asses, or pearls before swine? So many people will consider him foolish, insignificant, inferior, ignorant, for, like cloudy water, they cannot fathom him at all.

It is very important for you to understand that this sevenfold approach to life can become your own in the fullest possible sense:

modest,
watchful of the nature of death,
dedicated to the Spiritual School and to humankind,
daily growing in grace and favour with God, and constantly
changing,
simple,
empty of earthly desires,
not interested in displaying your true state of being to
dialectical people.

As a result of this sevenfold approach to life, the five attributes
will develop:

slight,
subtle,
obscure,
penetrative,
and deep

The impurities of the heart

In this chapter we would like to look at the last part of chapter 15 of the Tao Te Ching.

Who can purify into peace the impurities of his heart? Who can be born gradually into Tao by a prolonged practice of calm?

He who retains Tao does not wish to be full. Precisely because he is not full he is forever secure against change.

Here are two very important questions, and they need to be answered in detail. The five aspects, the five states that determine and manifest the nature of the soul are:

the blood,
the endocrine fluid,
the consciousness fluid
the nerve fluid
the serpent-fire.

These are the five 'life-lights', or the five universal forces from which the soul arises and from which the consciousness is to be explained. These five soul-forces determine our sensory perception, and they combine to form one unit. However, one of the soul-lights plays a particularly prominent role, and that is the blood, which determines the other four. The quality of the blood is manifested in two distinct respiratory processes, one in the head sanctuary and one in the

heart sanctuary. The respiration which takes place via the brain's magnetic system is determined by the person's soul quality. The respiration which takes place via the heart sanctuary is the gateway to the soul. The heart respire via the ordinary breathing apparatus of the lungs, but also via the sternum, and the respiration of the sternum, too, functions magnetically.

So there are two magnetic respiratory systems, one which works via the brain, and one which functions via the sternum. In between the two is the ordinary respiratory system which operates via the nose and enables us to absorb forces from the atmosphere. For the sake of completeness, we should also mention that the whole body respire as a result of this twofold magnetic system, absorbing astral fluid via the liver and ethers via the spleen.

The brain's magnetic system functions automatically, although it can be influenced by the will. However, the modern Spiritual School advises strongly against this, because to try it would be to set foot on the slippery slope of occultism. Instead, the pupil is advised to influence the magnetic system of the sternum, not by means of the will, but with the boundless desire for salvation that has arisen in him as a result of insight and experience.

So now we can see the significance of the question: *Who can purify into peace the impurities of his heart?* All desires are radiated by the sternum, and all reactions to them are absorbed by the sternum. So the sternum is like an open book. Everything that enters your system in this way determines the nature and vibratory level of your blood. And the state of your blood at this moment regulates what is assimilated by the magnetic system of the brain, as well as the quality of the other life-lights. All this in turn causes the magnetic flames of desire to emanate from the sternum.

So now you can see why there are so many impurities in the heart sanctuary, and how they spread from there throughout the human system and out into the external environment. True peace, genuine tranquillity of the soul, is the distinguishing feature of the new human being, but it is impossible as long as the sternum is controlled by all those ordinary emotions that characterise the dialectical state of life. The fivefold soul of the dialectical human being is never at rest, because of its very nature. The fundamental restlessness of the dialectical universe, the hostility of nature, anxiety, worry and fear, joy and sorrow, the struggle for existence — these things race through the soul in quick succession; they constitute the nature of the soul. That is why the soul needs tranquillity; it needs equilibrium, stillness. Everyone yearns for these things, because tranquillity of soul is health-giving. The constant restlessness of the soul is the cause of illness and death, and of every regretted deed in our lives. He who finds tranquillity finds health.

Do you now understand why people talk about 'care of the soul', and why they have devised so many methods of soul-care? People will do anything and everything to attain inner peace, to forget about their troubles for a while, and when they can't find actual healing for their souls, because it is not to be had, they seek stimulants. 'Alas,' laments the soul, *who can be born gradually into Tao by a prolonged practice of calm?*

A temple service you find interesting is a stimulant for you, and you could call a sequence of such stimulants 'soul-care'. But *that* is not the kind of soul-care we want to give you! For that kind of soul-care will not lead to healing, but only to a temporary forgetting of your troubles, because the turbulent magnetic blaze of the sternum is a fact. After you have gone out of the temple and are left to yourself again, in the midst of

your ordinary interaction with other people, it will not be long before your state of being reasserts itself, and restlessness surges through your being with renewed vigour, setting you on fire with its tongues of flame. Oh, who can purify into peace the impurities of his heart? Anxiety, worry and fear are your companions, and Lao Tzu projects you right into the midst of your problems.

So it is not distractions you need, or other people to care for your soul. What you need is to become your own soul-guardian. You need to open your soul to the Gnosis. Now you can try to do this with your will, but that will be forcing things, which is no use at all. With your will, you can influence your sternum's magnetic radiation in an artificial way, momentarily, so that you can send out an artificial vibration to the Gnosis. However, the Gnosis is not able to respond to such artificial vibrations, and they always have a disharmonious effect. Moreover, the response that does come is always an imitation, as one soon discovers.

The way to empty your heart of impurities is by no longer desiring them, without any action of the will. This is only possible from experience, from the defeat of the soul, so that one is emptied of natural impulses whilst knowing that there is only one power that can comfort the soul. Then the rosebud sends out a call via the sternum, the call of yearning for salvation. And in response, a powerful current of the Gnosis surges into your being, and by it you are purified into peace, into stillness. Then the tranquillity of soul for which you yearn so much will become a reality, and the result will be a total purification of the blood. All the other life-lights will then be compelled to follow suit, and with this tranquillity of soul as a foundation, transfiguration will begin, and the golden wedding garment will be woven.

THE IMPURITIES OF THE HEART

In this way, peace descends on the child of man, the peace that comes from the Gnosis, and he knows the meaning of the words in Psalm 16, 'thou wilt not leave my soul in hell'. No harm can befall you. This process is the only real solution to your problems. Because of your experience, and your yearning for salvation, it will be impossible for your heart to be full of dialectical impurities or earthly desires. The current of the Gnosis will touch you, and in this way you will retain Tao and be born into omnipresence. It will not leave you, even in hell.

If, out of inner need, you distance yourself from the nature of death and focus your whole being on the Gnosis, the purity of your heart will always safeguard itself from change. You will live in perfect tranquillity of soul, whether in the temple or outside it, and you will enter the stillness, the silence, the great calm.

In the times drawing near you will need this state of being very much indeed if you want to avoid being drawn into the fierce turmoil of the nature of death. Only with tranquillity of soul will you be able to navigate the sea of life and reach your home in the land of the Father.

When the utmost emptiness has been reached, imperishable tranquillity is maintained.

All things are born together; I see them return again.

All things flower abundantly, then each of them returns to the source.

To return to the source is called being at peace. To be at peace is called returning to true, eternal life.

To return to life I call being everlasting.

To know what is everlasting is called being enlightened. Not to know what is everlasting is called bringing about one's own misery.

To know what is everlasting is to have a great soul. Having a great soul, one is just. Being just, one becomes a king. Being a king, one is heaven. Being heaven, one is Tao.

Being Tao, one is everlasting. Even though the body dies, there are no more perils to be feared.

Tao Te Ching chapter 16

The utmost emptiness

The state of utmost emptiness is the condition of the candidate who has cleansed his heart of all impurities. In other words, he has emptied the magnetic system of the sternum of desires, tensions and conflicts. Such a candidate has become desireless, empty, and in this condition he can sustain an unwavering tranquillity of soul. The equilibrium of his soul can no longer be disturbed. He is safeguarded forever against change, for he has attained true peace, as one of the characteristics of the people of God.

If the state of utmost emptiness has not yet been reached, times of soul-tranquillity will always alternate with moments and periods of soul-conflict, which prove that the magnetic system of the blood, and hence the heart and the soul-nucleus, is not yet completely pure. So one of the most important tasks for a pupil is to trace the inner causes of his soul-conflicts. These causes are always to be found in his own self. Never, under any circumstances, can they be caused by another person, or by something coming from outside oneself.

The fivefold soul-being is an organised whole that receives whatever is necessary for its maintenance in keeping with its nature. Whatever is drawn into one's being with the aid of the magnetic respiratory system is invoked by the being itself. In many pupils there is still too much of a tendency to want to 'serve two masters'; too much emphasis is placed on earthly things, which are still too often seen as necessary. There is still too much desire for things on the horizontal level, and too much acceptance of things. The result is that one goes on belonging to two worlds. On the one side there is that

something of the Gnosis which is active in you, and on the other side there are earthly things, which are given priority when they shouldn't be. This only intensifies the conflict with the Other One. In addition, it perpetuates one's susceptibility to the restlessness that characterises the whole of ordinary nature.

However, if you had reached the state of utmost emptiness, people in the world would of course still be able to attack and wound your body, but they could not touch your soul. The whole gamut of soul-conflicts could be going on around you to lead you astray, but you would no longer be tempted by them. Your entire soul-state would have entered the peace of the people of God and all your vital fluids would have become immune to variability. Your consciousness would perceive and experience everything, but the equilibrium of your soul could no longer be disturbed. That is how it ought to begin! Then any wounds people sought to inflict on you would simply rebound on them. You would enter the state which has been known throughout history as 'the heroism of the soul'. To be a hero in that sense does not mean to be courageous or unafraid of death, but to have entered the new state of being.

Imagine how it would be if someone you loved very much were to do something terrible to you, and that your soul were to react against it by entering into conflict. This would be proof of the existence in your soul of tendencies or causes that had allowed such a conflict to develop. But if you had reached the state of utmost emptiness you would, under the same circumstances, understand what caused the outer situation so fully that your mind, your will and your heart would no longer feel any urge to hit back. You would only observe the situation in the sense of 'being on your guard'. Your purity of heart would protect you absolutely, and your soul would be free.

The preceding Brotherhoods called those who had reached this state of utmost emptiness 'pure ones', and we hope you will now realise the full import of that expression. When one sees it being used, one can be sure one is dealing with transfigurists. This purity of the heart, this utmost emptiness, forms the foundation for the whole process of transfiguration, because it brings the soul-state into the spheres of that eternal peace which is of the Gnosis. Once you have entered the peace of the people of God, once you have been born into it, nothing can threaten you any longer, and from that moment onwards, the kingdom of God can be proclaimed within you, and that means: it can be realised within you.

At the moment, the kingdom of God is still being proclaimed *to* you, and you are standing at the gate, but as long as you do not go in through the gate, your soul-state will always be prone to variability. It is important to realise this, and that is why Lao Tzu reminds us that:

All things are born together; I see them return again. All things flower abundantly, then each of them returns to the source.

He is reminding us of the way things are in dialectical nature: everything comes and goes, and comes again, in an ever-recurring cycle of growing, blooming and fading. Dialectical things come to you from a certain point of departure, and then they leave you again, to return to that point of departure. The logical consequence of this fact is that you will not be able to free yourself of soul-conflicts and soul-turbulence. These, too, come and go, only to come again, until the soul becomes so tired of it that it becomes numb, and lapses into indifference, until the whole thing ends in sickness and death.

The nature of one's soul-conflicts may change in minor ways with the passing of the years — when one is young,

one does things in a different way than when one is old — but in essence, the predicament remains the same. If, with considerable trouble and pain, you succeed in struggling through some conflict situation and in driving its causes back to their source, the only result will be that the source will immediately start sending those same causes back to you again. That is the signature of the nature of death, and of everything that lives and moves within it. The ordinary human being can never free himself of it; his being is not safeguarded against variability and change. That is why he needs to return to his own source, which is the Adamic state. And it is not some part of him that must return, but his whole self. His entire microcosm must return to the Immovable Kingdom, the source of the beginning. Only when you return to that source will your soul be at peace, and only then will you rise above the interplay of changes. Your soul will transfigure; the new soul will be born. Soul-transfiguration is the first necessity, because life proceeds from the soul. That is why the Bible is so full of references to the salvation of the soul, and that is why Lao Tzu says:

To return to the source is called being at peace. To be at peace is called returning to true, eternal life.

To return to life I call being everlasting.

To know what is everlasting is called being enlightened. Not to know what is everlasting is called bringing about one's own misery.

No one can really understand what is revealed to him from the Universal Doctrine unless the Gnosis has touched him. If you have approached the School of the Rosycross out of a genuine inner need, longing for the Gnosis with all your heart, you

will have been moved by the current of the gnostic plenitude, which will have been drawn into your system via the magnetic respiration of the sternum. Such a touch enlightens one's understanding. An enlightened person is someone who lives in the touch of the Gnosis. He *knows*, because the nature of life imparts not only power, but also wisdom. As long as you have not been enlightened by the divine nature, you will go on bringing about your own misery.

That may sound harsh, but the truth of it is undeniable. Day and night, you will be forging a continuous chain of causes and effects amid the interplay of change. Hence the conclusion, a conclusion that reverberates like a Song of Songs, a cry of triumph: *To know what is everlasting is to have a great soul* — a new soul. The new, enlightened understanding is always proof of soul rebirth.

Having a great soul, one is just, not according to the law of this nature, which is subject to change, but according to the eternal, immutable, fundamental law. Thus, the transfiguration of the soul must be followed by a total, structural rebirth.

In this way, by *being just, one becomes a king*. One becomes a priest-king of the original realm; one enters the Mystery School.

Then, *being a king, one is heaven*, and the all, the totality of the divine nature, is realised, so that: *being heaven, one is Tao* — one becomes one with IT.

And *being Tao, one is everlasting* — one enters eternity. *Even though the body dies, there are no more perils to be feared*. The body is a phenomenon of the old life, to be laid aside when the right time comes.

This imperishable, incomparable salvation is made possible by the rebirth of the soul. That rebirth is the key to your eternal happiness.

In ancient times the only thing the people knew about their princes was that they existed.

Then came princes who were loved and praised by the people

Then came those who were feared by them.

Those who came thereafter were held in contempt by them.

He who does not trust others, will not receive the trust of others.

The ancients were slow and ponderous in their speech.

When they had accomplished their tasks and their labours had borne fruit, the people said: 'We live spontaneously.'

Tao Te Ching chapter 17

The people and their princes

When one looks at the seventeenth chapter of the Tao Te Ching, one immediately realises that when it uses the word 'princes', it means the spiritual leaders of humanity, at various levels of development. In ancient times, rulers were also religious leaders, or better still, spiritual leaders were also state rulers. A symbolic relic of that can be seen, for instance, in the English royal family, in which the monarch is also the head of the Church of England.

At the beginning of a new human epoch, a new day of manifestation, the remnant of fallen humanity is brought back into manifestation. The emptied, purified microcosms are brought out of the cosmic night into a new period of dialectical activity, in which they are again given the opportunity to surround a personality. When such a day of manifestation dawns, spiritual leaders are sent to humankind, whose task is to guide and impel it towards liberation. In these early stages, obviously, it is not possible for such leaders to be drawn from among the human beings manifesting on earth, because they are not yet sufficiently mature.

So in this tender stage of human development, members of the last and lowest link in the chain of preceding Brotherhoods emerged from the chain of immortal souls as princes and leaders. Having already attained liberation before the last cosmic night fell, there was a vast distance between these sublime princes and leaders and the young remnant of fallen humanity. Owing to this immense distance, direct contact with them was impossible, and the most that could be achieved was an impersonal link through which humanity's

sensory perception and dream-life could be influenced. At that stage, human entities were incapable of perceiving their spiritual leaders in person. Nevertheless, all were convinced of their presence because they experienced it inwardly. They experienced the gods. That is why the Tao Te Ching says: *In ancient times the only thing the people knew about their princes was that they existed.*

The second hierarchy of princes was drawn partly from the people itself, under very special conditions, for in the meantime, the racial body of young humankind had developed. Certain predisposed entities could now be overshadowed by the gods of the last link in the chain. Later, some gods were able to manifest themselves in a microcosm in an even more direct way, initially by supplanting a person's consciousness while he was in a temple, and subsequently by birth. In this way, a more direct and personal link between the spiritual princes and humankind became possible. This direct, personal connection was also necessary because man's inner vision was becoming increasingly dimmed as a result of his immersion in matter. This explains why the Tao Te Ching says: *then came princes who were loved and praised by the people.* The worship of the first phase was supplemented with the love and praise inspired by actually beholding the princes in person.

As the development of dialectical humanity progressed further, a third phase became necessary. The spiritual princes belonging to the last link in the chain could now withdraw because they had completed the work of laying down the path of magic and giving all the necessary teachings and instructions. At the same time, the human racial body and microcosmic state had matured sufficiently for a hierarchy of spiritual leaders to be recruited from among humankind itself for the first time in the history of the new humanity. Through this new human priesthood, at certain appropriate times, one of

the former spiritual princes would return to earth to sound the reveille and ensure that the proper contact was maintained for as long as possible.

This was extremely necessary, because the developing human I-centrality soon had a deteriorating effect. The new hierarchy of priestly princes, recruited from among humankind itself, disintegrated because of quarrels about power, and because of envy, jealousy and the whole range of human passions. And since this hierarchy had been trained in magic, and the racial body was still rather tenuous and not as dense as it is now, it was possible for magic practices to have far-reaching effects. Some displeased ruler's magical incantations could cause immediate death. Good and evil in their extreme forms were considerably intermingled, and thus the people had every reason to fear their princes. Hence the words: *Then came those who were feared by them.*

Lao Tzu scans the whole of human history extremely swiftly, because he is concerned not with the past, but with the present. Hence the brevity of the sentence he uses to describe the next phase in man's development. The time when rulers were also priests passed by, and spiritual standards continued to plummet. This was inevitable, because the densification of the racial body and the deterioration of the ruling priesthood naturally led to the breaking of the connection with the princes belonging to the last link in the chain. Seen from the spiritual point of view, there remained only the presence of the gnostic radiation-field and the Spiritual Schools, which took over the tasks of the decadent priesthood. These Spiritual Schools had to operate with the utmost caution because they were fiercely persecuted in all kinds of ways. That is why the next phase could only lead, firstly, to a degeneration of the priesthood into black magic practices, and secondly, to the development of theology, as

purely intellectual knowledge without any inner, priestly standing, rights or qualities.

In this way contempt came to the man of the masses, an ever-growing scorn. Love and adoration vanished, and so did fear. Priests and theologians were no longer taken seriously. Hence the words: *Those who came thereafter were held in contempt by them.*

The period we live in now is one in which the majority of human beings have completely lost any connection with the Gnosis. As humanity continued to crystallise and degenerate, such connections were betrayed and destroyed. The masses were hemmed in and indoctrinated by a sham spiritual life, which most people nowadays scorn and distrust completely.

In theological circles there is a certain amount of self-knowledge, and people are aware of achieving nothing and being ignorant, but even in their ignorance many theologians believe themselves to have been called to spiritual leadership. In addition, so much blood has been shed by their forefathers over the centuries, so much evil and cruelty perpetrated that, laden with this heritage as their foundation, like a mark engraved in their blood, they remain bound. Just think of the witch trials of a few hundred years ago; of the countless persecutions of the servants of Spiritual Schools like the Brotherhood of the Cathars. Think of Calvin, who instigated the persecution of Michel Servet. Millions have been massacred in our era, and this has resulted in an increasingly powerful blood-reaction of mass distrust and hatred. And you know the law: *The person who does not trust others, will not receive the trust of others.*

Of course, efforts are being made to develop the ecumenical movement, to form a kind of new 'spiritual international', but how can anything new in the sense of a restored link with

the Gnosis be realised on the basis of ignorance, combined with such a damaged condition and such a vast hereditary burden? The present-day priesthoods have long since lost their rights as first-born. Those rights were transferred to the Spiritual Schools many thousands of years ago, and they have had an ecumenical movement ever since that time. The theological ecumenical movement, on the other hand, only consists of a succession of congresses and strident publications, whereas it is clear that quite a different path ought to be followed. In this connection just look at the closing verses of chapter 17:

The ancients were slow and ponderous in their speech. When they had accomplished their tasks and their labours had borne fruit, the people said: 'We live spontaneously.'

Genuine workers in the vineyard of the light are slow and ponderous in their speech. This means that they only speak when it is really necessary, and never merely for effect. Their attention is focused on accomplishing their tasks and seeing that their labours bear fruit, so they do not suffer from verbal delirium, and see no point in saying anything merely for the sake of appearances, or to indulge in conjecture. For every worker and every pupil needs to demonstrate the facts in every aspect of their lives, both inner and outer. Only facts can really speak and testify. Only truth, only reality, is liberating. Only through the rebirth of the soul can one transcend the world of time and space.

After a great deal of effort, a working apparatus and a basic foundation of inner values have been realised. The ancient wisdom has been divested of its material veils, the connection with the princes of the last link in the chain has been restored, and the sevenfold Living Body has been made ready. So now we stand before the task of gathering in the harvest from all

the corners of the world. The forge has been built, the anvil is in position, the fire has been lit and is being roused to a fierce blaze. So now the hammer-blows must fall. A new priestly host must now prove itself.

Each member of it must personally demonstrate a new state of being, not with words, but with facts. That is the key which can break open humankind's present blood-state. People are drowning in distrust and contempt, born of a nameless woe. Do not come to them only with words; you will never succeed. Do not come to them with the ordinary methods, with pious, honeyed words, but go to them in your new soul-state.

And when, in this way, your tasks have been accomplished and your labours have borne fruit, the people who are ennobled to it will say: *We live spontaneously*. We are coming to you, we are with you, spontaneously, because we see the facts. We are coming because we cannot help it; we are inwardly moved to do so.' Then they will practise not-doing just as you do, and they will attain what you have attained. And that is the path in practice, in the living present; that is the prescription for liberation. It is the prescription of the ancients.

When Tao was neglected, humanism and justice appeared.

When acumen and shrewdness appeared, great hypocrisy developed.

When the family no longer lived in harmony, parental and filial love came into being.

When the provinces of the kingdom were in confusion, faithful subjects appeared.

Tao Te Ching chapter 18

*When Tao was neglected,
humanism and justice appeared*

If one has some knowledge of the Universal Doctrine, the reason for the confusion and degeneracy of humankind is certainly no mystery. When a new human epoch begins at the dawn of a new day of manifestation and all microcosms receive a wealth of new possibilities for resurrection, the opportunity for liberation is open to all. But that opportunity does not stay open indefinitely. Such a thing is simply impossible in a dialectical dispensation. That is why every day of manifestation follows a set pattern, beginning with a period of birth and growth, followed by a period of maturity, and ending with a period of dissolution and death. As this pattern unfolds, the racial body becomes increasingly dense, and a state of maximum separation is reached. As we explained in the last chapter, the Gnosis — Tao — comes to young humankind at the dawn of a cosmic day and remains with it for as long as possible, in an attempt to liberate as many microcosms as possible, as quickly as possible. And the harvest is indeed great, but for those who remain behind, the tragic moment of parting occurs. That moment now lies behind us and our fellow human beings. We belong to the residue, to those who, until now, did not want to follow the path of liberation.

At the time of that separation, one last remedy was entrusted to the Spiritual Schools of the sevenfold World Brotherhood. We prefer not to say any more about the tragic decline of the hierarchical priesthoods. But even with the greatest optimism, it could not be said that any more than a very small percentage of humankind was ready to

receive this help offered by the Spiritual Schools, because only a few were capable of showing even a glimmer of reaction to the magnetic radiations of the Gnosis. For the rest, after a period of 'neglecting Tao', came a total, fundamental rupture with Tao.

It would be understating the truth, though, if we were not to say that in the great majority of human beings there are still elements present that clearly show they are called to a better fate and a higher good. A neglected true-bred dog may look terrible, but you can still see its pedigree, its ancestry, and the same applies to humankind. The rose of the heart speaks within the human being, and its presence is evident, even though one may give expression to it only in a very negative and caricatural way. Humankind shows its 'pedigree', its royal descent.

But the tragedy of it all is shown clearly in an image Johann Valentin Andreae uses in his *Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross*. He shows humanity imprisoned in a dark dungeon, in which everyone is busy blaming everyone else for the darkness, their misery and their shackles. People quarrel and fight, but at the same time they are doing their best to restore order and improve things, both in theory and in practice. They do not succeed. Their efforts are ineffective, but at the same time very understandable. That is why Lao Tzu says, *when Tao was neglected, humanism and justice appeared*.

Did you know that the history of humanism as we know it today goes back four hundred years? In 1533 a congress on humanism was held in Geneva, in memory of the fact that there, four hundred years ago, Michel Servet was burnt at the stake at the instigation of Calvin. At the time, this led to a tremendous humanistic protest instigated by Castellio, and ever since then humanism has grown and set its mark on our

civilisation. Humanists give their utmost for their cause, and indeed, where would we be without humanism and human justice?

But if one considers humanity's hellish decline in the light of all these efforts, the extent of it becomes even more evident. We have had four hundred years of humanism, but we have also had four hundred years of suffering and misery — the most terrible wars and destruction, a frenzy of murder and slaughter, with a tiny sprinkling of humanism and justice to sweeten the brew of blood and tears. It seems that the human being has a dual nature. Potentially, he is a god, yet at the same time he is a devil. So the tangled, writhing tumult of human life in the dungeon goes on. What an awful predicament!

So is there any point in humanism? Should we stop being humanistic? Well, if the urge to love humanity is present within you, you can't — and you shouldn't — switch it off, but you should realise that the ordinary, humanistic methods of expressing that love will never be able to provide a final solution to human suffering.

What about justice, then? Shouldn't we strive for what is right? But what *is* right for the writhing, tangled mass of humanity in this dark dungeon? What is good for one can be vastly different from what is good for another and, all too often, those who campaign for some social improvement or other have their own vested interests at heart. Surely you have noticed how easy it is for people to become hypocrites in the name of justice? That is why Lao Tzu says, *when acumen and shrewdness appeared, great hypocrisy developed*.

You have interests on the horizontal level; you have your duties and your obligations, your concerns and your need to support yourself. As a result, you are bound to have

developed a certain measure of acumen and discernment. You use carefully planned tactics to achieve your aims, and one of those tactics will be to try to get justice on your side. But then it will not be for the sake of justice itself, but only to protect your own personal interests. And that is hypocrisy. All kinds of confusions arise, and situations become more and more complex. If one sees humankind's political struggles in the light of the Tao Te Ching, one is bound to feel revolted by them. In politics and economics people lie and deceive intentionally, and in the dungeon of our society, all we can do is watch while our leaders continue with their mutual backstabbing and back-biting. It can hardly be said that the great human family lives in harmony; far from it. It is a terrible situation.

But even in the face of all this, humankind does not deny its high origin. The great human family is not in harmony. You know that. You experience that. But still, *when the family no longer lived in harmony, parental and filial love came into being*. Like little islands in a raging sea, there are thousands of families in which all is peace and contentment. There are plenty of exceptions to this, of course, but even then, parental and filial love still exist. Is that kind of love wrong, then? Not at all! Let the peace of your family life and the love between parents and children be a comfort to you. It is perhaps your only point of rest amid the storm of life.

But do not overestimate the quality of all this, for does your heart beat equally lovingly for the family of your neighbour? Our homes are piled on top of each other and next to each other like bird-cages. In many cages there is a great deal of harmonious chirping. Nevertheless, all the inhabitants are party to the conflict in the dungeon. Sometimes, community leaders hold up the nobility of family life as the cork on which

our society floats. They are right, for it is a life jacket that saves us from drowning. But do not idealise it, for it is only a sad remnant, a faint glimmer of the original life with Tao.

As with the family, so it is with nations. Each nation is a family on a larger scale. There are lots of nations on earth, into which the original 'family' of humankind has been fragmented. There are all kinds of goings on in these families, and sometimes they fight with each other. But even so, in the lives of all those nation-families something of divine nature still survives — feelings of patriotism, for instance. Whether or not you, personally, have these feelings, and how you experience them, does not affect the point we are trying to make. We are only trying to show that such feelings are alive in every nation. No person on earth is totally unaffected by the psyche of the nation to which he belongs, because such effects are rooted in the blood. And we know to what results patriotic feelings can lead, even though they can be thought of as good qualities, as sparks of the original life.

So we can easily understand Lao Tzu when he says: *When the provinces of the kingdom were in confusion, faithful subjects appeared.* There is no need for us to illustrate this point. You can refer to your own experiences, and when you search your own heart, in the light of what is expected of you as a pupil of the Spiritual School, you will have to admit that there is a great deal left for you to do before you can say you have freed yourself from delusion.

For surely it is delusion to content yourself with caricatural reflections of the light? Surely it would be much better to seek the light itself? What you need, surely, is to return to Tao, while you still have the chance. You have heard the calling voice of the Spiritual School, and you have heard about what will serve your eternal peace. As you have responded to that call, what matters now is what you do about it!

It is staggering to think that the Tao Te Ching was brought to humanity at least six hundred years before Christ. And in our opinion, it is several thousand years older than that. In a way, then, we can hardly call ourselves pioneers. We are more like laggards! So, laggards that we are, let us go forward while there is still time. Let us leave the dungeon and enter into freedom, through soul-rebirth:

Being Tao, one is everlasting. Even though the body dies, there are no more perils to be feared.

Put away wisdom and abandon knowledge, then the people will be a hundred times happier.

Put away philanthropy and abandon justice, then the people will return to being loving parents and children.

Put away subterfuge and abandon acquisitiveness, then there will be no more thieves and robbers.

Renounce these things and never be content with outward appearances.

Instead, I will show you what you need to do. See yourself in your original simplicity and maintain your original purity. Have little egoism and few desires.

Tao Te Ching chapter 19

19-I

Abandon knowledge

With its few remaining shreds of the original life, humanity is lost in the dark dungeon of the nature of death, trying to make the best of things with philanthropy, justice, familial love and patriotism. Although these methods are ineffective in terms of the ultimate results, and can therefore never lead to a real solution, they must nevertheless be regarded as the only way for humanity to express its potential for goodness.

Tao was neglected — and we have looked at the various consequences, some of which you will have experienced for yourself. Our findings brought us to the conclusion that there is only one solution: to use the cords being let down for your sake into the pit of death, and, with their help, to follow the path of return. This path begins with the rebirth of the soul, which straight away admits the soul into a state of peace.

This path of return has various aspects, all of which you need to take into account. We have often mentioned the fivefold universal Gnosis, a process which corresponds with your vital fluids:

insight, which involves the blood;

yearning for salvation, which involves the hormonal fluids;

self-surrender, which involves the serpent-fire;

the new way of life, which involves the nerve-fluid;

the actual rebirth of the soul, which involves the astral fluid.

For many years, every effort has been made to give pupils of the School of the Rosycross sufficient insight into their condition. The same can be said about yearning for salvation.

When a person has some insight, he begins to yearn for the new life-field. For years we have been telling you almost daily that the self-surrender of the I, the I-less state, is the key to the new life-field. And you know that these three paths — insight, yearning for salvation and self-surrender — are connected with electromagnetic radiations which are present and can be experienced in the powerfield of the School.

After a number of years, a new electromagnetic force emerged in our powerfield, which caused us to speak about group unity and the new way of life. This is a force that works primarily on your heart, a force that awakens you to action, to outward proof of the pure state of your pupilship. This force generated an avalanche of changes and developments in our School, changes which, on the one hand, filled us with gratitude and joy, but on the other hand also brought sorrow, because the knife of purification and liberation had to be used with such relentless courage. One of our Temple Songs puts it this way:

*New attitude to life requires
wise and clear reflecting.
Those who depart for the new life
make a new beginning.
Day by day, come what may,
always I-denying;
with the group uniting.*

We made the preparations for the new beginning, and those who still cherished the I and its delusions and therefore stood in the way of the journey excluded themselves from the group.

For now, though, let us assume that you have started out on that journey by accepting the new approach to life; that you are willing to accept the consequences of making that

journey. Even then, there will still be various problems that arise, and they will have to be solved, for if we cannot solve our problems, our normal cheerfulness will give way to melancholy and fanaticism. What we mean is that, besides the broad directives regarding the path, which you know and accept, and besides a basic way of life in keeping with those directives, there are practical, day-to-day aspects of one's approach to life that have to be considered.

When you focus your attention on the aim of the School, you know what is expected of you. But during your everyday life you also have to contend with ordinary situations, with all their ups and downs, and you are often at your wits' end. In this way you make mistakes, and they often affect your fate in quite an undesirable way. That is why, in everyday situations, too, a pupil needs to adopt a carefully chosen approach to life. You may not take the attitude that: 'Ordinary life does not interest me. I have nothing to do with it. I am finished with it.'

It would be foolish to talk like that, because the fact that you are here in this earthly existence proves that life has not yet finished with you. That is why, whatever your circumstances, you should also choose what behaviour patterns you will follow when faced with situations on the horizontal plane. Lao Tzu tells you how to do that.

So, firstly, in ordinary life, you need to put away wisdom and abandon knowledge. You only need to radiate your soul-light. This means that if you approach your fellow human beings bursting with all the gnostic knowledge and wisdom you have acquired, they will find you insufferable. You will awaken feelings of hatred. You will arouse opposition. You will start a war. But you will do wonders with a little knowledge of human nature, a bit of understanding and some love, supported by the new light of the soul. In this way, you will make the

people around you happy. In such an atmosphere of harmony and happiness people will be more open than ever to your spiritual approach to life.

That is why Lao Tzu says: *Put away wisdom and abandon knowledge.* Behave as naturally as possible. *Then the people will be a hundred times happier.* Then you will be following the path of least resistance, and that is exactly what will enable you to dissolve all resistance.

This approach is also important when one is confronted with all the turmoil created by the human struggle to achieve justice and humanitarian values. There are countless movements trying to help humanity on the dialectical level by campaigning for certain legislations or providing humanitarian aid. Think of the many religious, humanitarian and political movements. The world is rife with their debates and publications. They have their publicity methods and their organisations. They call and beckon you from every point of the compass, all with their own points of view, and all with the good intention of transforming the chaos of the dungeon into order, and if possible, divine order.

Do not belittle these people. And do not attack them, either. Do not try to impose your point of view on them. View their efforts with great respect, for they are doing what they can. Only, do not join in the controversy. Do not allow yourself to be drawn into it. And whilst you should not expect anything lasting from such efforts, you should remain ready to respond to the needs of the moment. If there is any group that can have an influence on the world situation it is a gnostic group, because of its radiation-field. If the Spiritual School frees itself as a group from this tremendous worldwide turmoil, then it will make a significant contribution towards the ultimate restoration of the unity of the great human family. Then humanitarian efforts on the horizontal level will be replaced

by reality. Then we will hasten the coming of the period known as the millennium.

This process must be carried out by the Spiritual Schools of the sevenfold World Brotherhood. That is why Lao Tzu said:

Put away philanthropy and abandon justice, then the people will return to love.

This development is only just beginning, but if you are willing to participate, you will discover how important all this will become. We have been talking about the social paragraph, which concerns the pupil's relationship to society, and we have discussed his relationship to his fellow human beings. But this paragraph has more aspects we need to consider.

Put away subterfuge and abandon acquisitiveness, and there will be no more thieves and robbers.

What does this sentence mean? Let us apply it first to the School, and second to your own individual state. Suppose your motives in the School were impure in any way. This impurity would obviously stem from the fundamental impurities of your heart. Then you are carried along by the flames of your desires. With the techniques of subterfuge, which you have learned during the course of your life, you try to achieve your aims. You try to gain something that, in fact, is not meant for you. You try to force something that would eventually come anyway when the time was right. So you act like a thief or a robber, and obviously this will invoke all kinds of forces and vibrations that are in keeping with your actions. In this way the School is hindered and its field of work disturbed. In such a situation an unholy radiation would emanate from the School that would be destructive rather than redeeming in its effects. So in a

ABANDON KNOWLEDGE

Spiritual School, especially, you should set aside all that desire, subterfuge and acquisitiveness.

Try to apply this point of view in your everyday life as well, consciously and consistently. Dare to do that! Then your development on the path towards peace of the soul will be influenced very much to the good. Haven't you summoned rather a lot of thieves and robbers in your own respiration-field? And what a lot of difficulties this has created in the lives of others! It does not help you and it destroys others. So: *Put away subterfuge and abandon acquisitiveness, and there will be no more thieves and robbers.* Put this approach to life into practice.

19-II

Renounce these things

There is one more part of Chapter 19 of the Tao Te Ching we would like to consider:

Renounce these things and never be content with outward appearances.

Instead, I will show you what you need to do. See yourself in your original simplicity and maintain your original purity. Have little egoism and few desires.

Renounce these things. What things? Let us remind ourselves. In your everyday approach to life, as far as your contacts with other people are concerned, put away your wisdom and your knowledge. The wisdom and knowledge you have received are for your own, personal use, to help you in the process of developing from a mortal soul into a reborn soul. And one of the results of that process is soul-radiation. This soul-radiation emanates from you independently of your will, without you thinking about it, and it can never be wounding, antagonising or disagreeable to anybody. Your own wisdom and knowledge, however useful to you personally, can only be useful to others on the path if they specifically ask for it; if, in their soul's need, they ask you for that sustenance. The rest of the time, just approach others with love and understanding, patience and compassion, remembering your common humanity. In this way you will be able to bring happiness to all the living beings you meet.

The second thing you must renounce has to do with philan-

thropy and justice. There is a seething turmoil of countless movements, great and small, religious, humanitarian, political, occult and economic, all imploring your attention, your cooperation, your vote, your devotion. But you do not allow yourself to be drawn into these things, because you see the fruitlessness of it all, and you know that by joining in, you would only succeed in perpetuating the conflict. But neither do you react to these things with animosity, or in an unintelligent or arrogant way. You remain silent, and bring the offering of your soul-light.

The third thing you need to renounce is your cunning and acquisitiveness, for these characteristics are weapons used to rob what you are not entitled to and to steal what is not rightfully yours. You would then draw around yourself an atmosphere of disharmony, robbery and destruction.

We explained this threefold renunciation in the last chapter. But if you decide to do it, remember that you must not do it in appearance only. If you know that something is not good and you give it up outwardly but not inwardly, then it will only be a sham. Then you will just be following a law that has been imposed on you, or that you are imposing on yourself. You will be living under the law, in the old testamental phase. You will be submitting to the law, but there will be no new reality in your blood. Then you will not have put away ordinary justice, and you will be contenting yourself with outward appearances. The new approach to life only has value if you practise it from within, motivated by an urge which arises from the heart and is seated in the blood. If it does not, then it is only a sham, a pretence. Then you will be judged, just as it is said in chapter 18: *When acumen and shrewdness appeared, great hypocrisy developed.*

You need to realise that merely keeping up outer appearances will not take you one step further in the Spiritual

School; it will not bring you any closer to success. That is an important thing to remember, because in the ordinary world outer appearances do carry weight. And that causes trouble, because pretence engenders self-preservation, and self-preservation engenders war. The habit of pretence, of doing things just for the sake of appearances, is so ingrained in the blood, generation after generation, that there is a tendency to continue with it in the Spiritual School, in the process of following the path. But then you don't call it pretence, or hypocrisy, for those are ugly words. You say, 'I want to do it, I'm doing my best to do it, and I yearn for it so much,' and things like that.

We are not saying this because we want to insult you or put you in an unfavourable light, but because it is our duty to ask you, 'Is the Gnosis a simulated value for you at this moment? Is it a value that is as yet outside you, but which you would very much like to possess?' If so, you can study the characteristics and purposes of that value and you can try to approximate and imitate it with the dialectical means you have at your disposal. But then you will be simulating pupilship, and that is something which is indeed done, sometimes in a very subtle way. But if pupilship is simulated, there is no blood-property. You need to *demonstrate* renewal, in and through your own blood-field. That is why Lao Tzu says in chapter 19: *Instead, I will show you what you need to do.*

De Genestet, a Dutch poet, once said:

*From pretence, O Lord, deliver me;
nature and truth return to me.*

See yourself in your original simplicity and maintain your original purity. What does this mean? Certainly not the origi-

nal, divine simplicity and purity. You cannot see that simplicity and purity in yourself because you, as a mortal soul, have never known that state. But if you approach the Spiritual School and are determined to walk the path, then you will need to free yourself from all the veils that pretence, imitation and education have formed around you and stand on the foundation of your true nature and state of being.

Every human being has a particular type, a particular character, with a certain key-note. If you understand this with self-knowledge, neither overrating nor underrating yourself, you will be standing in your original simplicity. Then you will know your own type. It is with the purity of that knowledge that you need to approach the Gnosis, and then the process of insight, yearning for salvation, self-surrender and the new way of life will be able to unfold very quickly! That is what you need to do. If you do not, then you will always run the risk of approaching the Gnosis with pretence, with all its consequences. See yourself, from day to day, in your absolute simplicity and on that foundation, follow the process with purity. That is what Lao Tzu means.

As long as you have to live in this world, you will have material interests and needs to take care of, and you will need to look after yourself. So the thing to do is to reduce your personal needs and material obligations to the simplest and smallest proportions. So have little selfishness and few desires, and let what little you do need be only for the fulfilment of your biological needs. Put aside pretence and begin your path as a pupil in simplicity and purity. Then group-unity — the great community of the soul — will break through powerfully, and in a glorious way. Leave behind everything that serves no purpose or hinders you. Or, to put it in the words of our Temple Song number 88:

RENOUNCE THESE THINGS

*Cast, then, away
your burdens grey,
tainting your blood with their
decay, and enter freedom without
delay.*

So, having immersed you yet again in the wisdom of the Tao Te Ching, we hope that the fruits of all these reflections will be seen in your way of life.

Abandon study, and your worries will cease.

What is the use of linguistic subtleties? Much better is knowledge of the distinction between good and evil.

Alas, the world has become a wilderness without end.

The multitude rejoice and are glad, like those who enjoy their food, like people who have climbed a high terrace in spring.

I alone am calm and have not yet moved. I am like a new-born babe who has not yet smiled. I am free and without limitation, as if there were no place to which I would like to return.

The multitude have enough and to spare; I alone am like one who has lost everything. I have the heart of a fool; I am a chaos of confusion.

The common people possess sparkling lucidity; I alone am dark. The common people possess penetrative insight; I alone am mournfully anxious. I am indeterminate, like the sea; I am restless, tossed to and fro by the waves.

Everyone has a reason for everything; I alone am foolish.

I alone am different from the common people, because I revere the Mother who nourishes all things.

Tao Te Ching chapter 20

Abandon study

Let us try to understand the gnostic meaning of chapter 20 of the Tao Te Ching. Did you feel confused when you read the words: *Abandon study and your worries will cease?*

People who depend on intellectualism are likely to find these words either foolish or hurtful. And aren't they in conflict with the standpoint of the School of the Rosycross? Don't we say that one needs to possess knowledge in order to understand the Gnosis? Doesn't the Bible say, 'My people are lost for lack of knowledge'? Isn't it very important to study the contents of our literature if one wants to understand the aims of the Gnosis? Perhaps you will say, 'Surely, pupils of all times have always received instruction, either through the spoken or written word, or through the language of the mysteries? Should one give all that up, then? How is it possible to use such ridiculous words, dating from 600 years before Christ, as if they were gnostic wisdom?' So let us examine what Lao Tzu may really have meant. Let us start by taking a familiar example:

Suppose you had read all the literature of our School. Suppose that your interpretation of it was based on everything you had read in related literature over the years. And imagine that you had a good memory and had remembered clearly everything you had read, to such an extent that people could say about you, 'He knows it! She knows it!'

Would that knowledge have brought you one millimetre closer to a genuine possession? Is there not an enormous difference between intellectual knowledge and real possession? Are there not many people who, in their enormous craving for

Life, throw themselves on the literature of the School and gulp it down as fast as they can? And afterwards, have you ever observed or heard about their reactions? One chapter brought joy, the second sorrow, the third repugnance, and the next, perhaps, deep confusion, followed by a spark of hope, and then a sense of fear, and so on.

The whole gamut of psychological reactions is gone through in quick succession, and the result is one great tangle. Often the person concerned experienced so much tension and underwent such a total astral collapse, with all kinds of worries and anxieties gathering together like clouds, that the opposite was achieved to what, in his hunger, the person had expected.

If you have ever observed such a psychological and emotional breakdown and understood its cause, then surely Lao Tzu's words, 'For goodness' sake, give up all that studying,' will grip you straight from the heart?

Besides psychological and moral difficulties, too much intellectual analysis can also cause other problems. The absorption of theoretical information on a purely intellectual level produces a tendency to overrate oneself, and to think, 'I know all that.' In such a psychological state one can crystallise, and when one tries to put these intellectual theories into practice, one can do harm to others, as well. In any case, it always means that real human development is prevented.

The immense pressure we experience today towards the development of the intellect stems from the conditions humankind has created for itself. Mechanisation, industrialisation, and the extremely complex structure of human society make study necessary for almost everyone.

But has it really made people any happier, better or wiser? Perhaps you have studied a lot in your life, or maybe you are studying still, but has it freed you from your worries? And

what about the people who devise all those theories, and the people who teach them to others? Has their learning freed them from their cares? They know a great deal and because of that people think they possess spiritual abilities. But what a mistake! What a devaluation of the real purpose of life!

This situation has gone so far now that if, at this moment, people were to change course and take the advice to 'abandon study' as a general directive, the most almighty clamour would break out: 'Surely we cannot let our children enter life in society without studying how it works, and without the training they need to look after themselves?'

So can all this really be called progress and development? Is it not true that nearly everyone is caught up in it? Almost everyone is following a road that, according to Lao Tzu, leads to perdition. That is why Lao Tzu observes in Chapter 20: *Alas, the world has become a wilderness without end.*

A cultured person, by today's standards, is in many respects a marked man. In most cases, the grip of the nature of death has bound such people in powerful chains. So what is Lao Tzu's solution to this enormous problem, which he showed his pupils as long ago as six hundred years before Christ? Well, it is not a solution that, once arrived at, brings with it new worries. It is one that, if you work at it consistently and honestly, will lead you to liberation.

Could that be true? Could that really be possible? Let us think about it and see.

20-11

The world has become a wilderness

Have you ever honestly examined your life and yourself, and realised that you are caught in a chain of cause and effect? And that your children are stuck in the same straitjacket? Lao Tzu drew attention to this predicament two and a half thousand years ago, and since then it has become many times worse. So if you really want to experience pupilship of a gnostic Spiritual School, if you really want to ascend the path of liberation, you must 'abandon study'.

To understand this injunction and be able to explain it the way it was meant, one must begin by drawing a distinction between worldly knowledge and real wisdom. Worldly knowledge aims to fit the human being for his role in life and to prepare him for his passage through the nature of death. Study is also meant to ease one's course through life, and to provide access to life's various comforts. It plays on earthly drives such as the desire for honour, fame, power and possessions and also on people's lower instincts.

In practice, however, it turns out that much of this supposed knowledge is founded on the most shaky grounds. In fact it has no real foundation at all, and belongs to the realms of pure conjecture. That is why applying such knowledge can only add to the problems afflicting humankind.

If you look at the course of your own life, you will probably realise that you have often been the victim of knowledge that, when applied, turned out not to have been knowledge at all but largely just a sophisticated form of supposition.

To give you an example: vegetarians, who depend on the products of the vegetable kingdom, have experienced how

the whole of the vegetable kingdom is being poisoned, via the atmosphere and the soil, by the products of modern agricultural science. Indeed, the entire biosphere and all the creatures living in it are plagued by the results of study. And the driving forces behind all this are economic, political and national interests, the interests of various groups, racial conflicts, and so on, which are carried beyond all reasonable bounds as the result of study.

Alas, the world has become a wilderness without end, said Lao Tzu, and the truth of his words is clearly evident today. Nowadays, it is no longer possible for our children to enjoy absolutely healthy and unpolluted food. What an outrage! What a worry!

Or do you, too, allow yourself to be deluded by the lies of officialdom — all those carefully crafted falsehoods formulated through study, refined with the techniques of applied psychology and disseminated via advertising and the various information bureaux? The world has become a wilderness, and now, scientists are even trying to involve other worlds in this wasteland. There is no end to it! Do you see how humankind is teetering on the brink of an abyss?

There are some people who cannot accept these conclusions. They think we are painting much too grim a picture, that we are pessimists. It was just the same in Lao Tzu's time. He says: 'The multitude rejoice and are glad. The multitude have enough and to spare. The common people possess sparkling lucidity, penetrative insight. In all things they have their reasons, their arguments, acquired and developed through rational study. Apparently, I alone am foolish. I alone am mournfully anxious. I alone am dark. I am a chaos of confusion, as one who has lost everything.' Yet, for the person in Lao Tzu's position, all worries have ceased. Only one concern remains, a concern that will not, cannot leave him: the

concern for the whole of humankind, which has made this entire day of manifestation into a hell, a wilderness. Through study! Through worldly knowledge, applied without even a spark of wisdom. So we beg you not to make the mistake so many other people have made, the mistake of thinking that knowledge is the same as wisdom. If you have understood even the smallest particle of what Lao Tzu really meant, you will know that not only is a new approach to life necessary, but also a total self-revolution. With anything less, you will achieve nothing!

This concerns the third aspect of the Tao Te Ching: the application of universal wisdom. The crucial thing is not what you know, but what you do! You need to undertake a self-revolution so radical, so total, that it can be called all-encompassing. Your goodwill and love for the School and the Gnosis are clearly evident. But in addition, it is crucial that you, as a modern human being of this age, are able to begin and carry through this radical self-revolution. And to do it, you will need an intelligence born not of fanaticism, but of wisdom. For this radical revolution, which is so necessary, will need to affect not only yourself, but also everything and everyone for whom you are responsible.

There is no uniform program that can be laid down for this radical self-revolution; no set formula that can be followed and applied by everyone. It is, first and foremost, an inner event. However, it expresses itself outwardly as a totally new style of living, based on life's true purpose. And that life-style has characteristics which are clearly recognisable.

You will have to make the imperishable Kingdom the most important thing in your life. For that, too, knowledge is necessary, but it must be knowledge that is founded on the wisdom which is of God. This self-revolution, which includes everything you have understood until now as pertaining to the

state of the true pupil, the state of being of the living soul, will be able to save the whole group from perdition.

Now, you know about how wisdom can be attained, how the pupil can open the fount of wisdom. It is by walking the path that leads to life, the path we have been telling you about for so many years. Well then, if that fount of wisdom had been opened in you, so that it could flow into your head sanctuary, disclosing itself to your cognitive faculty, vivifying the various centres latent within it and purifying all its damaged aspects, then straight away an intense conflict would arise. There would be a dissonance between you and the whole world, between you and the whole of humankind and its ways. As a new human being, you would no longer be able to live as they do, despite any effort you might make to adapt yourself to their ways as far as possible.

That is why joy is felt in the work-field when the symptoms of this dissonance appear in the life of a pupil. Because, through the application of worldly knowledge, the whole world has been thrown into chaos; it has become a wilderness. Every concession you make to the ways of that world will deprive you more and more of the fruits of pupilship and add to your share of world-karma. It will prolong your imprisonment, as well as giving you a whole series of new worries, which will make you feel as if you had been cast into hell.

So do you see how urgent it has become for both the group and individual pupils to take strenuous action? A new page has been turned in our book of life. What will we read on it? Will the group be able to fulfil its task?

The whole world has become a wilderness and there is still no end in sight. We can see that quite plainly! But the problem is that the wilderness, and the results of the application of worldly knowledge, are in many respects preventing the

THE WORLD HAS BECOME A WILDERNESS

process of pupilship from generating lasting new values; they are blocking the ascent into freedom. The path of the Rosa Mystica, which has been and is still being explored right through to the spirit-soul field, is being deliberately obstructed.

That is why action must be taken, by us and by the group, so that all who wish to ascend the path upwards may do so. If you consider how few possibilities of positive development are now left to humankind, you will realise how imminent the impending cosmic revolution must be. And only through self-revolution will you be able to survive it.

20-III

I alone am different from the common people

The twentieth chapter of the Tao Te Ching ends with the sentence: *I alone am different from the common people, because I revere the Mother who nourishes all things.*

This is a clear statement of the immeasurable difference in orientation between someone who has attuned himself entirely to the nature of death, and someone who keeps his heart focused on the nature of life.

The 'Mother' referred to here is the field of pure, immaculate astral substance which concentrates around any domain in which divine sparks are to grow. In this field currents flow, and from it, radiations emanate. That is why the sacred scriptures of all times speak of 'the boundless ocean of primordial substance', and 'the water of life'. The Book of Revelations mentions 'the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.' From this mighty fount of life all children of God need to be nourished. From this power alone is 'the' life to be explained. Without this power of life no manifested phenomenon can really be called 'living'.

It is understandable, justifiable and natural that this astral plenitude should be called 'the Mother'. From this Mother, the whole of creation must be brought forth, and it is by means of this Mother-power that the Father's plan of creation needs to become a reality. From the Father radiate divine sparks, microcosms, containing the spirit of God. The divine spark is the divine seed. Everything that lies enclosed in this divine spark must come to maturity, to manifestation, through contact with the World-Mother — the astral field of the true

life. From the Mother, through the seed of the Father, the childship, the sonship becomes a glorious reality.

Lao Tzu lives from this Mother. He reveres the Mother who nourishes all things. But why does that make him so entirely different from his fellow human beings? You can give the answer to this question yourself. Earthly human beings do not derive what they need to live from the astral field of the World Mother. They originate from and are maintained by the astral field of the false mother, the astral field of the nature of death. The aims and motives to which they are bound, their approach to life and its results, are quite different from those of people who worship and serve the true World-Mother.

So it is understandable that the ordinary, earthly human being, who is born without any wisdom and has only been equipped with the ability to understand things intellectually, can only acquire and store worldly knowledge; knowledge obtained and expanded by experimental means. But this kind of knowledge is devoid of wisdom and therefore invariably leads to the abyss, turning the world into a wilderness, as Lao Tzu says.

So there is a tremendous contrast between the two human types: the ordinary, earthly human being and the figure of Lao Tzu. Both possess a microcosm; both emanate from a divine spark. But only one, Lao Tzu, lives out of the astral field of the World-Mother, in which the spirit of God is manifested and makes itself directly knowable. In that astral field, the real child of God, the true human being, is generated from the divine spark, and the wisdom which is of God Himself can be linked directly and absolutely with the cognitive apparatus and can make use of it. Not a single aspect or effect of one's approach to life will then be speculative or disappointing any longer. From step to step, and from power to power, one's life

will manifest the glory of God and of His plan for His children. Compare that with the other type of human being. Is he a human being? He is not! He is imprisoned in the nature of death, sundered from the World-Mother. His manifestation, his development, has stagnated. He is the cripple, the lame one, the blind one, who must be healed. `Seeing, he is blind, and hearing, he is deaf', as Jesus the Lord says. He is unborn.

Many people who are only able to cognise intellectually and have acquired some esoteric knowledge in the course of the years deceive themselves with the hope that the earthly human being, even though seriously damaged, will eventually reach perfection by some roundabout route. They still think it is possible to rely on advancement through study.

But let us understand Lao Tzu correctly. Only a total revolution on the path can save earthly humanity. Only by reversing the alignment of one's being, so that it is focused entirely on the World-Mother, on the saving astral field of the beginning, can the human race be helped.

The way that leads to this is known to you; it is shown to you daily in the Spiritual School. Begin, then, by clearing the chief obstruction out of the way, the false assumption that worldly knowledge, and not the wisdom which is of God, can help you. The practice of both is impossible. They cannot be combined. So: *Abandon study, and your worries will cease.*

The visible effects of the great Te are engendered by the emanations of Tao. They are the nature of Tao.

In its creation, Tao is indefinite and difficult to trace. How indefinite! How elusive! Yet, at the heart of creation, all images are contained. Oh, how vague, how intangible! And yet, at the heart of all things, the spiritual being is present. This being is of the utmost reality and contains the infallible testimony.

From the most distant past until now, its name has been imperishable. It gives life to all true creation.

*How do I know all created things have their origin therein?
Through Tao itself*

Tao Te Ching chapter 21

21-i

In its creation, Tao is indefinite and difficult to trace

The visible effects of the great Te are engendered by the emanations of Tao. They are the nature of Tao. With this quotation from the ancient Chinese wisdom we would like to begin our discussion of chapter 21 of the Tao Te Ching.

This chapter deals mainly with an explanation of the terms *Tao* and *Te*. What Lao Tzu meant here can best be understood by referring back to last verse of chapter 20:

I alone am different from the common people, because I revere the Mother who nourishes all things.

In the last chapter we said that the word 'Mother' in this verse means: the original, absolutely pure astral field of the beginning, in which the Father manifests himself completely. This original astral field has not disappeared. It still exists; it is inviolable. This is something anyone approaching the gnostic path needs to be keenly aware of from moment to moment. The great World Mother is inviolable. The space from which, in which and through which reality must arise, is immaculate.

As soon as a human being, a group of human beings, or a whole human lifewave deviates even slightly from the original, divine plan of genesis, the astral field of that individual, group or lifewave is immediately separated from the original astral field so that what is different cannot spoil the original in a denaturing sense. This process of separation is a universal law, which safeguards the divine manifestation on the one hand, and the element of freedom on the other.

Such an astral separation could, in a way, be called a 'fall', but it is not a fall in the absolute sense. It is quite common for

the astral states of individuals, groups and lifewaves of human beings, as well as the astral states prevailing on the various celestial bodies, to differ from each other and from the astral state of the World Mother, but one can really only speak of a 'fall' when the element of evil predominates and the attempt is made to turn fleeting, transient things into static, permanent things.

If such a state arises — as is the case with our humanity — the separation becomes very sharply accentuated. Between our nature of death and the original nature of life there lies an enormous gulf, a gaping abyss. And what happens then you will know only too well, both from experience and from the teachings of our School.

The astral field from which and in which a human being lives, corresponds minutely with his actual state of being. All his experiences, everything that happens in his life, all his desires, thoughts and actions are the result of the state of his astral life-sphere. So if a person's astral field has developed highly individual characteristics, that person will be something of an outsider, and the afflictions and experiences he undergoes in an astral field that deviates from that of the World Mother will be equally individual.

However, if the person's approach to life has much in common with that of the majority of humankind, if he does more or less as the masses do, he will be struck by the full force of the collective fate. That is why there we speak not only of individual karma, but also group karma and collective or world karma.

Another point we must mention is the certainty that it is the law of freedom, itself, which ensures that the World Mother remains inviolable. Imagine: the human race strays from the original plan (and, as you know, 'all have gone astray'). As soon as that happens, a separate astral field

arises in which a dialectical development unfolds; a process of rising, shining and declining which always results in the dissolution of everything unholy or moribund, so that it is repeatedly brought back to the original point of deviation. This deviation can then easily be eliminated at the dawn of a subsequent day of manifestation.

So no astral field which deviates from that of the World Mother will ever be able to violate, eclipse or destroy the All-Manifestation as a whole. Every deviation brings about its own end and receives the chance to begin anew and return to the original. That is why Lao Tzu, who had restored his connection with the original astral field, said:

I alone am different from the common people, because I revere the Mother who nourishes all things.

Chapter 21 of the Tao Te Ching begins by explaining how a striving human being can celebrate this return. More especially, it shows the scientifically incontestable conditions on which such a return must be based, and these are what we would like to discuss with you now.

The visible effects of the great Te are engendered by the emanations of Tao.

Imagine a person — such as a pupil of the young Gnosis — who decides to walk the path of return. It is certain that he will only be able to do this if he detaches himself completely from the astral field of the nature of death and turns towards the astral field of the World Mother. That is the primary precondition. And it is fulfilled by a total revolution in your life, a revolution which has three aspects.

Your birth in nature means that you are surrounded, firstly, by your own personal astral field, which determines the individual characteristics of your astral body.

Secondly, you are linked with a particular group of human beings who are of your type. The size of this group will vary, and the connecting characteristics may take the form of material things, desires, I-central aims, nationality or some other attribute.

Thirdly you are linked with humanity as a whole.

So you are imprisoned in your own astral field, in that of the group to which you belong, and in that of human society in general. Therefore, if the revolution you are aiming at as a pupil of the Spiritual School is to succeed, it will have to be threefold. You will need to dissolve your existing astral conditions on three levels, and link yourself completely to the original astral field of the Mother of Life, as Lao Tzu advises. Otherwise you will only succeed in shifting the accents of your life within the framework of the nature of death.

Imagine how it would be if people were to become pupils of our School without undertaking this inner revolution; if they were to confine themselves to becoming vegetarian, and giving up smoking and using alcohol; if all they did was mimic dogmatically the ways of speaking, feeling and thinking they saw exemplified in our School, and adopt a few ideas and social habits consistent with pupilship. The result would be that they would indeed form a new group together, but ... within the framework of the nature of death. So they would form the kind of group of which there are already so many in the world. And they would have not the slightest effect on the sting of death within them, the real cause of their imprisonment. For their character, inner state, behaviour and general disposition would remain precisely the same as they were before. All they would have achieved together would be to create the need for yet another graveyard. Apart from the Roman Catholic and Protestant graveyards, not to mention the Jewish and municipal cemeteries, there would then be the

need for a graveyard for people who call themselves 'Rosicrucian'. But in essence, they would not differ from other people in any way.

So why was Lao Tzu so different? Well, his veneration of the Original Mother, the Mother of the true child of God, has to do with a threefold, inner revolution, with freeing oneself in a threefold way from the astral imprisonment in which one lives. This revolutionary process is combined with a measureless yearning for the original astral field, a yearning which arises in the heart of the person concerned, and becomes more and more intense.

Now you may be thinking, 'What an awesome task! How difficult it must be!' But to think that would be the greatest mistake of your life. If the yearning we are talking about is really growing in the heart, then at the same time there will also be the power, the ability, the profound gladness and all the insight necessary to take the measures required, as well as the surety that they will be completely successful. This might involve, for instance, withdrawing from some social position that was hindering your pupilship, or breaking all sorts of other bonds and taking quite radical measures to adapt your life to the consequences of pupilship.

Having heard this, many people are likely to conclude that the gnostic working hypothesis is too vague to be practised reliably in a world like ours. 'Can we really take the responsibility, for ourselves and for our family, of putting into practice this threefold gnostic revolution? The guidelines you have given are too vague, too confusing.' 'Oh, how vague...!'

But Lao Tzu replies: *The visible effects of the great Te are engendered by the emanations of Tao. They are the nature of Tao.* For people still focused on this nature, people whose options are therefore limited to the choice of which graveyard to be buried in, Tao is, in its creation, utterly vague and diffi-

cult to pin down. It couldn't be more so. And neither is anything else to be expected in an astral field sundered from the Primordial Mother. *And yet, at the heart -of Tao's creation- all images are contained.*

Reflect on these words, and then any vagueness you experience with respect to the practice of pupilship will, quite literally, be swept away.

Tao, the great power at the heart of all things

The visible effects of the great Te are engendered by the emanations of Tao. These effects constitute the nature of Tao. The presence of Tao in its creation is extremely difficult to trace and understand for human beings born of this nature. Indeed, it couldn't be more vague or elusive.

That is inevitable in a field of life separated from the Primordial Mother. Nevertheless, at the heart of Tao's creation, all images are contained.

Some writers translate the expression *the great Te* as 'the great virtue'. And although Te is indeed a great virtue, it is more accurate to translate it as 'the path of liberation' or 'the result of following the path of liberation'. By approaching the essence of Te in this way, we avoid considering the great virtue as an aspect of life in this nature. Many things in the nature of death can be called virtuous and good, but the virtue and goodness of this nature are not absolute. They are not what Hermes Trismegistus calls 'the Only Good'.

So the visible effects referred to in chapter 21 of the Tao Te Ching are the result of walking the path, the result of putting into practice the threefold gnostic revolution discussed in the last chapter. These effects do not need to be the slightest bit vague, for they are engendered by the emanations of Tao.

Tao is the Divine One, the Absolute; it is 'It', itself. But isn't that definition rather vague? It does not need to be, for three reasons. Firstly, these emanations are the nature of Tao. Secondly, Tao is present 'at the heart of things'. Thirdly, this

heart of things contains 'all images' within it. Let us try to understand this.

Throughout the entire All-Manifestation, throughout the whole of creation, Tao, the divine One is immanent. In this unfathomable space countless astral fields exist, all of them very different from one another. And with respect to every bit of this diversity, all of it included in the oneness, it must be said that 'Tao is present at the heart of things.'

That fact alone is very significant and comforting. But it is even more important to be able to state that emanations radiate from this divine power 'at the heart of things', emanations whose majesty permeates the whole of unfathomable space.

The significance of this becomes even more striking when one realises that all those myriads of celestial bodies, from the largest galaxy, zodiacal system or solar system down to the smallest planetary body, possess Tao at their centre, in the most literal sense.

Every planet, every sun, every system is surrounded and interpenetrated by the spiritual essence of Tao. That essence is brought to a focus at the heart of each of those heavenly bodies and systems. So the planet we inhabit carries Tao in its heart, in the most absolute sense. That is why it is said that the Christ-Spirit dwells in the central stratum of our planet. Having said this, we need to clarify the distinction between the Planetary Spirit and the Planetary Logos.

The Planetary Spirit is the expression of the dialectical aspect, the image-bearer of the planetary nature of death. We could compare the planet we know as Earth with the personality of the human being. The Planetary Logos, however, is the indwelling Tao-existence, the existence of the true Earth, born of God, which can be compared with the microcosm. It is the Heaven-Earth referred to in the Apocalypse, a planet

which is quite different from the one known to us, and which is nevertheless very near to us.

A still more amazing fact is that Tao is present not only at the heart of every cosmos and macrocosm, but at the heart of the microcosm, too. Remember the Hermetic axiom, 'as above so below'. Tao is also present at the heart of the microcosm, concentrated at a point which coincides with the physical heart. At this point, the emanations of Tao are very clearly distinguishable.

So we have shown you, at least in brief, the nature of Tao. Tao is everywhere, at the heart of everyone and everything. That is the great miracle of Tao. This great, living, divine power speaks and lives and radiates in the heart of everyone and everything. So that is the wonderful nature of Tao, the divine attribute.

'Then why,' you may ask, 'is the voice of Tao so vague within me! Why am I confused about it?'

Because Tao is indeed *in* you, but it is not *of* you. Tao is not embodied in you; it has no part in your material existence. Your existence, your personality, has its own consciousness, its own voice. You are from another nature, and the divine nature is only distinguishable in you as a voice, a radiation. It is the Word, which was, and is, from the beginning.

If a person is focused exclusively on this nature, if he is satisfied with that, if he is absorbed only in that and does not even know about the possibility of another nature whose voice resounds in him, then it is logical that he will not understand that voice and will only find it confusing.

If someone does know about the presence of the other nature, but does not adapt himself to it by changing his approach to life, he will find Tao not only confusing but also extremely elusive. In such a situation, the light, the Word, has appeared in the darkness, but the darkness cannot

or does not want to comprehend it. Do you see how explicit the prologue of the Gospel of John is?

If you want to free yourself from this confusion and turn Tao's elusiveness into clear light, you may never forget that throughout the All-Manifestation there are always two natures: the absolute nature, which is Tao, and a nature in genesis, which is not or has not yet become Tao. So, with respect to the microcosm, there are two lives: a divine nature and a nature in genesis, whose development may well have stagnated — as yours has — and consequently keeps on being brought back to the point of departure: the wheel of birth and death.

And remember, if there are two natures, there must also be two separate states of consciousness, that of the nature in genesis, and that of the absolute nature; the consciousness of the personality and the consciousness of the microcosm.

The lower state of consciousness must make room for and merge into the other one. This particularly applies to the state of consciousness of any being which exists in a stagnated nature, in a nature which has become evil. His state of consciousness must be broken up, in order to make room for the divine nature, so that one day the liberated entity may pronounce the words: 'The Father and I are one.'

We are telling you things you have probably known for a long time, but our aim is to make them truly alive for you at this moment. We want you to realise that the Lord of All is to be found — at this very moment — in your innermost being, in the stable of your dialectical self; it is to be found not only in the midst of this temple, but also at the heart of your microcosm.

In the past you may well have lost yourself in labyrinths of vagueness and confusion. So now, let yourself understand the words of Lao Tzu:

Yet, at the heart of creation, all images are contained. Oh how vague, how intangible! Yet, at the heart of all things, the spiritual being is present. This being is of the utmost reality and contains the infallible testimony.

Could it be expressed in a more concrete way than in Lao Tzu's holy language? From the heart of Tao flows the divine spiritual essence, the divine Voice, the divine Word. This Voice, this Word, contains the entire plan.

The characters of the divine Word consist of images, of concrete impressions. From the central principle of the microcosm, the rose of the heart, there emanates a radiant light-power, which bears within it a treasury of images of the great reality which will have to be realised in and by the human being. Just think of how radio and television work. Though a very mundane analogy, it will help you understand what an enormous wealth of images and sounds are transmitted by the heart of Tao, so that they can be perceived by any human being whose instrumentarium has been attuned to them.

The divine picture-language is being spoken to you all the time; it is being transmitted constantly, from the heart of things. The same divine language speaks in all of us, which gives us a means of comparison, of authentication. This language is spoken to us by the Planetary Logos (remember: not the Planetary Spirit). In short, this Word, this speech, is being transmitted to you from countless directions.

This Word contains all true knowledge. And, as Lao Tzu says, it conveys an infallible testimony with respect to the genesis of the entire All, explaining how this genesis needs to unfold, where it is going wrong, and how it can be put right again. The solution to every problem you place before

the inner tribunal of the microcosm, cosmos and macrocosm, is transmitted to you in multidimensional images, which are then transmuted into images you can recognise and understand.

Everyone who, in this way, approaches the Lord in the Midst, participates in the university of the divine world. Only the knowledge acquired there constitutes an infallible testimony. That is why Lao Tzu says in chapter 20: 'Free yourself from knowledge, and your worries will cease.' Only divine knowledge, put into practice, will benefit the world and humankind and be of service to the plan.

Can you now see why we are urging you to do everything possible to allow the spiritual being within you to speak, so that the light of its infallible testimony can shine? It is a testimony from the most ancient past, and it will last forever. It is a power through which the true creation can be brought into existence. This creation is produced in a completely natural, scientific way, by means of a process which can be followed to the letter by the candidate of the holy science, because the entire process of rebirth has its origin in Tao. And Tao is in your innermost being, imparting to you its power and enabling you to understand it by means of its image-forming capacity.

21-iii
Rebirth in Tao

It is said that Lao Tzu wrote nine hundred and thirty books about ethics and religion and seventy about esotericism. But of all those works and the copies made of them, nothing remains. They have vanished without a trace. The only one of Lao Tzu's works still extant is the Tao Te Ching, a brief document of some five thousand words, covering twelve pages or so. Often, this text is virtually impossible to understand. And maybe that is why it has been spared the fate of the others.

It is the same old story. The primordial adversary, which has taken so many forms since the beginning of time, did as it always does, using every available means to destroy any documents which appear to threaten the continued existence of the nature of death or which contain information about the reality of the two natures. You probably know what many Chinese scholars say about the Tao Te Ching, and you also know what we think of their interpretations. Yet many extensive commentaries on the Tao Te Ching are to be found in the libraries of the Far East. More often than not, these commentaries have been garbled and are bound to be misleading. So we should not be too hard on scholars who consult such sources. Indeed, over the centuries, many people have fallen victim to the adversary because of this kind of thing. For it is a fact that, in the nature of death, everything possible is done to erase any traces of the divine messengers.

So there is but one way, one method, of removing all the obscurity and confusion that stands between you and the great reality. It is the way, the method, we have been explaining.

You need to approach the actual nature of Tao, which exists in the centre of your being. In self-surrender of the heart, and in profound yearning, you need to approach the nature of Tao within you. Then you will discover that there really is an infallible, divine testimony, a Kingdom of God within you. Since the most distant past, says Lao Tzu, the divine essence, which is so near to us, has been imperishable. And it is that divine essence which can bring about genuine creation, the rebirth of what is true and real.

So let us take a brief look at how this process of creation can unfold in someone who puts the threefold gnostic method into practice:

First of all the person needs to withdraw from his own astral field, which belongs to the nature which deviates from the divine; secondly, he needs to dissociate from the astral field of the group to which he belongs as a result of his birth in this nature; thirdly, he needs to dissolve any astral ties there may be between himself and the astral field of the nature of death as a whole.

At first sight this threefold assignment seems like an unscalable wall, barring our way. Yet is it the same task that has been carried out by all the great ones throughout history, by all the children of God. It is exactly the path that Jesus the Lord exemplified on his *via dolorosa*. The Kingdom He sought and found was not 'of this world'. That is why He made his paths straight; why He immersed himself in the waters of the Jordan, the river of life, and why He overcame the astral adversary.

So if you want to become a real follower of Christ — and you can, because the Kingdom of God is within you — you must make a concrete beginning. With an all-encompassing desire in which your whole heart is absorbed, you must turn

towards the 'Lord in your Midst'. If you cannot yet summon that kind of desire, or if it costs you a great deal of effort — well, then your time has not yet come. No one can force you to produce that boundless longing of the heart. You cannot achieve it by means of exercises or through an intellectual decision. It is a state of being, rather like being in love.

If you have ever really loved someone, or been loved by someone, you will know that the whole heart can be absorbed and uplifted by it. This gives rise to an emanation, which radiates from the heart and establishes the connecting link. Well, it is with a love like that, that the heart must devote itself to the spiritual rose, which is present in the heart, in the centre, of your being. Then, because the rose is so very near to you and has been waiting for you for such a long time, a powerful connection will come into being between you. Then the foundation for soul-rebirth will have been laid. That is why the Bible says that only love can set you free.

Once this foundation for rebirth is firmly in place, the power of Tao will be able to enter the whole personality-system, so that the nature of Tao can perform its work. Then it is only necessary for the person who is permitted to undergo this miracle to keep his whole heart in the light of Tao, and not allow his heart's desire-orientation to wander into the highways and byways of the nature of death. This will systematically disconnect the whole personality from all its astral ties with the nature that deviates from God. A divine creation will come into existence!

Perhaps you are still wondering, 'How will I know for certain that such a rebirth really has its origin in Tao? Couldn't I be mistaken?'

Lao Tzu gives the answer: 'Dear friend, you will know, from day to day and from hour to hour, with unfailing certainty, through Tao itself'. When, in love, you have found and

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met the God within you, this Lord in the centre of your being will speak to you unceasingly in His picture-language. The `secret communion' with the All-Highest will then have been attained, for all eternity.

What is imperfect will become perfect. What is crooked will become straight. What is empty will become full. What is worn out will become new.

With little, 'It' is gained. With much, one deviates from 'It'.

That is why the sage holds fast to the One, and in this way makes himself into an example for the world.

Not seeking to shine, he is enlightened. Not overrating himself, he is distinguished. Not boasting, he has merit. Not wanting to be first, he is superior. Standing in non-conflict, he is unconquerable.

When the ancients said, 'What is imperfect will become perfect', how could this have been an empty phrase? When someone has attained perfection, everything must yield to him.

Tao Te Ching chapter 22

The four great possibilities

The individual chapters of the Tao Te Ching can best be understood when seen in the context of the book as a whole. So we would like to look at chapter 22 in the light of what was said in some of the preceding verses.

These showed that, right in centre of every microcosm, at a point coinciding with the heart sanctuary of the material human being, dwells 'the essence of the Spirit'. This centre, this rose of the heart, gives life to true creation, to the rebirth of spirit, soul and body. Whenever a human being finds 'the way', recognises 'the truth' and lives 'the life', such a victory is inevitable. That is why, in chapter 22, Lao Tzu can state as an axiom that:

What is imperfect will become perfect. What is crooked will become straight. What is empty will become full. What is worn out will become new.

It is absolutely certain that the divine plan for the world and humankind will be successful, and this is what Lao Tzu is making clear to his pupils. The concise language of the Tao Te Ching, with its briefly formulated lessons in which everything is said using the minimum of words, is clearly not aimed at the average person, but at Lao Tzu's pupils and fellow workers, the emissaries of the Universal Chain and their helpers. Such workers have an arduous labour to perform, in the course of which they are quite likely to lose courage, and even, at times, to be overcome by sorrow.

This psychological state is also described in the gospels and may overtake any worker in the vineyard from time

to time. It is to such people that the teacher's words are addressed:

What is imperfect will become perfect. What is crooked will become straight. What is empty will become full. What is worn out will become new.

These words give every worker new courage to persevere and keep going, whatever the circumstances, for every child of God will, and indeed must, reach the ultimate goal. The path to perfection will be found by everyone, and everyone will 'make straight the paths'; the empty will be filled by everyone, and the result will be victory: what was worn out, will be renewed.

All who have approached the Spiritual School and have accepted pupilship have obviously become potential fellow labourers in the great work. This work is totally devoted to the imperfect, the crooked, the empty and the worn out, so as to make it whole and be of service to it.

That is why you need to see 'the four great possibilities' clearly before you. These four possibilities are referred to in the Buddha's philosophy, for instance, as 'the four noble truths'. The four possibilities Lao Tzu is talking about can be put into words as follows:

- 1 the way of perfection,
- 2 making straight the paths,
- 3 filling what is empty,
- 4 the renewing process of transfiguration.

If you want to unlock these four possibilities (which, ultimately, are certainties), you will need to approach them in this order, because that is the order in which they unfold.

When you first read verse one of chapter 22 you may have thought that it was meant to be encouraging only in a kind of

mystical way, in the sense of: 'Just persevere, just keep going, and everything will turn out fine,' in which case it would not be so important what was said, or how it was said, for it would simply be an expression of loving concern: 'Don't worry. The crooked will be made straight in the end.'

But no, there is more to it than that. The nature of these words, the order in which they are expressed, and hence their structure, is in keeping with a law of the divine nature which governs the way in which creation and creatures are manifested. This is what we know as far as God's creature, the human being, is concerned:

After a period of preparation, called involution, the human being is faced with a task, called evolution. Contrary to what many people think, evolution is not an automatic process. Evolution does not just happen by itself; the human being needs to enable it to happen, through his own efforts. He needs to magnify the divine aim, in himself, and by himself, voluntarily, and in understanding and love.

That is why the human being is offered the way of perfection at the beginning of the path of self-realisation, the way of magnifying the God within. The human being is informed about the whole plan. This is what is meant by the statement that 'what is imperfect will be made perfect'. Everyone who is really ready for it, will see the way of perfection before him.

The plan that is then unveiled, must be put into practice. It must be fulfilled by the individual himself, in free will and devotion, with an all-consuming interest and profound love.

The presence of the spiritual essence in the centre of every human system means that everyone is capable of attaining the goal. But whenever any individual does not do so, or does not want to, the laws of the counternature will immediately come into effect. These laws are always self-correcting. If

necessary, the whole nature of death will function in this way, in order to keep on bringing the entity concerned back to the sublime reason innate in his divine spark.

So the way of perfection is, and has always been, present in the centre of your being. Its sublime rationale is eternal and always remains the same. But what if, undergoing the results of deviation from the divine plan, you have gone so far astray that you have 'forgotten' it? What if you are structurally denatured to such an extent that, when you are confronted with the path of perfection, you can no longer understand it and at best perceive it in a very obscure way? Then what you need most is to be shown the path of perfection time and time again, and to have all its aspects illuminated for you one after the other.

When the personality, born of the counternature and bound to it, has been buffeted so much by it that his lower nature is quite exhausted, he may at last hear the fervent cry coming from the primordial atom in the heart. Then the dark cloud that lies between the sublime reason of Tao 'which is in the midst' and the defeated heart of the personality, can be swept away and the seeking person will once again see face to face the way of perfection.

One of the propositions from Spinoza's *Ethics* states that 'A person who is motivated by fear and thus does good out of fear of evil is not guided by reason. However, a person who is touched by the reason that exists at the heart of things will never experience anything else than feelings of joy and intense yearning.'

Imagine how it would be if you had been so crushed and shocked by life that you had fled into the School of the Rosycross out of fear of even worse suffering, and that you had become a pupil because you were in the grip of this intense fear. Then, when you were told about gnostic phi-

losophy, such a motive would not enable you to catch even a single, momentary glimpse of the way of perfection lying before you. It might even be so that the sublime reason present in the centre of your being had never spoken to you at all. Then the rose of the heart would still be completely enclosed in its bud. Gnostic philosophy would carry no meaning for you; it would have no power in you.

A School like ours is not in any way like a religion of this nature because, as Spinoza says: 'Those who strive to keep human beings under control through fear' - he means fear of an avenging justice - 'thus driving them to flee evil rather than loving virtue, aim at nothing else than making others' lives as disastrous as their own.'

That is why it is important for anyone who has come to the end of his path in the nature of death, who has really landed on the bottom of the pit of death and has seen his whole life deteriorating through worry, fear and dread, through conflict and self-maintenance, to consider from time to time whether he is still acting out of an urge to seek new objects or subjects of fear, worry and dread, and to keep on vivifying new reasons to carry on some conflict or other.

If that is so, then the end of his passage through the land of despair has not yet come. The nadir of his suffering has not yet been reached.

However, when the psychological end really has come, a silence, a state of resignation will arise. Then, through your suffering, you will hear the voice of the rose, the voice of the sublime reason which exists in the centre of your being. Then there will be no further flight, but only joy and yearning: the person who is touched by reason, will never experience anything else than feelings of joy and intense yearning.

Why joy? Because, for the first time, the way of perfec-

tion is opening up for him in all its beauty and radiance.

Why an intense yearning? Because, after nameless suffering and affliction, after being wounded in every fibre of his being, the individual sees the wisdom and fullness of the liberating life shining so clearly, and offering such vast perspectives, that a boundless yearning to attain it seems to make his heart leap with excitement.

Thus, in joy and yearning, the foundation for genuine pupilship is laid. Then it is no longer difficult to decide whether or not to accept the consequences of a new approach to life. And, filled with almost boundless energy and power, one will gladly make a start on the second aspect of the fourfold process: making straight the paths.

*The sage makes himself into
an example for the world*

From what we have been explaining, you will have been able to see the path that leads to perfection, and thus to determine whether your pupilship is genuine. You will have realised that, for the genuine pupil, it is not at all difficult to 'make the paths straight'. Such pupils are deeply interested in these things, and it comes quite naturally to them to grasp every opportunity to follow the path of perfection they have seen before them.

The process of 'making the paths straight' is founded on the practice of John-Rosicrucianism, which can be begun as soon as the stage of inner illumination has been reached. In this context, it is very interesting to note how closely the four great possibilities mentioned in the text — *what is imperfect will become perfect, what is crooked will become straight, what is empty will become full, what is worn out will become new* — match the message of salvation which has been proclaimed by all the great world teachers.

Anyone who has strayed from the divine path must first be able to see the true way, the one path. That is the first requirement, and once it has been met, the pupilship of John the Baptist can follow quite naturally. Indeed, it will *have* to follow. This phase consists solely of making the paths straight — of making all the preparations necessary for the great return. It means correcting anything that could possibly obstruct one's return, by engaging in a very revolutionary, new approach to life.

Only then does one become a real pupil of the gnostic

Spiritual School. Or, to put it in the language of ancients: only then is one born in Nazareth, only then does one become a Nazarene, which means a branch on the tree of life. Then one is exempt, separated from the nature of death, and what is empty will be filled.

The nature-born person is empty of the prana of life. So this original astral radiation, the original life-energy of the Mother of Life, needs to flow into the personality system again. In this phase, the candidate is filled with a new soul-power: what was empty is filled anew with the energy of life.

Then the fourth great possibility can be applied: *What is worn out will become new.* The renewal of transfiguration will unfold, and the truth of Lao Tzu's words will be revealed: *With little, 'It' is gained. With much, one deviates from 'It'.*

Lao Tzu's manner of expression is so succinct that we need to be careful not to trivialise it. For these words are in fact a powerful expression of the gnostic path of self-realisation and its intensely revolutionary character.

To become something as to the true self, one needs to empty oneself completely as to the old self. One needs to practise 'not-being'. The whole culture of the realm of death must be given up. The seeker must have the courage to become insignificant, to diminish. *With little, 'It' is gained. With much, one deviates from 'It'.*

Then, by our diminishing, the Other One will be enabled to increase. Then the voice of the rose of the heart will be able to resound, and the meeting with 'It', with Tao, can be celebrated. *That is why, as Lao Tzu says, the sage holds fast to the One, and in this way makes himself into an example for the world.* By practising John-Rosicrucianism, one will indeed set a shining example in the world.

Lao Tzu now goes on to give more precise details about how to diminish so that the Other One can increase:

- 1 one does not seek to shine,
- 2 one does not overrate oneself,
- 3 one does not boast,
- 4 one does not want to be first,
- 5 one stands in non-conflict.

A person who is approaching the four great possibilities will spontaneously fulfil this fivefold self-revolution.

The very self-assertive, nature-born person — and it is to this kind of person that our text refers — is obsessed with the urge for self-improvement. Nowadays, the majority of people, especially in our present race, are very self-assertive. This is yet another indication that the times of the end are fast approaching.

When a nature-born person reaches the limit of his earthly possibilities, there is either degeneration or a powerful urge towards self-improvement. Among the masses, and among those who are psychologically weak or morally defective, the curve will quickly take a downward turn. But in very self-assertive people — who have reached the limit but have no knowledge of how matters really stand — a state of considerable tension will arise. They want to go further; they want to achieve greater, more magnificent things. They are driven by an urge for power — and then there is tension, because the law of nature compels an absolute 'halt'.

Motivated by this powerful urge, more and more people are immersing themselves in intellectual study. This phenomenon is apparent all over the world — a proof that self-assertiveness has reached its limits, and that therefore the end of a period has come. The pursuit of study is a high priority in almost every country. The number of secondary schools, institutes and universities is proliferating rapidly. The whole education system is geared towards it. At the same

time, the number of manual workers, the people who really keep society going, is decreasing. Everywhere in the so-called 'civilised' world, the number of workers is diminishing and there are labour-shortages which governments are attempting to fill with 'immigrant workers'. Meanwhile, the number of graduates is increasing in virtually all fields of study.

Of course, this is bound to lead to crisis situations. It is the signature of the tension which has arisen in the borderland of dialectical nature. As self-assertive nature-born human beings, people want to shine. They want to take pride in their achievements. They want to clothe their status, the cultural level they have attained, with the glitter of prestige. They exert themselves to the utmost to be the first, the best, the greatest. The higher they can climb up the ladder of success, the happier they are. It is no surprise that all this brings with it an intense conflict, and extreme self-maintenance. In the tension-field of the nature-born self-assertiveness the battle for self-maintenance is raging on all fronts. Perhaps you, too, are involved in it, to some extent?

In this way, out of necessity brought on by the escalating labour-shortage, the mechanical human being, the robot, will be born, and the abyss will have been opened for all those intellectuals, doctors and professors, who know everything except the 'one thing needful'.

You probably know all this better than we do. Perhaps you are even at the forefront of it all, because of your position in society. The world and humankind have already been through many such phases. Are the words from chapter 22 of the Tao Te Ching not drawn from the reality of our times?

That is why, like us, you feel Lao Tzu's message to his disciples as a heartfelt cry, sent out to make human beings conscious of the one thing needful, to show them the four

THE SAGE MAKES HIMSELF INTO AN EXAMPLE FOR THE WORLD

great possibilities and make them realise the importance of the fivefold self-revolution before it is too late, before yet another cycle of human development ends in suicide. Self-revolution or self-destruction, that is the issue facing humankind!

That is why the sage, who understands, will dissociate himself completely from all the competition and strife in the tension-field of the dialectical world. He will reject utterly the tendency to use any means to push his way to the top and keep competitors at bay. He will follow the path of the rose and the cross, which will lead him to quite a different kind of wisdom. Then he will behold the dawn of the true life, and discover that the limits have disappeared. And, oh wonder, precisely in this way, by consciously decreasing, 'the Other' will be obtained.

In his non-conflict as to this nature there will nonetheless be a clear, positive victory. It is precisely such people who, in the service of humanity, will fulfil a great task in this earthly vale of tears, the world of the nature of death, and a place will be prepared for them in the pantheon of the immortals. This is the meaning of the final words of chapter 22:

When the Ancients said, 'What is imperfect will become perfect', how could this have been an empty phrase? When someone has attained perfection, everything must yield to him.

The imperfect will become perfect

Perhaps you know the words of Jesus the Lord, from Luke chapter 9, verse 24: 'He who wishes to keep his life shall lose it. But he who is willing to lose his life for my sake, shall keep it.' In the Gospel according to Mark there is a small insertion: 'He who is willing to lose his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel, will keep it' (Mark 8:35).

After what we have said in the previous chapters, you will easily recognise how closely these words match the contents of the Tao Te Ching. Yet again we find proof that the eternal truth has been proclaimed throughout all times. That is why it could not possibly have been an empty phrase when the Ancients, the sublime servants of the spirit, said: *What is imperfect will become perfect* — provided one follows the right path and applies the correct method. The I must decrease; the soul must increase. Then the true human being will be able to manifest itself via the living soul. That is the Universal Doctrine, the glad tidings which have been transmitted throughout all times as an imperishable truth, a gospel.

With this certainty — which no longer needs to be at all uncertain for any pupil of the gnostic Spiritual School — as the basis for our reflections, we would like to consider the closing words of chapter 22: *When someone has attained perfection, everything must yield to him.*

By practising the fivefold self-revolution, the four great possibilities we have been discussing can gradually be freed from their veils and turned into reality. Those who

are engaged in this process will experience that everything must yield to them. In other words, they will be freed from everything dialectical.

This is a miraculous event, and it is helpful to have some idea of what it entails. A tool can prove its effectiveness only if it is used, and only if it is applied in the right way will its proper function be revealed. The human personality is such a tool. It has the task of proving itself. But the tool keeps on being wrongly applied, and so it is destroyed by death, and keeps on having to be regenerated via birth in nature. However, when the living soul begins to guide the personality, death will become a thing of the past and birth in nature will be overcome. Without the living soul-state the personality is always incomplete and will remain so.

This sounds logical enough, so why doesn't humanity understand it? The cause lies in the fact that, when the personality is born, it is equipped with a natural state of consciousness, and people mistake this natural consciousness for the living soul-state. And that makes them think that any shortcomings will gradually disappear if only the natural consciousness is subjected to sufficient culture.

Alas, the nature-born human being will discover only after deep, painful and mostly very prolonged experience that the imperfect can never be made perfect unless all aspects of the perfect have been brought together and enabled to function in combination.

The great miracle of God's creation is that every aspect of the perfect human being is alive in itself. This means that, in fact, life is threefold, for there is the life of the personality, the life of the soul and the life of the spirit. Only when these three are combined, and each one is in the divinely intended condition, will the true, divine human being be able to live.

If you understand this, and as a personality you are willing to strive for this one great goal, then what the Ancients said no longer needs to be an empty saying: *The imperfect will become perfect*. If any striving mortal truly sees before him the threefold way to perfection and accepts the consequences, everything and everyone will have to yield to him. Why, one might ask. Can one be certain of that?

The whole universe is moved by natural laws. There are many laws in nature, and many effects produced by those laws, which are suspended or reversed by the laws of the higher nature. But the highest law is that of Tao itself. This law causes, if necessary, the dissolution of everything not in harmony with it. All the lower, all the undivine, everything which is only to be explained from the personality-being, must yield to the higher, which is of Tao itself.

Those who live in harmony with Tao, those who orientate themselves towards Tao and make the three into one, are in this way invested with great power — the greatest power in heaven or on earth. There is no power which is higher than that of the gnostic magician. That is why he stands in the world as an authority.

Those who possess this power will not, of course, misuse it by applying the cunning methods of the imperfect personality-being. The personality enforces his will, his decision, his point of view, whenever the power or the opportunity to do so comes his way. The gnostic human being, however, does not fight; he does not battle against unwillingness, impotence or inability. If he were to enter the battlefield in this way, it would be of no benefit to him, seen in the light of perfection. Moreover his own soul would suffer harm. 'What doth it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, but harm his own soul?'

You, as a pupil of the Spiritual School of the Golden

Rosycross, are a personality-being. You possess a soul, or at least a soul in the making. And as a Lord in your midst, you possess the nuclear power of your microcosm, the living rose. Until these three have been combined completely into one, in keeping with divine law, you are still imperfect.

But nothing and no one can prevent you from impelling the imperfect to perfection, by following the path shown to you in the Spiritual School. Everything, but everything, will then have to yield to you in this!

If you walk this path, the words of Jesus, in Mark chapter 9, will also apply to you: 'Verily, I say to you, there are those among you who will not taste death until they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power.'

He who speaks little is spontaneous and natural.

What is it that prevents high winds from lasting all morning and heavy rains from lasting all day? It is the activity of heaven and earth. If heaven and earth cannot last long, how much less can man.

That is why he who conforms to Tao will become one with Tao. He who conforms to virtue, will become one with virtue. He who conforms to error, will become one with error.

Being one with Tao means to obtain Tao. Being one with virtue means to obtain virtue. Being one with error means to obtain error.

Not having sufficient faith means to have no faith at all.

Tao Te Ching chapter 23

23-i

He who speaks little is spontaneous and natural

He who speaks little is spontaneous and natural. These words of Lao Tzu will not seem strange to you, for you are familiar with the periods of silence during our renewal conferences and we have often spoken to you about the importance of being silent. But you also know that much always lies hidden in Lao Tzu's so very concise language. One single word of his often lays open to us the whole of gnostic philosophy.

That is why we would like to devote more than superficial attention to the first verse of chapter 23. If we want to try to fathom the full depth of what Lao Tzu means here, we will need to unveil the mystery of speech and sound.

The first thing you need to bear in mind is that human speech is always closely connected with two processes: the process of breathing and the process of thinking. Unless you breathe you cannot speak. Without a properly functioning mind you cannot express any language in sound. The larynx — the organ with which you bring forth articulated sounds — is of relatively minor significance compared to the respiration and the thought processes.

When various authors state that the human being can speak and is distinguished from other animals because he has a perpendicular larynx, this is only a partial truth. For all the organs of the material body are necessary if we are to function properly in matter.

In both animal and human heads and hearts are several minute organs which connect them directly with the astral spheres. With many species of animals and human types it is not so much the heart as the solar plexus which plays a large

part in that process. This fundamental connection between the living, material being and the astral sphere determines the quality, the whole nature of the creature concerned.

The astral plane is not uniform throughout. It is made up of countless domains, each one qualitatively different from all the others, and in each one of these astral domains, countless possibilities and situations are manifested. So it is easy to understand that every human being possesses an individual astral type, a personal astral key. This key is expressed in every aspect of his being, and is present not only within him but also around him. On this factor rests the whole nature and quality of a person's breathing.

By this we mean to say that, even though we all live in the same respiration field, in the same atmosphere, each of us still possesses a highly individual, personal respiration-field, which is formed and prepared by our personal astral condition.

So with every breath we take, both the head and the heart will function in a way determined by our astral condition at that moment. In this way, life really does arise from breath, in more than one sense. From our breath arise not only our mental activities, but also our desires. There is an inner, astral basis which arises via the chakras, and there is an outer astral activity, which connects with the inner, astral basis via the breath.

Whenever a thought is produced by the brain or a desire is born in the heart, these emanate from the head and heart and project themselves into the astral substance which surrounds us on all sides, in the same way as a fish is surrounded by water. These projections are then reflected back and in this way our fundamental astral nature, our respiration field and our breath, as well as our thought life and desire life, are kept within a certain framework.

Now imagine that thoughts and feelings are aroused in you which do not correspond to your fundamental astral type; they are alien to it. Then they will always have been caused by some influence on your respiration-field, for the other route, via the chakras and the etheric body, is too heavily obstructed by the blood, the nerve fluid and the endocrine system. So how do these influences and their subsequent results penetrate into your respiration field? Well, that happens through speech. When a person speaks, he does so during an exhalation. One does not speak when one is inhaling. You can only do that in a forced way — artificially — and only for a few brief moments, and your voice will sound very unnatural.

When you inhale, the astral substance in your respiration field enters your head and impels you to some sort of mental activity. Then, on the outbreath, you use your voice. By speaking, you activate the image, the power, the vibration which the inhaled substance conveyed to you. You convert the astral values into a living reality, which is magically active. So speech becomes a creative act by means of the air exhaled.

By dividing the exhaled air, the *prana*, into various currents of vibration, in keeping with the thought-image behind them, and in this way conducting the differentiated prana outward via the larynx, the mental and thus the astral become audible. They are converted into sound. Consonants and vowels form words in magic characters, sound-images.

All these sound-images have their origin on the astral plane. So this primary origin is invoked by the magic of speech; it is vivified, liberated, activated. This activity, this magic, naturally has results. These results may be helpful and liberating, but they can also be encapsulating and dangerous, as much for the sender as for the receiver.

That is why Lao Tzu warns that *he who speaks little is spontaneous and natural*. Every nature-born human being has his own, fundamental astral nature. So his primary concern should be to prevent this state of being from deteriorating or crystallising any further than it has already. The human tendency to chatter on meaninglessly leads not only to the wastage of creative energy, but also to serious damage, not only to the person concerned but also to others.

Those who speak little, because they are conscious of these things, because they know what they are doing and are aware of their responsibility, remain themselves and are completely natural. Then the foundation is present for liberating self-realisation.

So protect yourself from meaningless chatter; avoid gossip and scandal-mongering. The so-called higher creative power is many times more harmful than the lower creative power. Sometimes people have the tendency make their thoughts known to others in a very invasive way. Standing right next to them, leaning over them, almost, they pour out their word-streams, spewing their criticism and stirring up their listeners with their exhaled air, infecting them with their astral state of being. You must protect yourself from this kind of behaviour.

Imagine how it would be if some words were transmitted to you by the Gnosis, which aroused thoughts and feelings in you that did not correspond with your fundamental astral type at all. In other words, suppose that, through the words spoken in the temples of the Rosycross, forces were brought into your respiration field which deviated totally from your ordinary state of being. You could not avoid inhaling these values, even though they are alien to you, because by listening to the testimony of the Gnosis you would have opened yourself to them.

In most cases, this would initially give rise to high winds

HE WHO SPEAKS LITTLE IS SPONTANEOUS AND NATURAL

and heavy rains, a veritable storm of conflicting thoughts and feelings, for your inner nature would not have been approached in harmony but in disharmony. Your fundamental nature would be under attack, and so it would tend to react defensively.

And now the crucial question is: with what words will you respond? Will they be words of opposition, of protest, of misconception? Or will they be words of self-surrender? In the former case, the high winds and heavy rains will intensify; in the latter

Being one with Tao means to obtain Tao

From what we have said so far about chapter 23 you will have understood some of the difficulties and tensions human beings run into when they try to use the faculty of speech they have been given. With the human race in its present state, conflict situations are inevitable, not only in the degenerating sense, but in the liberating sense as well, because speech is a creative faculty, a creative organ. Through this creative faculty the astral forces invoked by your life-system and circulating in it are activated, brought into the respiratory system, with all attendant consequences.

All who are confronted by this great problem, are being compelled to solve it by the intercosmic radiations now interpenetrating the earth-field. The higher creative organ of the human being must be freed and applied in the proper way, if one is to avoid descending into the degeneration of the lower passions. In the long course of humanity's development there have always been, and there will always be, periods during which this great requirement is set. That is why these words of Lao Tzu are so relevant now. Every single human being is obliged to find a solution to this great conflict.

This solution needs to begin with reticence — with speaking little so as to be spontaneous and natural. You also need to protect yourself from others' speech-delirium and avoid opening yourself to speech that has no point or is negative, for this can contaminate you with very undesirable astral influences.

Perhaps it has occurred to you that even if you did not speak, thoughts and feelings would still be running through

your mind and heart all the time. Surely is also dangerous if thoughts, feelings and desires fall below a certain level?

That is indeed the case, but by putting thoughts and feelings into words you make them `present', and many times more active, in the same way as something which has been created is much more active than something which is still only at the conceptual stage.

We have been giving you this information to help you find a solution, but we have told you enough, now, about the negative side of this subject and would like to return to the positive aspects. So let us imagine, again, what happens when, through the words of the Gnosis — which are directed to you and to which you have opened yourself — your whole natural system is affected via your respiration. For when this happens, you are assailed by an astral light-power which is not, or not yet, yours. Naturally, this causes tension in you, for your natural astral basis exerts itself spontaneously: heavy rains fall, and high winds blow up. Unless ... unless you become `spontaneous' !

The word-image Lao Tzu is using here is meant to convey the idea of `not-doing', or wu wei, a concept already familiar to you. If you are certain that the Gnosis is touching you and disturbing your respiration-field, do not talk your tensions out. Stop trying to explain all those inner storms and bring yourself into a state of not-doing, by disengaging yourself totally from any tendency to resist or struggle, and surrendering yourself to the Gnosis.

If you do that, if you engage fully in that, then all the storms will cease. By entering into not-doing, into the inner silence, into self-surrender and reticence, you will be linked with what Lao Tzu calls `virtue', and you will be standing on the path that leads to Tao. *Being one with Tao means to obtain Tao. Being one with virtue means to obtain virtue.*

Those who do not do this will become one with error and will obtain error. When, following Lao Tzu, we use the word 'error', this is not meant to make you think of terrible misdemeanours, but of the idea that every action, every approach that leads you away from the Gnosis and maintains you in your nature-born state, is an error.

Let us explore this idea more deeply, so that you can understand it in the right way. Although there are many praiseworthy things to be observed in pupils of the young Gnosis, by far the majority of them have maintained their ordinary nature-born state. In other words, they have allowed their fundamental astral nature to remain the same. The ordinary alternations of good and evil, positive and negative, are clearly evident in them.

Now, however, the Gnosis is addressing them, assailing their minds and hearts in the way described. Some sort of conflict, whether minor or major, is then inevitable, for what is entering their being conflicts with their fundamental astral nature. It stabs through that nature like a sword-thrust. It does *not* conflict with wu wei, with being 'oneself', with being 'natural' as a pupil — for in this state one is prepared. But in those who are not prepared, there rages a storm which does not abate.

Then these people visit each other and talk about the subject discussed in the temple, about the touch they experienced in the temple. At this point, pandemonium can break loose. For what are they speaking about? Will they be speaking about the new Word in them? No, because it has not yet been born. Why not? Because they have maintained their fundamental astral status, resulting from their birth in this nature. Will the soul in them begin to speak, the new soul? No question of it. Any new soul-power in them is still confined to the etheric double and cannot enter into the head

sanctuary, because it is still occupied by the old astral basis.

All kinds of misunderstandings therefore arise in the course of the conversation. There is no evidence of the accord that would result from understanding, on the basis of wu wei, but instead there are many opinions, often completely at variance with one another. So the misunderstanding is an error, a battle of words, waged to prove someone right. But what kind of 'right' is this? The 'right' of the fundamental astral nature of one of the participants, often accompanied by an unhealthy tenacity and stubbornness. That, too, is an error!

If there were nothing more to it than that, the only result of the error would be a distinct lack of fruitfulness. But all that debate and argument actually amounts to a creative orgy, to one great, formidable impurity. For the raucous clamouring of the participants has made all kinds of dialectical astral forces 'present', and this whole plethora of astral influences is introduced into their respiration fields. The participants have assaulted each other. They have committed a moral error of the first order, and everything the Gnosis wanted to convey to them would have withdrawn straight away, right at the outset of the conversation. So not only has the touch been rendered useless, but it has also been turned into the cause of an intense moral deterioration. Therefore, let it penetrate into your consciousness that: *He who conforms to error, will become one with error.*

You must understand that there are various forms and aspects of moral deterioration. The kind discussed here is the most serious. Every quarrel is an error and an affront to the personalities of all parties involved. Please realise, also, that the results of such an error are not confined to those directly concerned. The astral results of such quarrels contaminate the entire life-sphere of humankind. It is one great immorality! So is it not alarming that a gnostic Spiritual School, by doing

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its work for the whole of humankind, can be the cause of such a thing?

How does this come about? Through lack of faith and trust, and its consequences, as a result of which the fundamental astral state is maintained. *Not having sufficient faith*, says Lao Tzu, *means to have no faith at all*.

23-iii

Not having sufficient faith means to have no faith at all

We have explained at some length how much every human being is dependent on and controlled by his or her astral state of being. If the fundamental astral state resulting from one's birth in nature cannot be sufficiently altered, if one's astral imprisonment cannot be ended, one cannot hope for even one moment to experience pupilship in a liberating way.

The task is this: to become one with Tao, to become one with virtue. The power with which this oneness is attained is the power of faith. With a strong faith in the reality and truth of the Gnosis, and an intense yearning to participate in that high reality, one will be able to break through any obstacle that might exist between oneself and one's goal. Faith conquers everything! That is why the wondrous faculty of faith needs to be fully developed, if it is to achieve results. So Lao Tzu's saying, that *not having sufficient faith means to have no faith at all*, leaves nothing to be desired as far as clarity is concerned.

It is a good idea to begin by asking oneself whereabouts in the body the faculty of faith is seated. Is it connected with any organ? Or is it an organ?

If you begin to investigate these things, you will discover that faith is not only an emotional state, but equally involves the mind, and especially the will. Originating in the heart and in the head, faith spreads throughout the whole being. We are irradiated by it, so that straight away we are affected by it not only physically, but also psychologically. The physical state of faith is evidence that the blood, the nerve-fluid and the endocrine system are under the influence of

the faith-vibration. If they were not, there would be no question of all-fulfilling faith.

This activity, which is sometimes so very powerful, must clearly be supported by the etheric double, which in turn must be supported by the astral body. The seven chakras of the astral body must have opened for the light of the Gnosis, with all the attendant consequences. It is also important to understand the great difference between positive faith and its power, and faith in its negative form.

The power of faith in the positive sense develops through two astral elements, that of the chakra respiration and that of the ordinary respiration. The first takes following route: chakras — etheric body — material body. The second route is as follows: the personal respiration-field — the head sanctuary — the breath — speech. When these two astral, influences and processes meet and converge, in such a way that what is within corresponds completely to what is without, we can speak of a positive state of faith. It is clear, we hope, that such a positive state of faith can only come into being through walking the path, in total self-surrender.

So now let us contrast this with faith in its negative form. For karmic reasons, or because of hereditary influences, or because much sorrow has driven him to it, a person might become interested in a particular religious orientation. If this interest is to deliver a positive result, then the orientation needs to be combined with a liberating way of life. If this approach to life is not present, the seven chakras of the astral body will not be affected and the astral influence resulting from the person's faith will only affect him via his respiration-field, his brain and his speech. Part of his personality-system will thus be touched by a new influence, while the other part, the greater part, will remain totally unaffected.

Naturally, this is bound to give rise to all kinds of undesirable conditions. By using this one-sided method of exerting astral influence, religious revival preachers can goad great masses of people into a partial, and thus a negative faith-ecstasy. But it is a straw fire, which rapidly burns out and often leaves behind unpleasant traces.

So now we have seen the difference between positive faith and negative faith, and we are ready to ask what faith is capable of.

Let us take as an example a person who genuinely begins to yearn for the living salvation contained in the Gnosis. This yearning, born in the heart, will manifest its influence in the head so that, alongside the yearning, understanding will arise, and this will lead to an activation of the will. The person will understand that, if his yearning is to result in attainment, possession, a new life of action will be necessary, an approach to life which is at one with 'virtue' and completely disengaged from error.

If the person takes this course of action, a remarkable transformation will occur in him, as the precursor of transfiguration. His chakras will begin to rotate in the opposite direction to the one characteristic of this nature. Soul-power will accumulate in the etheric body. The four holy foods will circulate throughout the whole of the material system.

After this process of preparation, the moment will come when the real, all-conquering faith is born. It will announce itself as a mighty surge of power throughout the whole being. One's whole being will be filled with the true power of faith. The Bible says of this power: 'If your faith were as small as a grain of mustard seed, you would be able to move mountains.' And 'faith is the foundation of things not seen.'

All this has to do with a new astral power, the light-power of the Gnosis, which can, if one has been prepared and trained

NOT HAVING SUFFICIENT FAITH MEANS TO HAVE NO FAITH AT ALL

in the right way, be applied magically for the salvation of humankind. This magical power is applied with the higher creative organ. The living word is spoken, in the same way as when Jesus the Lord uttered the words: 'I will, be clean.'

That is how you can know and experience what faith, as Lao Tzu understood it, can do.

Standing on tiptoe, one cannot remain upright. Taking strides which are too large, one cannot walk.

He who wishes to radiate light is not enlightened. He who wishes to be the true human being will not surpass others. Boasting, he gains no merit. Reaching for the top, he is not superior.

Compared to Tao, this behaviour is like left-over food or other decaying remnants, which are always abhorred.

That is why those who live in Tao do not concern themselves with it.

Tao Te Ching 24

24-i
Selfishness

The meaning of chapter 24 of the Tao Te Ching is very clear. In a few simple lines, Lao Tzu sketches the habits of the ordinary, nature-born human being. He does it in a way that is so striking, so relevant to us now, that we are left wondering what should astonish us the most: the fact that Lao Tzu was able, thousands of years ago, to typify so accurately the twentieth century human being, or the fact that throughout all those thousands of years nothing about the nature-born human being seems to have changed.

But your astonishment will rapidly fade if you are willing to realise that, in fact, the psychological disposition of the nature-born human being is not susceptible to change. External conditions may alter, but nature-born human beings remain inescapably true to their nature, which is essentially selfish. Selfishness, in its various gradations, is the primal urge of nature. It is not possible for human beings to free themselves from it unless they give up the self completely.

The deepest and most crystallised form of selfishness is that of the rock-hard, I-central human being who, from the cradle to the grave, is totally absorbed in his own self and his own interests. Such a person does not maintain a single emotional tie; no family ties — such as a bond with his mother, marriage partner or child — affect him. This form of selfishness, which shuts out everyone and everything, is below even the animal level, for even in the animal kingdom ties of love are formed, albeit temporarily, between the mother animal and her young, and the mother may often perform acts of self-sacrifice in order to protect her offspring.

That is why, nowadays, people who show this form of selfishness — giving themselves up completely to their sub-animal lusts and desires — are regarded as being mentally disturbed.

Yet, in all countries, there is now a rapid increase in this type of selfishness. This is proof that humanity is fast descending below the level of what can still be called human, and it is a clear indication of the approaching end-phase.

A higher form of selfishness is the kind which includes the family, although the self remains the central factor. In this group, for a shorter or longer period of time, blood-ties speak a clear language. This language is easy to explain, because caring for members of one's family, and doing things for them, is obviously self-actualising and self-reinforcing in the natural sense, and therefore has the effect of considerably expanding the self. It is a kind of selfishness in which all the highly prized virtues of fatherhood and motherhood are expressed.

Familial selfishness has been subjected to various forms of cultural conditioning and is regulated and supported by many laws. The fact that it *is* a form of selfishness is evident from the joys and exertions, the eulogies and pride people show when their family members achieve success in life, even if this success is not always gained on a proper moral basis.

When two families squabble because they both want the same thing, the fact that selfishness is at the root of family ties becomes even more clearly evident. The two families may be quite good, individually, but nevertheless a fierce conflict develops between them, and it is conflict with the same astral foundations, fed by the same astral forces that once roused the primitive cave-dweller to action. The forms of the conflict may differ, but the essence and the results always remain the same: combat and defeat.

Selfishness can also expand to include a whole group, nation or race. We know the results of this kind of selfishness only too well. If an individual is infected by the selfishness-psychosis of a group or nation, it is certain that the other forms of selfishness will not be far away. On the contrary, they can be aroused by it, for the interests of the individual human being can very easily be threatened by those of the group. The forces of selfishness in the individual are then put under much greater pressure, and the result is inevitable: an outbreak of conflict!

However, if we are to understand properly what Lao Tzu means, we should not forget that when selfishness develops in the upward sense, this is always accompanied by a moral development. Countless are the examples of human beings who sacrifice their own interests for those of their family, group, country, or nation, or, to a lesser extent, their race. World-literature is full of such heroic tales. Perhaps it is necessary to take many of them with a pinch of salt, because the readiness to make sacrifices is so often interwoven with some form of selfishness. But nevertheless the fact remains that the higher forms of selfishness *can* go hand in hand with moral development, stimulated by religion and humanism and supported by legislation.

So now humanity is at last approaching the highest rung on the ladder of selfishness-culture, which is naturally highly camouflaged by various forms of morality. After having reached that highest rung, naturally whilst retaining all the lower rungs, because that's how ladders work, human beings will discover that there is no higher rung. This will signal the end of the whole Aryan era, just as we have now come to the end of a *phase* in that Aryan era. This highest rung of the ladder has to do with the merging, the integration, the unification of the whole human race. First it is the individual, then

the family, then the tribe or nation, then the race, and finally the whole of humanity. In every era, and in every phase within an era, this entire course of development is followed to the end. The final phase is when all distinctions between nations, communities of nations and races are removed.

Signs of this approaching world-revolution are already clearly evident. People are clamouring more and more loudly for total integration. All over the world, church members are campaigning for the removal of religious differences. Political power blocs have already been formed and we can clearly distinguish two great groups, two interest groups into which humanity is split: the Eastern bloc and the Western bloc. Both groups know that, if they keep on maintaining their own selfish standpoints, the whole human race will be annihilated. Meanwhile, it is becoming clear to everyone that gone for good are the times when there could be a front line where the dead and wounded fell, with the staff quarters for the war directors safely behind it, and an even more heavily protected nest for the various governments and leading economic groups still further away. Furthermore, modern technological equipment has eliminated the possibility of one side being able to annihilate the other by surprise. So, since the fundamental principle of selfishness is self-protection, both sides will be obliged to unite.

It is possible and even probable that, before people recognise this obligation as inescapable right across the board, a good deal of conflict will still occur, but the progress of the culture of the last phase can no longer be held back.

A large group of authorities is deeply convinced of the need for a new order of things to be established in our times. Also, there is actually a daily, unbroken contact between the top groups from the two camps, both political and religious,

even though most of these exchanges are not publicised in the world press.

Their question is not: 'Shall we do it?', but 'How shall we do it? How shall we get the people — the masses — on our side and justify this enormous about-face of all the values we formerly taught them to regard as sacrosanct?'

But essentially, there is no choice, because the whole human race is standing with its back to the wall. At first people imagined that the effects of exploding a nuclear bomb could be confined to the enemy, but now they realise the full extent of the risk, and that is why the whole choir will soon *have* to sing: 'All men will become brothers'. Many churches and religious movements, too, are seeking enforced unification.

Why is all this happening? Because the culture of selfishness, the struggle for existence, the fear of death and destruction, are driving humanity towards this final step. Forced unification or mutual destruction: humanity will have to choose between these two extremes!

Driven by need and the fear of death, humanity is choosing the former alternative. When it is attained, the limit of human selfishness-culture will have been reached. But bear in mind that the other, lower aspects of selfishness will still go on existing, for they are ineradicable.

So the great unity of nations and races will only be able to be maintained through the use of force, with the cooperation and guidance of all the authorities. The world-government of the end-phase will therefore be fascist, and all people will be forced to become 'brothers': the final clause in the law of self-maintenance.

Meanwhile everyone is standing on tiptoe, stretching and straining as much as they can, so as to grab as much plunder

as possible. They are trying to take huge strides, so as to reach their goals as quickly as possible. In the beginning the churches will, in their delusion, speak about nothing else than the light that will now be able to shine throughout the world, the light that is the will of Christ.

But the fierce battle to become or to seem the greatest and the best will go on. In their monster corporations, the practitioners of selfishness will now exploit humanity wholesale.

Anyone who observes this race to the abyss with any measure of soul-quality, and hence objectively, will feel nauseous at the sight of such great deception. *Compared to Tao, this behaviour is like left-over food or other decaying remnants, which are always abhorred.*

Do you intend to take part in this deception? Or will you — seeking the way of Tao — choose the other path?

24-ii

The walls of Jericho

In our initial discussion of chapter 24 of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching we showed you where human selfishness will ultimately lead. One may complain about it, particularly if one has to taste defeat in the struggle for existence or in a conflict of interests, but the fact remains that selfishness and hence I-centrality are essential characteristics of the nature-born human being. Wherever life awakens in the nature of death, it is always surrounded by danger, and in this way selfishness, the survival instinct, automatically emerges. As creatures of this nature, all human beings, without exception, are selfish.

As you read this you are probably being stirred by a range of feelings and thoughts, because you do not find it pleasant to be called selfish. You feel rather insulted. Unless you belong to that large group of people who are so deeply absorbed in their nature-born state that they find the essential characteristics of human nature completely natural, you are bound to feel somewhat stung when you hear these sober facts about selfishness.

That, in itself, is remarkable, for a reaction like that is not characteristic of the ordinary human instincts. We are not talking about the resentment some people feel as the result of some past defeat in the business of selfishness, but the feeling of disappointment, the feeling of being unmasked, of being thrown off a pedestal. One of the causes of that pain is your knowledge of the Bible and the Universal Doctrine, which clearly show selfishness as the source of unholiness. Another cause is the voice of the rose in you, the voice of your conscience, which constantly appeals to you on account of your behaviour.

The result is that a constant flow of thoughts surges through you: 'I really should do this differently. I should do this better. And that must disappear, as soon as possible.' In this way, an inner conflict develops between your moral aspirations and your selfish behaviour. You will certainly have come across a whole range of moralists who, from mystical, humane and other angles, encourage you to continue with this inner struggle.

However, the struggle is hopeless, for human nature cannot be changed in any fundamental way. It is impossible. Whenever, as is so often the case, you experience the conflict between morality and selfishness, you try to settle it in favour of morality. But you will find that you always suffer defeat, and you remain the same as before.

You possess a relatively high morality. This is something that can be learned; driven by necessity and suffering, one can train oneself to act in amoral way, just as one can learn the habits of civilisation. One can learn to act as if one is radiating light; one can learn to be pleasant, and to appear mystical. This is not a question of hypocrisy, but as personality-beings we are capable of imagining how a gnostic, a reborn soul-being, might behave. In this way we learn how to seem pleasant and acceptable, and we learn to put on mystical airs.

But selfishness cannot be destroyed. It is an integral part of human nature. It was Lao Tzu's aim in chapter 24 to make this clear to his pupils. You, too, are trying to use your moral aspirations not only to keep yourself under control but also to live your pupilship.

You poor thing! Don't you know that your efforts to impose moral behaviour on yourself are serving no other purpose than the defence of a certain aspect of selfishness? This is your line of reasoning: 'It would really be wonderful if I could be a good pupil; if I were to possess the new soul-state; if I were to comply with the requirements of pupilship; if I were to attain this or that

in the sense of the Gnosis' — and so on. Mostly, you replace the word 'I' with 'we', because it sounds better. But 'we', or in other words 'I', do not have any success, because everything 'I' want and desire is nothing else than an effort to lodge the I safely in a particular aspect of selfishness.

This urge for self-preservation fills your whole being. It makes you exert yourself to the utmost. You stand on tiptoe and stretch upwards as far you can, in order to grasp what you desire. But you can't keep it up. You can't remain upright. You try bring some speed into your life and you try, as far as possible and as far as your legs can stretch, to drive yourself in the desired direction. But to no avail!

After numerous failures, you begin to take it easy. For you soon realise that the others have not succeeded with their moral re-armament either. Then the I starts to put on an act. It talks about light, and 'radiates' so-called light, and what then emerges is an astral state which has nothing to do with light. But it is one of your range of moral armaments, and you placate yourself with it. You become very busy; you undertake all kinds of activities for the School of the Rosycross and its work and you manifest your personality in what you do. You try to personify the true human being, but without success. You talk a great deal about your dedication, but it does not have the desired results. Straining yourself, you leap as high as you can, but you land on the hard ground of your state of being. Whatever you do, the end is negative. You are not a hypocrite —you are only playing the game of moral re-armament. But the armaments turn out to consist of nothing but gilded cardboard and delusion.

So we are obliged to draw this conclusion: *Compared to Tao, this behaviour is like left-over food or other decaying remnants, which are always abhorred.*

Anyone who attempts self-realisation in the way described,

will end up following the course of development described in the previous chapter: the course of primitive individualism, which terminates in a state of enforced unification.

Consider the reality of our young gnostic Brotherhood. Our pupils unmistakably form a group. They are all familiar to some extent with group unity. But do they really form a community of the genuine, living soul-state? Have they transcended their natural state of being, and thus their fundamental, animal selfishness?

If the answer to these questions is no, is it not the case, then, that the group's existence is being maintained by means of moral re-armament? Constantly repeated agreements, constantly renewed reflection, constant corrective measures — and time and time again the disillusioning discovery that selfishness has not disappeared. People wound each other with their personal tendencies, with their behaviour, and it causes much suffering.

So in deepest essence, your life has not become any easier. With your pronounced individualism you have undertaken a certain course which has brought you, now, into a community. And because your selfishness has not disappeared you have submitted yourself to a law: numerous rules regulate life in society. All that has ever been, comes back in some other form. The sun rises and the sun sets, and everything remains the same. Everyone is overcome with weariness.

So the destination of humanity as a whole has already been reached by our group community of individualists. They have reached the limits of their development. It is not possible to possess more morality than you do. You have made the very most of your possibilities, and now you stand at the border. So the School now faces either the end of its existence — for what more can its pupils do — or the breakthrough!

If any individual or group wants to transcend selfish-

ness, the ordinary path of moral development must first be followed as quickly as possible until the lawful end is reached, the limit of what it is humanly possible to attain. The whole arsenal of moral armaments will have to be exhausted before it will be possible to cross the border. But still, because of the suction power of selfishness and self-maintenance, the group keeps on being drawn back into the desert.

When one's efforts to behave morally bring so much sorrow and defeat, one is inclined to wonder whether, in fact, it is useless or even wrong to try to maintain high moral standards in the group.

But no, for ultimately all these efforts and failures make the individual and the group susceptible to self-surrender. In other words, you become willing to give up every selfish urge — for instance, the urge to impose your point of view on others — in the service of the one life which is of the soul, and which will lead to the true, promised land. Only the person who lives in Tao will transcend selfishness.

The soul-quality which is accumulating in your etheric body because of your participation in the Spiritual School, must be able to manifest itself; it must be able to develop into the Other One. Therefore, in order to awaken the Other One, who is dormant in you, you need to silence the old human being, consistently, day and night; you need to subordinate and give up every urge of nature, in the service of the Other One growing in you. Only the person who lives in Tao will transcend selfishness. The soul which must take shape and grow in the etheric body, has to follow entirely different norms of life. The life-field of the soul is quite different from the dense earthly sphere. If you want to leave the desert in which you are wandering, this is the only way: to practise self-surrender, consciously, right down to the smallest details, always regarding others as more excellent than your-

self and applying the highest standards of morality.

This means subordinating all desires — yours and those of your friends and relations — to the laws of Tao, to the norms of the School and the Work. That alone is the practise, the essence, of the law of love. 'Love God above everything, and your neighbour as yourself.' If you subordinate yourself to the laws of Tao, you will, in your interaction with your neighbours, your fellow human beings, test, help and spur them onward with the one law of divine love.

Once this approach to life has been established absolutely in you, the soul will be born and, step by step, the Seven-Spirit will enter into connection with it. In that process — if you can understand the symbolism — you will march seven times around the place called Jericho. It is the beloved place known to us as 'the new life-field'. At last, after the seventh time, the walls that separate you from the essence of renewal will collapse, and you will be free.

So we have seen how your course through life oscillates between the two poles of selfishness and morality. They are in conflict with each other, they try to eradicate each other, but without success. If things take a negative turn, selfishness can completely win the struggle. The individual then becomes sub-animal. If the development is positive, the person will be driven to a border. If he cannot cross that border, he will remain, as the ancient legends say, wandering in the desert for forty years (because forty is the number of completion). In other words, he will remain locked in the struggle between selfishness and morality.

Selfishness is like a snake which keeps on menacing and stinging you. Morality tries to make you immune to this danger. It is the consuming fire in which the nature-born person burns. It is the hell you make for yourself, and it includes the highest possible state of morality.270

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The whole group of the young Gnosis now stands before that border, thanks be to God! That is why they are feeling the fierce pain of despair, thanks be to God! That is why there is that scorching fire, thanks be to God! That is why there is the despairing cry: 'What more, in God's name, can we do?' Whoever has reached the stage at which this cry of the heart can be uttered, can understand what has to be understood, thanks be to God!

For there is an entirely different state of life. There is another morality, which one neither may nor can call 'morality' any longer. We call it self-surrender. That means subordinating your entire life, all your personal interests, everything that typifies selfishness, in the most individual as well as in the broadest sense, in personal as well as in impersonal things, to the life in Tao, to the essence of Tao. It means subordinating your whole being to the School and the Gnosis. It means being, like the young Jesus, immersed completely in the things of the Father. It means saying, if necessary, to your natural, selfish urges what Jesus the Lord said to his mother: 'Woman, what have you to do with me? Must I not be about my Father's business?' That is the life in Tao. That is how one gains participation in divine love. That is how to liberate the soul. That is how the walls of Jericho are sent tumbling down.

As a School, as a group, we are standing before the walls. Let us not sink down in anguish and despair at our lack of understanding, and let us not reproach each other on account of our natural state of selfishness, but rather, let us rejoice and march seven times around the walls.

24-iii

Devotion to Tao

To conclude our discussion of chapter 24 it would perhaps be useful to remind you of a fact very much emphasised by the Universal Doctrine; the fact that, as long as the personal ego, or self-seeking as a state of consciousness, is not completely and utterly devoted to what we call the soul, there neither can nor will be any question of a new state of life.

But this does not mean one should begin with the complete destruction of the personal ego. Because as long as the soul, which is the instrument of the higher consciousness, is not yet growing in you, you still need the instrument of the lower consciousness in order to keep your personality-vehicles together as a threefold unit. Furthermore, the I-central state, through its self-sacrifice, is needed to lead the personality through the hours of night until the moment of dawn, when the soul-being will be able to take over the guidance of the personality-system.

So the I-being, the self-seeking human being, has a task. This is something we want you to realise very clearly indeed, and it explains why the holy legends dealing with the lower, earthly self's pilgrimage say that the traveller will never be able to reach the goal on the other shore.

If you were to realise that, the problems now troubling you would take on quite another aspect. The nature-born human being, the self-seeking human being, has a task to perform. There is a goal underlying his existence. Being a self-seeking individual does not mean he is evil, or a sinner, or an abnormality in the All-Manifestation. But in his present state, and in the life-field in which he lives, his consciousness and his

nature must be applied in order to set free the Other One, the soul-being. He will only be a sinner, an abnormal, evil creation if he does not fulfil that one task which underlies his whole existence.

All these ideas are contained in the familiar story of the double figure John-Jesus: John, who performs his work of self-surrender; Jesus, the soul-being, who is freed and baptised by John. Jesus the Lord calls John the greatest of earth-born human beings, for it is John who makes possible the birth of the true human being, the soul-being.

Perhaps you will now understand how important it is that, as a nature-born human being, you not only realise your limitations and your earthly possibilities, but at the same time discover your task and make it the governing factor in your life. That is why we keep on telling you about the new approach to life, about the way of life that needs to be adopted by those who are willing to fulfil the task they have been called to by God. If that is what you want, if you walk that path, then, and only then, will the Christ be manifested in you.

You may often have heard the expression, 'Christ takes all our sins upon himself', and the biblical saying, 'Though your sins be red as scarlet, I shall wash them whiter than snow.' But you need to realise the full significance of these words. The Christ is the soul with which the Seven-Spirit has been linked. If, in obedience to the call, you follow the path of the endura, the path of self-surrender, and the soul really comes to life in you, then this living soul will draw up everything that lies enclosed within your microcosm into the new life-field and impart to this whole being the signature of the new life-state. In other words, the divine Son will be manifested in you as the saviour, the sublime Redeemer. He will take all your sins upon himself.

How must this path be walked? The method has already been shown to you many, many times. The key is devotion to Tao. You need to completely reorientate your path through life; you need to 'turn around', just as Christian Rosycross did on the evening before Easter. This 'turning around' means consciously surrendering your whole nature-born personality, which means giving up all self-seeking, all self-serving. These things are the cause of all sin and human suffering, and you will have to reject them, clearly and consciously. From that moment on, you will have to serve and obey Tao, which is transpersonal love.

The nature-born person of the present era is a very crystallised being as far as his personality-vehicles are concerned. His nature, his consciousness and his organs are entirely attuned to the life-sphere in which he exists. The soul cannot live in that life-sphere. At most, the soul can call him, and stimulate him to seek and approach the kingdom of the soul. For the kingdom of the soul-prince is not of this world.

If the personality hears and obeys that voice, he will still need his own consciousness, the form of consciousness adapted to his needs, in order to carry out the initial work of making the paths straight, until the border, the limit is reached — the bank of the River Jordan. Then, and only then, will the Other One take over the work, and lead him on paths where he as a personality-being cannot go. The Other One in him will lead his whole being from glory to glory.

The primordial human being has always known of this mighty process of salvation, but he has been imprisoned in forgetfulness. Nevertheless, in the mysteries, the noble science of liberation has always been preserved. Just as a deep-sea diver needs special equipment to keep him alive when he goes down into the depths of the sea, so the human being who sinks into the nadir of materiality needs a special

state of consciousness. If that person wishes to rise out of the nadir, he will need to lay aside the state of life belonging to the nadir; he will need to give it up. This means that, at a given moment, an entirely different, new state of consciousness will have to take the place of the former one, the state of consciousness of the living soul: 'He who is willing to lose his life for my sake,' says Jesus the Lord, 'will find 'It', Tao.'

If you regard all this as nothing more than a moral status, a new addition to your present range of armaments, then the nadir, the border, will not let you go. Whereas if, from this moment on, you enter into the new approach to life, which runs entirely contrary to the nature of self-seeking, then this will put an end to your natural state and at the same time set you completely free.

25-I

Religion and theology

Before heaven and earth existed, there was an indefinite Being. Thus begins chapter 25 of the Tao Te Ching. These words are an indication that this chapter's aim is to give information about the two aspects of genesis: cosmos and anthropos, the world and the human being. Our attention is especially drawn to the fact that before heaven and earth existed there was 'something else'. This point is forgotten by most students of metaphysics, the science of the supersensory. That is a pity, because without sound knowledge of this fact, errors are bound to be made.

If you want to understand this first verse of chapter 25, you will need to realise that, ever since the beginning, there have been two astral fields, two universes. As members of the young Gnosis we are quite used to this idea, because we are constantly explaining about the nature of death and the nature of life, about the dialectical nature and the original nature. This concept is not purely philosophical, but can be scientifically demonstrated.

On it rests the entire gnostic revelation of salvation: the awareness that a path exists, leading from the dialectical nature to the original nature. Throughout all times, gnostic philosophy has always spoken about these two natures. Gnostics have always spoken of the realms of life and the realms of liberation.

Note that subtle distinction, which is so easily missed. There is a great difference between the waters of life and the living water. The living water, says the Universal Doctrine, serves for the liberation of those who are on or in the waters of

life. This situation differs from the one that prevailed in former times, when there was close harmony between the living water and the waters of life. This was before the Fall, when the waters of life had not yet become evil but were only of a field of development, in equilibrium with the one, divine nature. At that time, then, the function of the living water was to create. Now, however, its function is to re-create. So there are two mighty astral fields, one of which is constantly trying to restore order in the other.

The age-old doctrine of the two natures is also recorded in the Bible. The words, 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth', for instance, refer to this idea. You will see what we mean when you realise that the original scriptures did not use the term 'God', but usually a plural form such as *Sephiroth*, or *Elohim*. These names refer to lifewaves far above ours, which are sometimes known as the absolutely pure ones, the perfect ones, or the divine ones.

Theologians of various religious persuasions deliberately omitted these names, because their theology was just intellectual knowledge, and not founded on universal wisdom. They wanted to avoid the risk of being asked by their followers, who regarded them as all-knowing, to explain just exactly who the Sephiroth and the Elohim are. They would have been unable to answer that question without consulting gnostic philosophers, who never shied away from the truth because they possessed it and could understand it. But the theologians would rather have died than let anyone see they were inferior to those they had denied, persecuted and handed over to the executioner. Moreover, they would then have lost all their followers. That is why they hid behind the abstract term, 'God'.

In the prologue of the gospel according to John, too, the doctrine of the two fields is mentioned. Here they are referred

to as 'the Word' and 'the darkness'. Because the darkness does not comprehend the Word, the messengers of the Word come to the darkness. But time and time again, in every era, these messengers of the light and their servants are persecuted by theologians. And whether one calls them theologians, scribes or pharisees, the facts remain the same. Jesus the Lord was persecuted and killed by the church of his day, in cooperation with the government. As long as the dialectical world, the nature of death, continues to exist, there will be no change in this pattern of events.

So the great disaster which has been spreading insidiously throughout our field of life since the beginning of our era was not caused by what is generally thought of as 'religion', but only by what people presume to call 'learning'. Theology is a system of learning which is based on the collection of intellectual facts. Theology is the product of a purely intellectual activity. That is why it is bound to lead to disaster, like every other system of learning, unless it is based on the universal philosophy of salvation and emanates from the fount of living water. Every system of learning not derived from that source has always led to disaster throughout history.

It would be really useful if you were more clearly aware of exactly what has to happen in you if you are to fulfil your task in life. The primary requirement is for the heart to begin to speak, in the midst of the degeneration of life. The heart must be filled with yearning for a solution to the afflictions and problems which are overwhelming the world and human-kind to an ever increasing extent. The yearning of the heart and its longing for wisdom are always the womb of genuine religion and learning. If you experience this state of being, this oppression of the heart, this yearning of the heart for a solution to the afflictions of life, then the urge towards wisdom is bound to be born in you.

What is the world, and what is humanity? What is humanity's task, and what path should it follow?

Through the urging of the heart, the intellectual organs are set in motion. The thinking processes begin to support the heart's desire. The mind seeks, it looks in every direction for a solution. In this way, at first, a speculative philosophy is born. The mouth speaks and testifies of the heart's yearning and of the mind's considerations and seeking, and of everything that has been discovered and encountered. A whole path of experience is the result of this.

In this way the individual follows a path through the antitheses of the nature of death and eventually discovers that everything comes and goes, and there is no real progress. This discovery stimulates both the yearning — as an activity of the heart — and the mental seeking — as an activity of the head. The individual intensifies his efforts to seek and to try to serve humanity.

And then, at last, all this speculation comes to an end, for the light of the other realm breaks in. The Word cleaves through the darkness and the philosophy of speculative thinking can be replaced, through the action of grace and truth, by the great reality itself, by the one, absolute power and wisdom which is of Tao.

Only from this wisdom, from this Universal Doctrine as a first-hand possession, can the kind of religion and learning be born that will bring humanity genuine happiness, peace, love and joy. That is why it is said that only love can set you free, and that God is love. That is why you are told to: 'love God above all and your neighbour as yourself.'

The word 'love' needs to be understood in the right way. There are many things in this world which arouse your love: things like family, material things, country, nation, race, friends, life itself, and because of your natural, human

goodness there are many people and things you hold in your embrace — including, possibly, the School of the Rosycross.

Yet this kind of love is only an aspect of the initial phase of the inescapable process — the phase of yearning and speculative thinking — until the living truth itself is born in you. Then the Godhead, who is love itself, will have entered into you as a first-hand possession. Then you yourself will have become love, just as God is love.

Love God above all things. This expression is often misused by interpreting it in a purely mystical sense. But we do not want you to see it in that way at all. What we mean is that, once you have found God in the way we have described, on the path that leads to the development of gnostic consciousness, you can, for the first time, love God truly. And if, in this way, you have approached God in truth and reality, you will also be able to approach your neighbours with the power you possess. You will be able to love your neighbour as yourself.

Then you will only be able to do two things, which will become, for you, an unbreakable, unassailable approach to life: you will serve and love the Godhead, the Being that is above and beyond heaven and earth, the essential Reality of the other realm. And because you have become one with that Being you will also be able to serve and love your neighbours. You will not be able to do otherwise. There is only one way in which you will be able to do it: by showing your neighbours the requirements of the path, and offering them the power to fulfil those requirements.

Imagine that your whole state of being had become light. Would you approach your neighbours with darkness? Would you be able to sit by while your neighbour served the darkness? What you were, you would manifest in and for others. So that light is the only thing you would be able to give your neighbours, and you would give it in order to manifest to them

the power that makes it possible to fulfil the one requirement.

If they were neither willing nor able to comply with this requirement of love, then you would love them in such a way that you would be able to set them free, to leave them their freedom. For you would know that as long as a person is not of the Gnosis, or cannot yet be, he cannot enter the other realm. So to hold on to him would mean to burn him. And that would not be love at all.

That is why neighbourly love, which belongs to reality itself, is always prepared to wait. It will wait as long as it takes for there to be equilibrium between the two natures: the one nature, which is of God, and the other nature, the field of development. As soon as there is equilibrium between these two fields, between these two natures, they will flow together into one. If you can understand these things, then we are ready to begin our analysis of chapter 25.

25-II

Before heaven and earth existed, there was an indefinite Being

There are, as we said, two natures. We call them the nature of life and the nature of death, the dialectical nature and the divine nature. In the dialectical nature the alternation of opposites prevails. Because people do not understand how this alternation works, it causes them much sorrow and misery, particularly when they cling to one of its aspects and try to make it lasting.

The dialectical nature is meant to be the training school of eternity. That is why it is necessary for things to keep on changing, coming and going, and for opposite aspects to keep on alternating with each other. This explains why, throughout the nature of death, we see changes occurring not only in the various aspects of human society — changes which are caused by rotation and interchange of radiations — but also in the fundamental structure of things.

In this way, from time to time, the structure of our planet changes. Continents sink and others rise up from the depths of the ocean. Through the precession of the equinoxes, climates change because of the displacement of the poles. But there are also times when the entire planet dies and dissolves. So the entire solar system is a life-form which is subject to successive incarnations. Therefore, it is not only the human personality that passes away and evaporates, but also the whole planetary manifestation. The life of the sun, too, is subject to ending and revivification.

What we want you to do, now, is to make this image as vivid as possible in your inner being. Impress upon yourself the fact that, before your personality existed, something else

was, namely your microcosm or monad. Before you existed there was an indefinite, non-material being, whose life-state, compared to yours, was peaceful and calm. What a difference! You: a creature of turmoil. Your monad: originating from and existing in that entirely Other Life. This same relationship exists with respect to the earth. Before the earth existed, too, there was an indefinite, non-material being. The earth contorts from time to time because of the turmoil which afflicts her and which forces its way upwards from her interior. But the other earth, the one John once saw descending, is completely non-material. So there is a distinction between the Planetary Spirit, which is a material manifestation, and its monadic counterpart, the Planetary Logos. The same relationship also exists with respect to the life of the sun, the lives of zodiacal systems and galaxies, and the whole totality of the dialectical universe.

Seeing and experiencing this panorama, one must surely come to the conclusion that the entire dialectical universe, with all its phenomena, forms and aspects, is, in its deepest essence, an unreality. Anything that appears and then disappears again can surely not be called a high reality? It is a self-dissolving delusion.

What is not a delusion, and hence the reality with respect to yourself, is the microcosm. The microcosm is eternal, real. The personality is finite, unreal.

With regard to our cosmos there is the Planetary Logos. With regard to the sun there is Vulcan. With regard to the universe as a whole, there is the other All-Manifestation, the high, great reality, the nature of the truly living waters, Tao. It is from this Tao that the microcosm originates, as do all the Planetary Logoi, Vulcanides and Cosmocrators.

So now you can see clearly the contrast between the material and the non-material. The non-material — the great

reality of the true, divine universe — exists independently. *It stands alone, by itself, and does not change. It pervades everything, and yet is not endangered.* In essence it is the Father-Mother of the other universe, the material one.

In this way, urged by Lao Tzu, we reverse our perception of all relationships. The great reality of the unchangeable exists in complete contrast to what we are accustomed to perceiving as 'reality', for that, in deepest essence, does not exist. How many times have you heard yourself saying, 'That is what is important to me, that is my reality, that is my life?' But if you say things like that, you are not yet living. If only you were! If you perceive things in that way, then, in deepest essence, you do not exist.

Not exist? What do we mean by that? Well, we ask you: can things which will sooner or later dissolve and disappear truly be called 'reality'? You perceive these things as reality because you want to; because you keep on trying to hold on to them and make them lasting.

If you were willing to realise, very deeply, that this sham-reality is essentially unreal and to let yourself experience that, seen from the viewpoint of Tao, what you think is real does not in fact exist; if you were to experience, in your very soul, the fact of not-being, then you would really be able to enter your kingship. Then the microcosm would be seen as the reality, and the personality would know itself to be only a projection, a reflected image. The reflected image, however, is not the reality!

Nevertheless, by means of the reflected image, the only reality could perform a mighty work of radiation, of reflecting. The one, absolute reality could manifest itself by means of the reflected image. If you were to let go of your delusion, if you were to tear off the jester's outfit you are wearing and rediscover yourself as a projection of the Eternal, then this

mighty work of radiation would be possible. Then the light would be able to shine in the darkness, wherever darkness prevails.

That is the truth about not-being. And that is why we say: not I, but the God in me. Not I, but the Other One. Not I, but the Father. Just as a projection is caused by the one who projects, so the Son comes from the Father. That is why the Son can say, 'The Father and I are one'.

If you let go of all your self-maintenance, if the delusion that: 'I am this, and I possess that,' is broken in you and taken away from you, if all that has disappeared, then you, too, can say: 'The Father and I are one.' If you dissolve yourself in not-being, if you enter the endura and practise the great self-surrender, if you completely neutralise your delusion of separate, independent existence, then you will become one with the Other One.

Then the saying will be fulfilled: 'He who is willing to lose his life' — his self-seeking existence — 'for my sake, shall keep it.' The personality must begin to respond once more to the law of the other nature. That is the mystery of existence: there is an approach to life which, if you adopt it, will enable you to create in yourself the conditions necessary for the reality, the One, to be able to project itself through you.

So would it not be supremely valuable to make this imperishable One the governing factor in your life? To absorb yourself in it, forgetting yourself, not maintaining yourself, living in the state of not-being? Then everything will come. Everything will *be*. A mighty light will spread through the dark regions of dialectical existence, as a blessing for many. And the nature of death, with all its horror, will cease to exist. If you have understood all this as it is meant to be understood, you will be able to practise *wu wei*, not-doing, the endura. This will enable the voice of the rose, the voice of

the monad, to make an impression on the mirror of your heart, even though, at the moment, this mirror is rather tarnished and blurred. Your heart will then begin to yearn for the only possible solution.

This yearning, as we explained earlier, will stimulate the urge towards wisdom. And while you are persevering with your attempts to understand wisdom, until the lawful end is reached, the tarnished mirror will be cleansed by the light and power of the other realm. At last the moment will come when you will begin to see 'face to face'. The great reality will be unveiled firsthand. The religion of 'seeing the invisible', as Paul calls it, will then become a way of life. The science of divine thinking, which reflects itself into the mind, will then lead to the practice of the great art.

So, when you understand not-doing, and you practise it as a way of life, everything is set free. Reality, the absolute Being, can reflect itself into the non-being. Like a new sun, the great glory will spread its dawn throughout the nature of antitheses, which will once more become the training school of eternity.

How could one define that joy, that glory? We do not know its name. We call it Tao. Were we compelled to describe it, we would call it 'great'. After 'great', we would call it 'ephemeral'; after 'ephemeral', 'distant'; after 'distant', 'That which returns'. For there are mighty forces, wheeling and circling, which hold everything in their embrace. An immense plan lies at the foundation of the divine universe. This plan *must* be fulfilled. And it *will* be fulfilled!

How? By projection, by reflection. In this way, the plan projects an alchemical workplace, an astral reality which serves as a place in which the work can be performed. Into this forge, the microcosms descend — and the cosmocrats, and all the sublime ones who are of God's generation.

The hammer blows ring out and the songs resound, the joyous songs of those who are working on the one, great plan of all-realisation. The architect is That which projects itself. The workers are the projected, vivified forces and beings.

The great wonder becomes a reality — the Mysterium Magnum, the Great Work!

25-III

The fourfold law of Tao

At the end of chapter 25 of the Tao Te Ching we read:

Tao is great, heaven is great, the earth is great, the King is great. There are four great powers in the world, and the King is one of them. The King's law is of the earth, the law of the earth is of heaven, and the law of heaven is of Tao. But the law of Tao is of itself.

These words give a picture of the whole fullness of manifestation. It clearly shows two extremes: Tao, on the one hand, and the King on the other. The King is the human personality, who has become capable of reflecting in a pure way all the intentions latent within Tao.

That is why all holy scriptures compare the human personality-system with a temple, and why, from time to time human beings have been reproached with the question: 'Do you not know that you are the temple of God?' The temple of God is the temple of the Kingship of the Spirit, the temple of the royal, priestly race. It is the temple in which the high intentions of Tao must be given expression. A radiation emanates from Tao. Similarly, therefore, a radiation emanates from that aspect of your being which has originated from Tao, namely the microcosm or monad. Through this radiation everything latent in the microcosm can be brought to expression; it can be projected.

We would like you to visualise this clearly, because it is what Lao Tzu wants you to understand. The personality human being is intended to be the projection, the expression of an eternally existing Being. If separated from that Being,

the projection's existence becomes a non-existence. Only in combination do they form the divine reality. Without this cooperation, in total harmony and mutual understanding, the personality-system becomes a curse and is delivered to destruction. The monad then becomes one of the living-dead, like the sphinx of the Egyptian mysteries.

So all who wish to participate in the new consciousness will have to make tremendous efforts in order to reach their goal. They will need to adopt a new, practical approach to life from which they do not deviate, whatever the circumstances, and whose aim is attunement to all the radiations emanating from the one, central Being.

The human being receives not only life from the Godhead, but also radiant, living instructions. That is why in the beginning there is always the Word.

In this context it is perhaps useful to point out that originally, religious practice took quite a different form than it does now. The original, priestly human being was not someone who performed rituals and chanted prayers, but someone who applied directly-received, divine instructions. Whatever the monad projected, whatever radiations it poured in, were immediately understood and applied in practice. This conversion into form of the monadic radiations was what was meant by 'service'.

To understand this you need only look at the ancient meaning of the word 'priest'. The priests of antiquity were not ministers of religious rituals and ceremonies. In ancient times, the word 'priest' was synonymous with 'sage'. Via the living soul-state of this sage, the spirit projected itself into the personality. The priestly human being lived in and through that power and was completely in harmony with Tao. He could not be otherwise.

Those who belonged to this race of king-priests formed the

true Brotherhood of divine human beings, the Order of Melchizedek, of which Jesus Christ is called the High Priest. This Order maintained a law, the law of the true human state, the law of Tao as a living reality. In this way, 'as above' became 'so below'. The law of Tao was the law of the King, the royal human being, and it related to the whole task that had to be fulfilled on earth.

Whenever a group of king-priests like these really begins to carry out a task on earth, then a sanctifying, blessing influence is bound to emanate from them and spread over the whole earth. In this way, the earth is glorified through human kingship. A glorified earth becomes one with heaven, with a purified astral field and, inevitably, this ascent will reveal the majesty of Tao itself.

Bow then, if you really understand these things, before the four great powers and the fourfold law, the law of kingship, the earth, heaven and Tao. Be profoundly aware that God is light. Through light the Godhead, the reality, the truth of Tao becomes manifest in you, and throughout heaven and earth.

What, then, is required of the human being in order to make these four truths a reality? First of all: the great purification of wu wei, of not-being, not-doing, self-surrender. Secondly, through self-surrender, the rebirth of the soul. This makes possible, thirdly, the reunification of the consciousness with the radiation of the monad. Then, fourthly, the personality-being will be able to 'move' in harmony with Tao, which means he will manifest Tao through his actions. Thus the fourfold law of the divine plenitude will have been restored.

To move with Tao means to have restored the age-old rhythm of Tao in one's being. That is why, long ago, this movement was referred to as a dance. But in later times this knowledge was lost, and dance-ritual became at best an approximation of the real dance, which had to be re-

stored in the human being by living in the reality of Tao.

Through the radiations of the light, atoms are set in motion. They begin to revolve. In this way, whirling vortices are set up in the astral substance, the wheels of the mysteries, the wheels of creation. He who sees these fiery wheels must consciously and positively travel with them; he must move in harmony with this pattern of forces, until their aim has been completely fulfilled.

'I saw a storm wind coming out of the north, driving before it a black cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually. There in the midst appeared a shining metal. And in the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures [...] Each of them had four wings [...] They flashed like rays of lightning hither and thither. While I looked at them, I saw upon the earth beside each of the living creatures a wheel, sparkling like turquoise [...] As the beings moved, the wheels beside them moved also.'

Gravity is the root of what is light; stillness is the master of movement.

That is why the sage never separates himself from gravity and stillness.

Though there may be much beauty to behold, he keeps himself in stillness and detachment.

But alas, the Lord of ten thousand chariots thinks the light of the kingdom exists through his own doing.

By regarding his ministers as being of minor importance, he loses them. By allowing himself to be carried away, he loses his authority.

Tao Te Ching chapter 26

26-I

Gravity is the root of what is light

You know what gravitation is and how it works. Modern human beings are particularly preoccupied by it, judging by the enormous efforts being made by scientists to overcome the gravitational forces of the earth.

Every object in space, including the earth, has an electromagnetic power of attraction. As a result of this power, everything that belongs to the earth, everything that is of the same essence, is prevented from leaving; it is kept in its place and in this way is provided with the opportunity to live.

Gravitational forces have two aspects, two properties. The most obvious one is the power of attraction. The other is repulsion. Through the power of repulsion everything that does not belong to the earth, and thus might be harmful to it or its creatures, is kept outside the system.

The twofold effect of gravitation originates from the tenth stratum of our earth. This is the heart of the earth, where the central focus of the Earth Spirit is to be found. This focal point deep within the earth determines the gravitational effects of all the other nine earth-strata, which include the two aspects of the material sphere, the four aspects of the etheric sphere, the astral sphere, and the two aspects of the mental sphere. So all the fields in which the personality is manifested are under the control of the gravitational influences emanating from the Earth Spirit.

This also applies to the vehicles of the personality itself, which, apart from the material body, also include the etheric body, the astral body, and a rudimentary mental body which is still in the process of development. In other words, it is not

only the material body which is attracted by the Earth Spirit, but also the etheric body, the astral body and the mental parts of the personality.

This explains why the wheel of birth and death and its effects are confined to the Earth Spirit's various planes of manifestation. If a space traveller is able by mechanical means to escape the gravitational pull of the immediate, physical plane, he must next pass into the gravitational field of the etheric planes, then into that of the astral planes and finally into that of the mental border planes. Beyond that is nothingness as far as his personality is concerned, emptiness, because beyond that point quite different electromagnetic laws of gravity apply, which require quite different astral, mental, etheric and material conditions.

This outermost limit is set for every mortal, because the personality's centre of gravity coincides with the heart of the earth, and is therefore bound to the Planetary Spirit. This also applies to the microcosm and to all the previous personality-lives that unfolded within it. No microcosm can ever simply detach itself from the confinement of this electromagnetic sphere. However, as explained in the previous chapters, there is yet another earth, completely invisible to the nature-born mortal, even though philosophically demonstrable. It is the holy Earth, the planetary system of the Planetary Logos.

The Universal Doctrine draws a distinction between the Planetary Spirit, which has to do with our material earth, and the Planetary Logos. The Planetary Logos is the Lord of the original, inviolable, divine planet, the ineffable, eternal glory. From this holy Earth, from this original planet, our planet has emerged as a training school, a field of development which the microcosm must enter in order, after completing its studies, to ascend from it and return to the House of the

Father. So the Planetary Logos is the beginning — the alpha — and at the same time the end — the omega.

Hence the great goal underlying the existence of every microcosm is to complete the journey, to celebrate the omega, and then to hear the words: 'See, I make all things new. Write, for these words are trustworthy and true. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I shall give the thirsty to drink from the fountain of the water of life, freely.'

The point we want to impress on you is that two natures of which the Gnosis testifies are intimately connected. Even though they are quite distinct from one another, the two solar systems and the planets they contain — including our earth and the holy Earth — are fully interpenetrating. So the microcosm contains not only the 'land of exile' but also the 'Land of the Father'. And that is why you are told that 'the kingdom of God is within you.'

The microcosm which surrounds you is the absolute aspect of the original planet, the holy Earth. The personality is of the earth-earthly. The microcosm originates from the House of the Father; the personality originates from the dialectical nature. To the personality it can be said that 'the kingdom of God is within you.'

Isn't that an exaggeration? Wouldn't it be better to say that 'the kingdom of God is very near to you'? No! To understand why, you need a clear conception of the relationship between the Planetary Spirit and the Planetary Logos. It is said of the Planetary Spirit that its reality is a mystery. It is an entity in development, a development in an upward direction. The Planetary Spirit is intimately connected with the Planetary Logos and carries out all its commands. It is the projection of the Planetary Logos and, as you know, its focus lies in the heart of the earth.

Now look at yourself. There is a microcosm *and* there is a personality. The microcosm is of God's generation; the personality is subject to space and time. The whole sphere of activity of the personality — with its the material, etheric, astral and mental aspects — is determined by the heart of the personality. The electromagnetic condition and the quality of the personality — what it attracts, what it repels, what it is indifferent towards — all this is determined by the state, the nature, the disposition of the heart. The heart is therefore the primary focus of every human life. That is why a brother of the Rosycross once said: 'What the heart does not want, cannot enter the head.'

So it is easy to see why chapter 26 of the Tao Te Ching examines the mortal human being's centre of gravity and explains where it is situated. Where does the centre of gravity in *your* life lie? That is the question! It is the most important thing in your whole existence, because the heart's centre of gravity is your central focus and gives direction to everything that happens to you in the course of your life.

Gravity is the root of what is light. Stillness is the master of movement. That is why the sage never separates himself from gravity and stillness.

We can now understand what this means. There is a centre of gravity, a source which determines the way your life is oriented. Its seat lies in the heart. The state of your heart determines your centre of gravity. This gravitational force is the very ground of your existence, of everything you do and do not do.

You see someone doing or not doing certain things. You ask yourself in disbelief, 'How can he do such a thing?' Or, smiling with approval, you exclaim, 'How wonderful!' All these actions, positive as well as negative, proceed from the

individual's centre of gravity which is seated in the heart. So your life is like a plant whose root is embedded in your heart, and which you are bringing into the light of the living present. That is why *gravity is the root of what is light*. Your centre of gravity is the root of what emerges into the light of your life's actuality.

The actuality of your life is movement, a constant activity, whose nature is visible and whose fruits are demonstrable. To enable this movement, this growth and its results, there has to be energy. So there is a root — there is energy — there is movement — and then there is a result.

Now suppose your centre of gravity were rooted in the Gnosis. The energy that would then give rise to movement in your life could be referred to as 'peace', or 'stillness'. The stillness of your heart would then be the master of movement. In the letter to the Hebrews, the whole of chapter four is devoted to this stillness. The letter is addressed to people who are learning about the one path that leads to stillness, and it tells them: 'Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest remains, let us fear lest any of you be judged to have failed to reach it. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest.'

If the human being's centre of gravity is rooted in the Gnosis, a certain energy, a movement, will emanate from it. Something is brought into the light; the fruit becomes visible. This fruit, this living result, is inner peace, stillness, that glorious state of being which passes all understanding. And this result becomes the master of movement.

So it seems that a profound mystery is connected with the heart, and you are capable of solving it. It is the mystery of how to transfer your life's centre of gravity, the root of your existence, from the depths of the earth to the primordial ground of the Logos. If you are familiar with the Bible you will know that a great deal of it is focused on that problem:

how to attain liberation from the earth-earthly and enter the eternal glory of the other planet, the holy Earth, which John saw descending out of heaven, because he had become entirely one with it.

How does a pupil of a School like ours achieve this? How does the gnostic method help him to solve this mystery?

The sage who has solved this mystery *never separates himself from gravity and stillness*, says Lao Tzu. Because his centre of gravity has established roots in the Other Life; it has been transferred to the Other One. Once he has tasted this glory, he will certainly never be willing to give it up for the fruits of darkness.

We urge you to prepare yourself so that, with us, you can solve this glorious mystery.

The three crosses

In the human heart lies the seat of life, the nuclear power of the monad, the immortal rose. This rose is characterised by a strongly radiant, multicoloured light, which emanates from it. The seat of the rose coincides with the apex of the heart sanctuary. Its presence means that every nature-born human being is a potential rosicrucian, for the rose of the personality is always fixed to the cross.

This rose is the representative of the Planetary Logos in the nature-born human being. So the original kingdom is within us. The path and the law of life touch us. They are part of our system.

The heart has seven aspects, seven ventricles, each of which has a sevenfold activity. So it should be possible to cause seven times seven rays to emanate from the personality-system, with the rose as the central point.

Now if we visualise the rose as a radiant five-pointed star of Bethlehem, and the heart as a shining circle from which the seven times seven rays emanate, we will have before us the mighty symbol displayed above the place of service in our temple in Haarlem. This is the most wonderful symbol we could ever encounter. It is the voice of the Christ in us. It is God in the flesh.

In the exact centre of the microcosm, coinciding with the heart of the nature-born personality — yes, actually *in* the heart of the nature-born personality — we are born of God, we exist in the life-field of absolute Being, we participate in the heaven-earth, and we stand in the wide embrace of the alpha and the omega, the beginning and end.

Nevertheless, there is a formidable obstruction, for in addition to this mighty, glorious, spiritual Being, we possess another, quite different consciousness. It is seated in the head sanctuary. It is the ego, the animal or intellectual consciousness. The consciousness of the rose is transpersonal, divine, whereas the I-consciousness is an aspect of the personality. That is why it is animal and mortal. And would it not be true to say that your life's centre of gravity lies in your head?

That is fine if you want nothing more from life than the journey, as a personality, from the cradle to the grave. But it is not fine at all — it is crazy — if you are seeking and aiming at the life of absolute reality. For you cannot possibly participate in or gain access to the great reality with your intellectual consciousness.

The I-centrality, the I-consciousness, in which your centre of gravity probably lies, must subordinate itself completely to the transpersonal, to the Lord of Life, who dwells in the heart. The centre of gravity of your life must be transferred totally from the head to the heart. Then the great miracle will reveal itself to you.

That is the endura, the turning of one's entire being inward, towards the true self, the highest self, towards the Lord of Life in you. The endura does not direct you outward, but inward, towards the holy, golden rose, which radiates from its dwelling-place in the heart.

You must understand this very clearly. It is a process you can begin right now, today. But you need to bear in mind that your heart is very polluted, very impure and damaged. Why? Because of the I-delusion that has prevailed throughout almost countless past existences in your microcosm, and that still governs you because the gravitational focus of your life still lies in the head sanctuary, in the I-consciousness.

That is why the first task ahead of you — and it is an immense

one — is the purification of the heart. That is what 'making straight the paths' means! If you do not begin with that, if you do not succeed in that, your pupilship will be meaningless. Please understand this as it is meant. We do not mean that you must give up reason and exchange it for a kind of mystical emotion. For that would amount to nothing more than an attempt of the I-consciousness to ensure its safety in the polluted and damaged heart. Three crosses are erected on the hill of Golgotha:

In the centre is the cross of Christian Rosycross, the self that emanates from the radiant, golden rose, the self that can overcome all things and gain the victory.

Beside it is the cross of the hardened, I-central self, which lives in the delusion that *it* is the all-knowing, all-possessing ruler in the nature of death. It is the part of you that does not know the one path and therefore mocks and rejects it. Is this self not the absolute murderer of the true self, the greatest enemy of the God within?

On the other side we see the third figure: the human being struggling for a way out. He represents the person who is engaged in shifting his centre of gravity to the heart, the person who is seeking the new orientation, the new 'movement' from within the centre of gravity of the heart. He is the person who hunts for true inner peace and tranquillity. He desires to water the root of the one life with the sacrifice of his entire self, right to the last drop of blood. For the displacement of his centre of gravity will mean his ultimate relief, and will lead him into the stillness which is the master of the movement.

However, the lasting, radiant light and the inner peace which passes all understanding have not yet reached maturity. The centre of gravity has been shifted, the foundation has been laid. But now the total purification of the heart has to take place, the absolute emptying, the fundamental reversal,

the endura, the process of `dying while living'.

This work has seven times seven aspects. It is a laborious struggle during which a great deal will have to be suffered, especially in the beginning, for one is bound to stumble and fall many times. That is why the person in this phase is still, in many respects, a murderer of his highest, divine self.

But he *knows* the Other One. He knows: `this is the son of God', and he perseveres, keeping his eye, his centre of gravity, constantly on this fount of grace and truth. That is why he is able to hear the voice of the Other One, who speaks to him the most glorious words that can be addressed to a human being: `I say unto you, you shall be with me in Paradise.'

You need to free these words from their traditional, biblical veils. Then you will taste the pure Gnosis and you will know that all these values lie within your reach. From this divine fount in you, the absolute, eternal wisdom can begin to flow abundantly. If the mortal human being is able, through constant perseverance, to overcome all resistances and attain to wisdom, he will never again be the murderer of his divine self. Never again will he need to give up his newly attained centre of gravity, and he will enter the eternal stillness:

Though there may still be much beauty to behold, he keeps himself in stillness and detachment.

So now you can understand what is required of you — not by the School, but by your highest, divine self. At the moment, you are lived and governed by the intellectual self, by the brain consciousness, which is nothing more than the product of your karmic and hereditary past. It is nothing more than the outer form, the house in which the rose has chosen to dwell.

But why let the form predominate? Surely it is the inhabitant of the form, the dweller in the house, that should take first priority? Yet in most people there is at best a chaotic,

haphazard interaction between the house and its occupant, and between the head and the heart. Sometimes the problems of the head are given precedence over those of the heart, while at other times the situation is reversed, and in this way heart and head come into conflict with each other. The result is confusion and inner dividness. And when, forgetting your task, your calling, you allow the form to dominate over the essence, you unfortunately bring about the situation in which *the Lord of ten thousand chariots thinks the light of the kingdom exists through his own doing.*

As the form, as the personality-house, your vocation is to give the rose the opportunity to manifest itself fully, to allow it to rule over the form, so that it can constantly transfigure the form for each task that will be required of it on the great journey of development. Therefore the form, the personality, needs to behave in such a way that it will see the heaven-earth descend into its own being, since that is how the great aim will be achieved.

So the form is not useless or worthless, but is one of the essential ingredients in the process, just as our planet earth is essential to the task of the heaven-earth. That is why, in the terminology of Lao Tzu, the form is called the 'Lord of ten thousand chariots'. In other words, it is very strong, powerful, gifted, and equipped with great abilities.

However, if the form-being is aware of something of that great might and ability, and as a result begins to regard the divine self as being of minor importance, placing his own self centrally and allowing his own interests to take priority, he will lose his abilities. He will lose his ministers. And by allowing himself to be carried away by this delusion, he will lose his connection with reality and the authority that gives him, and thus his fall will be total. That is why we urge you to shift your centre of gravity without delay, so that you can

make your form into a temple in which the God within you can dwell. That is what the sage does. He *never separates himself from gravity and stillness*.

Nature-born people of our times often show signs of degeneration. This is because the centre of gravity of their lives is rooted primarily in the intellectual brain consciousness. From that centre they may try to live the life of gnostic pupilship. In this way, at most, they achieve a state, an experience, of religious observance, a life in which they sincerely try to serve God, the School and the Gnosis. But this state of pupilship is constantly being broken up and undermined, and cannot be sustained in the face of the problems of dialectical life. For in essence, nothing changes when one tries to serve the Gnosis with the I-consciousness, with the intellectual consciousness.

Seen from the point of view of the divine plan, this kind of religious observance is false; it has no foundation in reality. So you should strive not to imitate God, but to become *one* with God. That is the destiny of all creation. That is the plan. That is your calling. That is why the rose of roses dwells in your heart: to make possible your unification, your union with the Godhead which is within you.

Religious observance is therefore always a compromise. At most, it is a starting point. But if you remain at the starting point, without going any further, your religious observance will turn into ego observance. That is why, in the nature of death, there is always a conflict between religious and anti-religious people. That is why the field of religion is so rife with all kinds of experiments and confusion. That is why religious groups are constantly appealing to each other to unite.

These ideas may be new to you, so may we suggest you take some time to think them over? Then confusion will no

THE THREE CROSSES

longer torment you. Shift the centre of gravity of your life. Make your form into the forecourt of a threefold temple. Carry out the purification of your heart, and thus prepare for an encounter with the God within you. Then He will be able to enter the sanctuary.

The path of the Gnosis is the path of becoming one with God, and not the path of religious observance. The sage knows this, and puts it into practice. That is why he never ceases to seek and to find his centre of gravity in the still point at the centre of his being.

26-III

The threefold mastery

As we said in the previous chapter, the three crosses — the cross of the I-being imprisoned in itself, the cross of the human being struggling for liberation, and the cross of the self that overcomes all things — are erected on the hill of Golgotha, the place of the skull.

That may have struck you as odd. Why, if the centre of gravity of true life has to be anchored in the heart sanctuary, must the three crosses be erected in the place of the skull, in the head sanctuary, which we have been calling the seat of the intellectual consciousness?

To understand this you need to realise that the results of the purification of the heart are always revealed in the head sanctuary. It is the head sanctuary which has to be prepared as the higher self's place of service, in which the ultimate victory will be attained. The head sanctuary is also the place in which the total defeat of the I-consciousness must be manifested. The rose-power wells up from the heart; in the heart lies the root. But the awakening, the enlightenment, the resurrection, is manifested in the head.

As soon as the ruler of the form has surrendered his dominion over it, the living soul-prince stands radiant in his place. Of the three crosses, only one of them will be able to etch its signature, its sign, in the mirror of the forehead: either the sign of the I-being, or the sign of the struggling soul which has received the promise of grace, or the sign of the Son of Man.

Now, perhaps, you can understand better than ever before

the miraculous events of the seventh day of *The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross*. All who really want to bring the wondrous rose into full bloom are finally assembled in the tower of Olympus. This tower has seven floors, just as the heart has seven aspects, seven ventricles. The purification of the heart is a sevenfold labour. The great work of pupilship is a sevenfold task which requires the pupil's utmost devotion.

When Christian Rosycross has performed this work, he ascends to an unknown eighth floor, a vault directly beneath the roof. And it is there that the victory is revealed, the all-conquering rebirth of the Rosycross. The gate of eternity, symbolised since ancient times by the number eight, is opened wide. Resurrection has become a fact.

Through the work of preparation we call 'the alchemical wedding', which is made possible because we allow the rose of the heart to govern the life of the form, a completely new system of personality-vehicles is built up, with some miraculous characteristics, which can be manifested once it has been fully resurrected.

The first of these is mastery over the material sphere of the earth. The second is mastery over the etheric sphere of the earth. The third is mastery over the astral and mental aspects of the earth.

Among other things, this threefold mastery brings with it full consciousness in all the vehicles of the renewed personality. This has some peculiar results. For instance, the material garment remains bound to time and space, but in the other vehicles of the renewed personality, time and space lose their significance and ultimately cease to exist. So if brothers or sisters of the Rosycross find themselves spatially at a certain point on our globe, it will not be difficult for them to be somewhere else at the same time. From the point of view of

time and space, he is omnipresent throughout all domains of the earth. Though apparently bound to matter, he is in reality totally free.

You will easily see how tremendously significant this is if you give it a little thought. It explains how the group unity of all the brothers and sisters of the great soul-community is realised. All the enormous burdens of life in the world of time and space simply fall away.

Jesus the Lord's appearances between his resurrection and his ascension were meant to prove this fact to his disciples and pupils. Abundant confirmation of this life-state is also given in the gnostic gospel of the *Pistis Sophia*. What mystics call the 'ascension' means not only being admitted to the world of the Planetary Spirit as a totally new human being, but also being no longer of this world. It means belonging to the world of the original, divine life-state, the world of the Earth Logos, the heaven-earth of John.

Try to see clearly how this glory can unfold for you: the pilgrims to eternity gathered in our group need to make straight their paths. They need to place their Rosycross on the hill of Golgotha. They must do these things with all the power that is in them. Then their Living Body, their celestial ship, will be able to move forwards and upwards, until at last, the moment will be reached when some of the brothers and sisters can celebrate their ascension. This will release tremendous power, which will spread over the whole Living Body, fulfilling the glorious promise of Pentecost: 'You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit, which shall come upon all of you, and you shall be my witnesses unto the ends of the earth.'

You can prepare yourself for this approaching, eternal feast of Pentecost by choosing the right centre of gravity, and thus becoming master of all movement.

He whose movement is good will leave no tracks. He whose speech is good will not give cause for blame. He whose counting is good will need no tally. He whose closing is good will need no bolts, yet no man will be able to open what he has shut. He whose binding is good will need no knots, yet no man will be able to loosen what he has bound.

That is why the sage always excels in caring for people and rejects no one. He always excels in caring for things and rejects nothing. I call this: being doubly enlightened.

In this state, the good is the teacher of the bad, and the bad is the teacher of the good.

Though his wisdom may seem foolish, he who attaches no value to power and does not seek affluence has attained supreme wisdom.

Tao Te Ching 27

27-i

The Only Good

Looking at the text of chapter 27 of the Tao Te Ching, it is easy to see that Lao Tzu is speaking about a fivefold approach to life and the five forms of goodness which are its signature. However, the goodness Lao Tzu means must be quite different from the kind ordinary, nature-born people possess and know. For the goodness Lao Tzu is talking about creates quite different results than ordinary, human goodness.

Lao Tzu is speaking about the hermetic Only Good. The ordinary human being, however, knows only the kind good which is inseparable from its companion, evil. That is why it is so important to draw your attention to this difference right at the beginning of the chapter, because Lao Tzu's words cannot be understood properly unless you remember that he is speaking from the perspective of a world quite different from the one familiar to you. The laws of this other world, and the way of life in keeping with those laws, are not at all applicable in ordinary nature. If you were to forget this, any reflection on the ancient Chinese wisdom would only lead to misunderstanding, and that would be bound to cause difficulties in your life.

The great reality of the two natures is no longer a familiar idea in this world — your world. The fact that the kingdom of the spirit is not of this world has long been forgotten. Yet the age-old doctrine of the two natures is the key to understanding how the path to liberation is followed. Anyone who has lost or can no longer use this key, and can therefore no longer find the path that leads back to the Kingdom of the Father, will become hopelessly entangled in the labyrinth of

the nature of death. In the light of this information, we would like to take a look at two very common phenomena which are actually the products of life in our world: theology and humanism.

Many people want to serve God and try to understand the Bible, because they wish to reach the state of eternal blessedness. This leads them to make desperate efforts to be truly 'good' and to spread goodness in the world around them. In their feelings, thoughts and actions, they try to conform to the requirements of goodness.

But even at the very beginning of this struggle, the painful fact is clear that, as soon as you want to do good, evil walks beside you. It even appears that, precisely because you are genuinely trying to do good, you end up doing evil. Or it turns out that your goodness has negative results, that your goodness is not enough, that nothing comes of it. Or that the initially positive result quickly crystallises and petrifies to a mineral-like remnant of what once lived spontaneously.

How does that come about? Theologians, in their blindness, denied the inescapable conclusion that the goodness they practised and preached to their congregations, could not be real, that it could not have anything to do with the Only Good. Instead, they preferred to invent the 'devil'. And by doing so, those who were so afraid of evil and so much wanted to be good, consolidated evil as an astral reality.

It is easy to see how this can happen. If, in your naivety, you were to think you, as a nature-born person, were good and had done right, and yet things turned out quite differently to what you had imagined, you would be quite likely to deduce the existence of an anti-force, an adversary who must have been responsible. And then the devil would exist, for if only

you think long enough about evil, you give it form, because of the attributes of the astral substance.

If that embodiment then begins to hinder you — and it will do so, since you are its creator and you therefore experience it as your devil — then you can tell all your followers about that experience and formulate doctrines about it. And all those who follow in your footsteps will amplify the negative astral embodiment originally made by just one person into a monstrous being that hinders the whole of humanity and poisons the astral sphere.

That is why we repeat the gnostic truth: the cause of personified evil lies in the goodness of this nature. In that fact lies the negativity, the hopelessness of all theology, of all nature-religion. It would be most helpful if you understood this and were willing to accept it as the basic assumption of your new life in the Gnosis. As Jesus the Lord says, 'No one is good — not even one!' May God grant that you will understand these words.

The order of existence which humanity knows and experiences and from which its birth in nature is to be explained, is a dialectical one, which means to say that it is not, and never can be, an *absolute* reality. Every phenomenon in it, every characteristic or attribute it could possibly possess, is subject to the law of antitheses. Things appear and, sooner or later, they disappear. So nothing in this world can possibly be absolute; the absolute cannot possibly manifest itself in this alternating movement of rising and setting.

Yet the idea, the dream of the Only Good does lie within the human being. Even in the worst criminal, a dream of the good exists. But with their nature-born form and in the nature of dialectics the good, the Only Good, cannot possibly be realised. 'No one is good — not even one!' If, going against all

these natural laws, the ego nevertheless tries to attain this goodness, and wrongly calls its goodness 'love', then it will only cause much sharper contrasts and the differences between light and darkness will become much, much more painful. For the laws of nature must be fulfilled, and in the alternation of opposites, the light the human ego wishes to hold on to and keep is bound to turn into darkness, and its love into hate. The ego's reality will be lost in delusion and its life in futility. And in its struggle to keep and make permanent what may not be kept, with all the resulting emotional and mental activities, the ego establishes evil as an astral reality in its individual life-sphere and in the world as a whole.

That is the reality in the delusion of dialectics and through it the whole astral sphere has been ruined by hordes of archons and aeons — the harvest of religion as it is practised in this nature.

That is why so many people, in the course of the centuries, turned away from religion and took to humanism instead. The negative result of religion was so clear, the chaos it caused so great, that the revolution *had* to come. For the goodness people had been striving for had not been *so* good as to preclude their seeking the best for themselves. All this self-seeking gave a powerful stimulus to the development of the I-consciousness and the resulting struggle for existence eventually produced huge contrasts between poverty and wealth, between the suffering of the oppressed and the extravagance of the rich.

This was the soil in which humanism germinated; the struggle for freedom, fought by the proletariat of all nations. A powerful urge towards goodness erupted in all those who wanted to help the oppressed. Democracy was born and human rights were held up as a call to freedom. A number of

movements were set up to help the poor and oppressed. The whole of Europe shook with philanthropic aspirations.

This led to a peak of anti-religious feeling. What the church could not do, humanism in its many forms would accomplish. Europe reached the pinnacle of civilisation: goodness was to be scientifically applied; all men would be brothers. The few remaining blemishes would soon be a thing of the past.

But look what, in our present century, was brought in on this wave of goodness: such a ghastly horror, such a dreadful pestilence, such a savage, scientifically calculated carnage, as has never been seen throughout the whole of world history, or even prehistory. In our School, we lament the terrible fate of the Cathars, the brothers and sisters of the preceding Brotherhood, and rightly so. But the behaviour of their murderers was like the frolics of a kindergarten class compared with what our century has shown us.

Our enlightened, humane century, dripping with goodness, has broken all records in the fields of blood-thirstiness, cruelty, scientific extermination and insanity. The pinnacle of goodness has brought into the open the pinnacle of human damnable baseness — and it is still going on, even now. The human misery of the present moment is indescribable. We will spare you the details. You know them!

Where has human civilisation led us? In what labyrinth have we been lost? The labyrinth of delusion, shot through with blood and tears! Goodness? No one is good — not even one! It is one great big, total failure: the religion of nature-born egos, the humanism of nature-born egos, the science of nature-born egos.

Perhaps you do not entirely agree with us. Well then, experience will teach you. Human goodness has left behind too many traces — one great gaping wound, so huge that everyone can see it. The world has become one ghastly

charnel-house, despite religion, humanism, science and everything else.

And now Lao Tzu says to us: *He whose movement is good will leave no tracks*. How can such a standpoint be defended in the stark light of the living present? We will try to answer this question in the next chapter.

He whose movement is good will leave no tracks

We would like to look at the initial verses of chapter 27 of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching:

He whose movement is good will leave no tracks. He whose speech is good will not give cause for blame. He whose counting is good will need no tally. He whose closing is good will need no bolts, yet no man will be able to open what he has shut. He whose binding is good will need no knots, yet no man will be able to loosen what he has bound.

The first sentence of this section: *He whose movement is good will leave no tracks*, is rather strange and difficult to understand if you perceive it in the light of what is going on in the world today.

On the face of it, all who have sought and found contact with the gnostic Spiritual School are 'good people'. They are known to be good. However, though their goodness may be religious, or humane, or a combination of both, it is nevertheless a product of their nature-born ego.

Can you honestly say that your attempts at goodness have never left deep tracks behind them? Perhaps you have been thinking about this since you read the previous chapter. Haven't there been many times when your goodness has caused deep wounds? Haven't you set limits on your goodness, only doing good towards those you thought deserved it? Has this never aroused jealousy in others? How many times have you embroiled others in difficulties, precisely because of your efforts to help them? And why do you act so kindly

towards some people, whilst showing a complete absence of kindness towards others?

It is worth thinking deeply about questions like these because, in fact, your attempts at goodness have left many, deep tracks behind them. These tracks prove all too clearly that you are *not* someone 'whose movement is good'. You certainly look nice enough. Nature-born goodness is your signature. But there is a saying: 'He is not as nice as he looks'. The fact is that your goodness, however good it may be, still leaves tracks; it carves deep grooves in the soul. The goodness of the human ego, whether applied by individuals or by groups, always makes a mess of things.

Sages know this and they warn people about it. They allow you to see and taste your own reality, and it causes you pain. How can you resolve this problem?

Virtue and knowledge can help you. The powerful urge towards religion, or humanism, or the artistic appreciation of beauty, or the acquisition of knowledge, or a combination of these things, which you have been feeling ever since your youth, is actually something very remarkable, and it can form the basis for a totally new life. For this urge is in fact caused by the touch of the rose-power, of the Kingdom of God within you. All you need to do now is to turn this inner basis into an absolute virtue, into a liberating virtue.

So the basis for virtue is present within you. But there is more, for knowledge, too, is present within you, and it is there for you to use. Please understand this as it is meant. We do not mean the knowledge you learned at school, the kind of knowledge you need to get through life in the world of anti-theses. We mean knowledge of the one true life, the Universal Doctrine. This Doctrine of Life is engraved in the primordial atom, and the Gnosis reveals it to you in order to stimulate and hence to set free, in your own inner being, the path to true

knowledge. So if only you can combine that knowledge with virtue — with your inner urge to be good, and to do good — it can and will set you free.

However, you need to take to heart Chuang Tzu's warning: 'Virtue and knowledge are dangerous means and may not be used recklessly. If your virtue is real and your fidelity is firm, but these things do not permeate your mind, what then?'

The urge towards perfect virtue, towards radiant goodness, is deeply anchored in many people. Similarly, there are many who, intellectually, have the whole of gnostic philosophy at their command. These are wonderful possessions! The former group is led by the heart, the latter by the head. However, separated from one another, these two attributes are useless and even dangerous. And even if the heart and head are allowed to function together, this can still leave deep tracks if the ego of nature still rules your life.

Furthermore, says Chuang Tzu, 'Tao cannot be divided. To divide Tao is to break the unity.' This is an extremely important saying, which shows that the real Gnosis, the sanctifying and redeeming Gnosis, cannot possibly be conveyed through the display of goodness on its own, or through teaching on its own. Tao can only be experienced in its completeness — or not at all. That is why every human being needs to seek the way to Tao, to find it and experience it himself.

We have seen that the personality is equipped with some mighty abilities. All these abilities can only achieve their real potential and will only be able to function in the proper way, if they are applied in the correct combination, in cooperation with the microcosm and the divine source at the centre of your being. Virtue and knowledge must impel you to walk the path, to practise the new approach to life. You must return to the original nature, by following the enduristic path on which

your whole, nature-born self is sacrificed. That is the point we have been trying to explain. It is the key to the whole meaning of life.

The mistake human beings make is to think the mental and moral endowments they possess — considerable though they may be — are already fit for use and that by exerting them they can spread blessings, knowledge, wisdom and progress in the world around them; that in this way they will be able to serve the Gnosis and humankind. But: 'Tao cannot be divided. To divide Tao is to break the unity.'

That is why, if you really want to benefit from what is conveyed in the temples of the Rosycross, you will need to put the new approach to life into practice. You will need to walk the path yourself, right to the very end. If you do not do that, and you nevertheless try to use your imagined abilities, you will leave deep tracks behind you. You will sharpen the contrasts between the antitheses and you will multiply evil.

If you recognise yourself as a 'rich young man', a talented person, you may, on hearing this, turn away in disappointment and switch to a negative, dangerous approach to life in which you no longer even try to do good. But you may also follow the advice of Jesus the Lord: 'Leave all you have and follow me,' fulfilling your task in profound obedience to the holy work, to the Universal Chain and its emissaries. You need to tear away from yourself the delusion of being perfect, the delusion of thinking that 'I can do everything, I can do it well, I can do it myself.' You need to see your natural urges towards virtue and knowledge in the proper light and adopt a life of what the Bible calls 'prayer and fasting'.

What does that mean? Certainly not muttering prayers for hours on end, and still less living on bread and water or going without food for days, or performing rituals one after the

other. To the ancient sages, 'prayer and fasting' meant focusing one's whole state of life on the Other Realm, the Land of the Father. It meant setting free the Kingdom within you and bringing every action of your will into harmony with that aim. It meant no longer listening with your ears to the cacophony of the antitheses, but opening yourself, with your whole mind, your whole head sanctuary, to the influx of the Seven-Spirit.

The ancient sages said: 'Leave the hearing of the ears to the ears. Leave the work of the mind to the mind. When the soul is still and without images, it will be open to receive. Into the open soul, Tao' — the Seven-Spirit — 'can descend.' That is prayer and fasting.

If you walk your path in that way, if you live your pupilship in that way, it will be possible to say of you, *He whose movement is good will leave no tracks*. Then the microcosm will move in the 'hidden communion' with God. Spirit, soul and body will be linked with each other in fulfilment of the highest law of the divine nature. Only then will your abilities be able to be applied as they were meant to be applied from the beginning.

This is the only way in which you can free yourself, so as to be able to use your freedom in the service of captive humankind. Enter into the upper room, fasting — which means persevering — and praying, focusing your whole being on that single aim.

'When they had come into the town, they went to the upper room, where they remained. All of them were together in unity, persevering in prayer.' 'When the day of Pentecost was fulfilled, [...] they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.' The outpouring of the Seven-Spirit had become a fact.

Only when that has happened will goodness, and the talents

of virtue and knowledge, no longer carve wounds in yourself and others. For:

He whose movement is good will leave no tracks.

He whose speech is good will not give cause for blame.

He whose counting is good will need no tally.

*He whose closing is good will need no bolts,
yet no man will be able to open what he has shut.*

*He whose binding is good will need no knots,
yet no man will be able to loosen what he has bound.*

27-iii

*He whose speech is good
will not give cause for blame*

In our discussion of chapter 27 of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching we have shown how the words, *he whose movement is good will leave no tracks*, can be fulfilled. All the talents, abilities and attributes a nature-born person may have or which he might be able to develop, can only be used in a liberating way for himself and for others if he entrusts them to the living soul, which means: if he surrenders himself to the Gnosis on the path of the endura and in this way opens his whole being to the other nature. The microcosm and the personality then become a unity.

The approach to life, the lifestyle, which proceeds from that, is one which makes possible total withdrawal from the alternation of antitheses. Death is completely overcome. The undivided Tao, the Seven-Spirit, is manifested. And the personality who has thus focused itself on 'that which is above', will no longer leave tracks in 'that which is below'. For such a personality is in the world, but no longer of the world. That is the mystery of Tao!

When you follow the 'good path' and therefore no longer leave behind any tracks, you will have withdrawn from all reasons and causes for karma. When a person walks the good path and meets the Other One - from within - he eliminates the earth-binding results of his actions. That is the mystery of what people call 'the forgiveness of sins'. 'Though your sins be red as scarlet,' so the Bible says, 'I will wash them whiter than snow.'

This happens not through some external agency, as if by divine intervention, but when you follow the good path and

thereby enter into connection with the Immovable Kingdom, for then you, yourself eliminate all the results of karma. You no longer leave behind any tracks. You begin to rule over the phenomena of dialectics and can therefore no longer be victimised by them. In this way you will have eradicated the death-causing elements of your way of life.

When someone practises goodness in the dialectical way, thereby invoking and activating opposing forces and effects, he will be bound to the results of his actions; he will not be able to free himself from them. That is the primary reason why human beings remain chained to the wheel of birth and death; they leave behind karmic tracks in the nature of death.

Only when a human being's movement - his approach to life - is good in the sense meant by gnostic magic will he no longer leave any tracks and therefore free himself from the nature of death. Then, for the first time, he will be absolutely free of the earth-earthly and therefore able to work in the right way on earth, in the service of his fellow human beings. And, as is described in so many stories and legends about the sages of old, a light-power will emanate from him which, alone, will be sufficient to make a considerable difference to the world and humankind.

We have spoken a good deal about the misery of dialectically applied goodness. But we could say just as much about the trouble caused by false or wrongful speech, or by the things people say when they are under the influence of astral agitation. What an aftermath a wrong spoken word can have, even if, by the standards of goodness, it was very well-meant. What causes for blame are so often involved in human speech.

But the speech of those who walk the path of the Gnosis will invariably be good and give no cause for blame, with all

its karmic and hence earth-binding results. Their counting, their closing, their opening and their binding will also be good. They will have no need of aids, bars, keys or cords. In other words: in all their actions on the path of sacrifice for humanity they will always take the right measures and the right decisions. They will open up whatever is needed to serve the holy work and they will bind and close anything that could threaten the great aim.

Therefore, everything, yes, everything is dependent on adopting the right path, the liberating approach to life. If your movement is, in this sense, genuinely `good', you will hold the key to gnostic magic firmly in your hand. Imagine how it would be if a group of brothers and sisters were to liberate this age-old magic of life in our midst. What a glory would be unleashed! Did you think they would need to discuss things for hours and days so as to be able to take the appropriate measures and the correct decisions, or to decide on the right way to understand things? No, these things would simply `be' there, the instant their thoughts were directed towards some particular need. Everything would fall into place, as soon as the need arose.

A miracle? Absolutely not! Only the result of the liberating approach to life, which was forgotten so long ago. It is the result of living in Tao. That is why it is said that:

The sage always excels in caring for people and rejects no one.

The sage always excels in caring for people

The first part of chapter 27 of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching enabled us to see the contrast between the tragedy of dialectical goodness and the joys of the absolute good attained through the new state of life. The text continues as follows:

That is why the sage always excels in caring for people and rejects no one. He always excels in caring for things and rejects nothing. I call this: being doubly enlightened.

To understand these words it is necessary to know what Lao Tzu means by the word 'sage'. The sage is a person who has entered the original life, the heaven-earth, who has again become a true Man, in the fullest, original sense of the word, which was *Manas* — Thinker.

In the ordinary nature a thinker is a philosopher, a person who uses his intellect to make observations and collect data, and on that basis formulates a range of hypotheses, for instance about the origin or meaning of life, or about God, the universe, and so on.

You are probably familiar with many such products of philosophical thought, formulated by nature-born egos. But this kind of thought never goes further than the seeking phase. It is largely speculation. There have been many clever thinkers. There still are, and many more, no doubt, are yet to come. Many of them write thick books about their theories, and their ideas help countless seeking people to go further in their search. In this way, the mental capacities of many people are trained — albeit in a purely intellectual sense —

and the result is that, ultimately, they realise they are lacking some fundamental, missing link.

In the beginning, logically enough, the seeker thinks it is simply a problem of not knowing enough as yet; he thinks his cerebral apparatus just needs to be trained more, that he must accumulate still more facts. At long last, however, the awareness will dawn on him that the deficiency lies not so much in what he is capable of knowing, as in what he is capable of doing. The mental apparatus of the brain is meant to be an instrument of the thinking faculty. But the real thinking faculty itself is of quite another nature and essence. It is meant to be the fourth vehicle of the human personality, but it is only in an embryonic state in nature-born human beings. And it will remain so as long as the human being remains in his nature-born state.

It is very important to realise this, because there is an immeasurable difference between intellectuality and wisdom. Intellectual knowledge may sometimes be useful to the nature-born person, but it has no value at all as a means of penetrating to the great reality.

You may find this somewhat unacceptable, but we hope you will try to understand it. People who are intellectually trained and whose heads are full of intellectual knowledge, are not interested in the wisdom of the new life, which only arouses in them a feeling of mild contempt or the inclination to laugh. The sage, however, regards the purely intellectual approach as a dangerous course which leads only to delusion. The intellectual approach does not give access to wisdom's inner depths, nor even to its first glimmerings.

Nevertheless, the sage recognises the value underlying the human mind and knows its real significance. The real, divinely intended fourth vehicle, the cognitive faculty, com-

pletes the personality-system and turns it into a magical instrument, all-knowing, all-providing. It is the living soul. However, if *that* vehicle were to be given to humanity as it is manifested now, the resulting human misery and sorrow would be incalculable. Imagine: everyone equipped with those creative powers and abilities. It would be one great, horrible mess.

That is why the birth of the real mental vehicle does not lie on this side of the dividing line, but on the other side. The cognitive faculty can only be developed when the pupil has attained soul-birth, and then leads his nature-born personality across the dividing line with that soul-state and under its guidance.

*From the earth-earthly,
through the red sea of the
blood-passions, into the heaven-
earth, the promised land.*

Only someone who has crossed that border can develop the cognitive faculty. Then he will have access to wisdom and will be able to use the cognitive faculty in the right way.

If you cannot yet enter the new land, then, even as a pupil of the Spiritual School, you have only your nature-born goodness and your nature-born mentality. But you do have this, thanks be to God, that through the growing rose in your heart you may hear the glorious call sent out to you from the other shore. Then, perhaps, you will understand what it really means to be wise and who, in reality, can be called a sage.

In the next chapter, we would like to consider what the sage is called to do, and what he is capable of doing.

27-v

Being doubly enlightened

That is why the sage always excels in caring for people and rejects no one.

After what we have been saying about chapter 27 you will be able to understand these words, because you now know what and who a sage is in the taoist sense. The sage is a person who, having crossed the frontier of the order of time and space, has entered the new life-field and become capable of functioning in this heaven-earth. In that state of being, the cognitive faculty is built up under the guidance of the living soul-state, in the power of the Seven-Spirit.

The path to the 'other shore' begins in this ordinary nature. It starts with a personality which is entirely one with this nature, since it is in this order of existence that the personality is conscious. This personality discovers that it exists in a nature of death, which is governed by the law of antitheses. It discovers that the values, powers and abilities it possesses are not absolute; they are constantly turning into their opposites.

When, as a result of all this experience, the personality-being realises that all his troubles are fruitless, that everything comes and goes, and all kinds of questions begin to come up in his mind, the voice of the rose can awaken in his heart. The nuclear principle of the microcosm can begin to speak, urging him to undertake the journey to the true life, to seek the Land on the other shore. Knowing that not a single one of his abilities is absolute, the individual becomes aware that his inner being does not yet measure up to a number of fundamental requirements, and he begins to 'make his paths straight' in the

desert, in the chaotic desolation of his personal state of being. He descends right down into the deepest depths of his being, and in this way the soul is born.

What is the soul? The soul is an organised concentration of gnostic light-power, of the astral substance of the true life-state. These light-forces enter the personality-system, accumulate in the etheric double and shine in the darkness of the individual's life. They give nourishment, food and drink to the person who is engaged in making straight his paths. This soul-state is a wonderful possession. It shines, as we said, in the darkness, as well as giving food and alleviating thirst.

But as the soul-light grows, the human being is also permitted to behold a glimpse of the 'other shore'. The vision becomes increasingly clear, the path increasingly straight. And in this way it becomes less and less necessary for the I of nature to try frantically to make the best of things and arrive at a solution, and more and more possible for the soul-consciousness to take the lead in the individual's life and guide it consciously to the nadir.

The individual's course of development then undergoes a qualitative change. Previously, the direction of the path that had to be made straight was quite unknown. It was obscured by all kinds of obstacles. But all these obstacles must yield in the light of the soul. Nothing can withstand it.

In this way, the soul-born person approaches the other shore — behind him the darkness, before him the light of a new dawn. While he is diving into the water so as to pass through it to the other shore, or perhaps while he is laboriously scaling the opposite bank, the heavens break open and the dove descends upon him. The spirit descends upon him, the Sephiroth, the Holy Spirit, and straight away the cognitive

faculty is born. The cognitive faculty — the synthesis of the spirit, the soul and the personality. The soul is the emissary of the fire, the spirit is the fire itself. This is what we call *being doubly enlightened*.

Once in this state of being, the sage will always excel in caring for people and will never reject anyone. For he works not only with the goodness innate in him, purified by suffering, but also with the light of love of the truly living soul and with the fire-power of the all-encompassing holy, healing spirit. That is what the ancients meant by *being doubly enlightened*.

Now that we know this, we can glimpse something of the work of the Universal Chain and its many servants, who return from the other shore to the lands of darkness. Does that mean a return to all the former dangers? Absolutely not! For the sage who has reached this state of twofold enlightenment of spirit and soul has entered a reality which is omnipresent, beyond time and space. Such a person can remain in that reality, wherever he may be. He exists in the inviolable.

We do not want you to understand this in the three-dimensional, time-spatial sense, for instance in the way you understand the separation between white and black, or between the perfect and the imperfect, but in terms of the deepest significance of the words: 'In the world but not of the world.'

The sage can move anywhere in the world, without identifying with its phenomena and thereby sustaining harm. And the sage *will* do that because all God's creatures must be led to a good end, to their goal, to their destiny. That is why any creature that has already been liberated has a task to fulfil with respect to all those who are not. Any creation which is manifesting in full glory will always be used to help and serve

creations which are still in the process of development. That is why nothing and no-one can escape the care and attention of the sages.

If we try to view this mighty work from above, we see countless creatures in manifestation in countless domains of the All-Manifestation, all of them in widely differing stages of development. We also see the enormous hierarchy of liberated beings and sages, adapting themselves to the developmental stages and the nature and essence of all those countless beings, so as to stand by them and be of service to them.

Must only 'the good' be helped? What is good? No one is good who still exists in the first phases of development: not even one!

Must the sages remain aloof from the 'bad'? Why should they? Isn't so-called evil really only the product of ignorance and weakness? Aren't the appalling deeds people commit very often motivated by forces beyond their control? It is these people, especially, who must be helped, in the most highly intelligent way, carefully adapted to their state of being. Surely all need to come home to the House of the Father?

That is why the sage does not reward evil with lenience, as humanists are inclined to do, but with the wisdom which flows from the one plan which lies at the foundation of the All. So the sage is not the judge, but the teacher of the bad. All the behaviour of those who deviate from the plan and thereby create the most awful situations, is studied closely. Then they can be treated in keeping with their state, so that the plan, which also lies at the foundation of their being, will one day succeed. It is in this sense that the bad is the teacher of the good.

27-vi

*He who attaches no value to power
has attained supreme wisdom*

We have now come to the last verse of chapter 27 of the Tao Te Ching:

Though his wisdom may seem foolish, he who attaches no value to power and does not seek affluence has attained supreme wisdom.

This verse brings us up against a difficulty, because virtually all Chinese scholars give different translations of it. Most of them simply explain that the Chinese text is very obscure at this point. So although we will be trying to give you an explanation, we are not certain that it will be in keeping with the original text.

Throughout all times, liberated entities have carried out their task with respect to those creatures still on the path or still wandering in darkness. This means that there has always been contact between those who have been born as to the spirit, and those who are as yet unborn. The quality of this contact is very important for both parties. Is there sympathy, or is there antipathy? Are the workers met with belief or with disbelief? Is there susceptibility to real help? Or not?

These are urgent questions. Remember, for instance, the words of Matthew chapter 13: 'They took offence at him. But Jesus said to them: A prophet is not without honour except in his own country and in his own house. And He did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.' So the contact between those who are born and those who are unborn can involve many difficulties.

That is why Lao Tzu alerts his pupils to this at the end of chapter 27, because tendencies towards misconception, disbelief and even opposition and resistance, are always liable to come to the surface owing to the fact that the help and power emanating from the sages can have only one goal. Moreover, it is a help which is given impersonally and thus goes out to good and bad alike.

Doesn't the fundamental, life-encompassing requirement set by the School frequently conflict with your personal interests and circumstances? All who approach the new life will, in one way or another, have to let go of something. They will have to introduce changes in their approach to life and do things they would much rather not do.

That is why those who still expect everything of the horizontal level will experience a considerable amount of conflict on seeking and gaining contact with the sages, because, owing to their state of being, the sages are unable to compromise even slightly. In most cases this conflict will be unintentional, and certainly not desired by the pupil.

Why does it happen? Because every nature-born human being exists in a state of imprisonment. All are the prisoners of the astral field in which they live, for it controls their entire personality. In this astral field many radiation-forces are found. Some originate from the individual's past, or from the collective past of humanity. Others originate from humanity's present state of life. And there is a third kind of influence, which penetrates the world from the Immovable Kingdom.

Owing to their astral quality, these vibrations from the Immovable Kingdom can no longer reach human beings in a direct way, and are therefore brought to them by the sages. Obviously, this fundamental difference will quite naturally and inevitably cause conflict. The flaming sword of the

doubly illumined ones, the blazing sword of the Holy Grail, the sword of the Apocalypse, strikes and pierces everyone.

That is the predicament of those who are imprisoned in their astral bonds to such an extent that they can no longer react harmoniously to the inviting call of the light. What an intense conflict of conscience this must cause! Listening to the voice, hearing the call, but still not being able to react!

When a day of manifestation is still in the process of unfoldment and has not yet reached its nadir, humanity in general notices little of this piercing astral conflict. There are certainly contrasts between doctrine and life, but there are plenty of ways of avoiding the consequences. However, when a phase of human development is approaching its lawful end, difficulties are exacerbated to such an extent that people are held back by the bitter facts from escaping the great requirement. Then there is no choice but to demonstrate positively how one stands with respect to the messengers of the light.

When that point is reached, it becomes evident that neither good, nor evil, nor the possession of great intellectual knowledge, can bring humanity a single step further on the path of development. All the values people tried to cling to in their desperation, have turned out to be empty, void. The human urge towards goodness remains, but no one knows any longer what is good and what is bad; what one person considers to be good, another person denounces as the greatest evil. People can no longer escape the conclusion that their lives have been founded on delusion and that now, there is only one reality left, the reality of the void. Hence the question: How do you stand with respect to the messengers of the light, and the wisdom of the light?

A Spiritual School is always manifested at the end of a cultural period. The awakening call which emanates from it forces everyone to react. The sword is struck right into the

deepest depths of the human soul, aiming to make contact with the primordial atom of the heart and impel it to positive activity. The result of this can never be evil. For it is caused by the Only Good, which comes from the Father of Lights and seeks to form a link with everything and everyone who is in danger of being lost.

This message, this warning, had to be given to you. Let your consciousness dwell on the final words of chapter 27 of the Tao Te Ching: although his approach to life may be decried by everyone as the greatest foolishness, the one who no longer attaches any value to dialectical forces and does not want to drown in the delusion of the nature of death, has gained connection with the supreme wisdom.

He is the valley of the kingdom who knows his masculine strength, yet retains feminine gentleness.

Being the valley of the kingdom, the everlasting virtue will not leave him; he will be restored to the unaffected, uncomplicated state of a child.

He who knows his own light, yet remains in the shadow, is an example for the kingdom.

Being an example for the kingdom, the everlasting virtue will not fail him and he will return to the infinite.

He who knows his own glory, yet remains in shame, is the valley of the kingdom.

Being the valley of the kingdom, the everlasting virtue will attain perfection in him and he will return to the original state.

When the original state of simplicity was extended, things were formed.

Making use of these things, the sage will be the natural leader of the workers.

Offending no-one, he will govern to the benefit of all.

Tao Te Ching chapter 28

28-I

The valley of the kingdom

When the Bible says man was created in God's image and likeness, one should not make the mistake of thinking that this refers to the nature-born personality. The real, divine human being is the microcosm, the monad, and the personality is its instrument, through which the monad's essence, aim and task are approached, known and accomplished.

So when you hear it said that the human being is a self-creating entity whose task is self-realisation, you need to bear in mind that the human manifestation needs to be understood in a new way, quite different from the ordinary. The two forms of human manifestation, man and woman, are fundamentally different, and this fact has brought humanity a great deal of sorrow and confusion on its course through the nadir, as well as reinforcing the ties which bind it to this nature-order.

From the very beginning of its course through the nadir humankind understood that there should be full cooperation between the sexes. But just what this cooperation really means, how it is practised and what its purpose is, have always been interpreted in a variety of ways. And a real, highly attuned cooperation between the sexes has, in fact, never been achieved in the nadir, because the underlying principles have never been fully understood. That is why there have been periods during which men subjugated women, and other periods during which women subjugated men, to say nothing of their other moral interrelationships. In ancient Egypt there was a time when the man had to promise obedience to the woman, and this requirement was formalised

in the marriage contract. Later on, in the marriage contract formulated by the church, these roles were reversed.

In magic, cooperation between men and women as equals has always been a matter of course, and in gnostic magic it is a sine qua non, for in reality, nothing good or liberating can be achieved if this cooperation is not functioning faultlessly. While not wishing to deviate from our subject, this important principle of cooperation had to be mentioned here to show the nature of humanity's bondage and terror in the nadir. For this whole disastrous development was caused by ignorance of the true significance of the dual forces at work in human nature.

Two forces, two currents emanate from the monad, from the microcosm. These two currents are equal in value and significance. In relation to each other, one is positive and the other negative in the ordinary sense of the word. However, in human monads, these two currents are polarised differently. So it could be said that there are two groups of human monads. In one group, it is the first monadic current which is positively polarised, while in the other group it is the second. So the two groups, although equal, are sharply to be distinguished. To convey this idea of equality in dissimilarity we use the term 'inversely proportional', hence the expression, 'inversely proportional polarisation'. You will never find this expression in a dictionary, because as a concept it is unknown. If it were known, the world today would no doubt look quite different!

As well as being divided into these two streams, human monads are further divided into seven groups, distinguished by the nature of their radiations but at the same time absolutely equal. But we will not discuss this any further at the moment, to avoid confusion of ideas.

One of the results of the inversely proportional polarisation

of the two monadic currents is that there are two kinds of form which the monad may take on in order to express itself on the various planes of manifestation. These are: the male and the female. In the male form, masculine strength predominates as the positive pole, while in the female form, feminine gentleness predominates as the positive pole.

To prevent misunderstanding we first need to seek an explanation of what the Tao means when it uses the words 'masculine strength' and 'feminine gentleness', for we are aware that the world has its own ideas about these things.

In gnostic philosophy, when the word 'strength' is used, it is referring to the monad's causative power. The monad possesses a mighty power, a whole series of mighty faculties with the help of which the great, divine plan must be carried out.

The term 'gentleness' or 'meekness' refers to the essence of the monadic being. This is what it means, for instance, when Jesus says: 'Learn from me, that I am meek'. It means the meekness — the gentle courage — of divine love. 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,' as it says in the Sermon on the Mount.

So the divine essence is inherent in the monad in a twofold way: as the divine causative power, and as divine love; as masculine strength and as feminine gentleness. Because of the inversely proportional polarisation, one aspect of the divine essence — causative power — is epitomised by the original, prototypical man, while the other aspect — love — is epitomised by the prototypical woman. Of course this does not mean to say that the opposite pole of the monad is not also present in each prototype.

If you see the situation in a higher context, rising above what you know of the present form, character and behaviour of the two sexes in the nature of death and all the resultant difficulties

and problems present in human life, you will realise that, in the life-sphere of each individual entity, self-realisation is a matter of course. For the two monadic currents needed for this self-realisation — the divine power of causation, and the divine nature of love — are both present in every human form. It is equally clear, though, that the way in which this self-realisation process unfolds in each of the sexes will be different, because of the opposite way in which the two different types of monad are polarised. But the results will be the same.

There wouldn't be any point in trying to describe the ideal woman or the ideal man. They simply do not exist in this three-dimensional nadir! Our aim is only to convey the understanding given in the Tao of how every monad will be able to attain an ideal personality-instrumentarium and how, through the efforts of these perfect instruments, the realms of earth and heaven-earth will once more be rendered capable of fulfilling their divine purpose.

Let us not forget, here, the biblical statement that inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven neither marry nor are given in marriage. Matrimony is an expedient made necessary by life in the nadir. It is accepted by the Gnosis, but is not essential to the liberating life itself.

What is essential is the spontaneous cooperation between the two types of monad, in all domains of matter and spirit. Let us not banalise this mighty fact, and state only that all gnostic brotherhoods in the course of the ages have proclaimed conceptions of this which differed widely from those of the majority of human beings. The incomprehension and slander with which these conceptions and ways of behaving were met was often used by the adversary to their detriment.

The ground is now prepared for gaining an understanding of chapter 28 of the Tao Te Ching: *He is the valley of the kingdom who knows his masculine strength, yet retains feminine gentleness.* We would also like to invert these words, and say: she is the valley of the kingdom who knows feminine gentleness, yet applies masculine strength.

There is a power of causation, and a divine love-radiation. Both of these emanate from the monad. And you will know the words of I Corinthians, Chapter 13: 'If I have everything but have not love, I have nothing and am nothing.' So the monadic current of love is the greater of the two, for without this inner essence of the monad, the causative power could never develop. This divine power is revealed through divine love, and in this way the two monadic currents combine to form a unity. From this unity the tri-unity of the divine sonship becomes a reality. So if you are able to activate the two monadic currents within the personality, the childship of God will be born in you in reality.

The 'valley of the kingdom' is an ancient Chinese representation of a place where genuine alchemical work is done. Just as human dwellings are found in valleys because of the fertile land they contain, so a genuine pupil will enter 'the valley', the place where the Brotherhood lives and works, when he sets out to bring into manifestation and harmonious cooperation the two monadic currents present within him: the power of causation, combined with the greatest gentleness. Only on this basis can there be unity and cooperation between those whose personality-forms differ because of their inversely proportional polarisation.

28-II

The everlasting virtue

In the preceding chapter we began discussing chapter 28 of the Tao Te Ching, whose first verse reads as follows:

He is the valley of the kingdom who knows his masculine strength, yet retains feminine gentleness.

We mentioned that the words, 'valley of the kingdom' represent being admitted to and participating in the Brotherhood of Life, the community of the living soul-state. All who are engaged in enabling the two monadic currents — the power of causation and the power of gentleness — to cooperate in the right way, are called to belong to this community.

If these two powers really are manifesting harmoniously and cooperatively in the nature-born human being, they bring about a complete transformation of that person's life-state. All the challenges that accompany the practice of pupilship then no longer present obstacles. The pupil enters a state of inner calm, a serenity which lifts him above his nature-born state. Transfiguration will then begin, and he or she will be fitted for participation in the group of those who are of the same mind, and of the same kindred.

The new state of being entered by such people when they begin to live and work through the two monadic currents, the twofold power of the rose, is what the Tao calls *the everlasting virtue*. Hence the words:

Being the valley of the kingdom, the everlasting virtue will not leave him; he will be restored to the unaffected, uncomplicated state of a child.

The two monadic currents which are set free and made active in the candidate make him fit to walk the path of liberation. From that moment onwards he possesses an ability which he can apply in practice to lift himself above the nature of death, above the experience of life in the nadir. This ability — virtue — will enable him, step by step, to enter the new nature and join the arc of evolution. He has become a child of God again.

The Bible has much to say about this extraordinary virtue of the childship of God. When the two monadic currents present in the human heart combine and the light of the rose can be perceived, the childship, the spirit of the sonship, is born. When a person reforms his approach to life in the right way, then the results will prove — or, as John says, the spirit will testify — that he has become a child of God. A child who is brought up in the right way is guided towards his destiny. Similarly, the pupil who is born into the childship of God and has joined the arc of evolution, and is therefore equipped with the everlasting virtue, will walk his path upward in the right ways

All this is connected with a task which, particularly in the beginning, is not fully understood by those who are preparing themselves for the path. That is why Lao Tzu gives his pupils further instruction on this point, telling them that it is necessary for the candidate in the gnostic mysteries to remain 'in the shadow' and 'in shame'. That sounds rather strange, and needs to be understood in the right way.

Someone who has succeeded in enabling the two monadic currents — masculine strength and feminine gentleness, the power of causation and divine love — to be expressed harmoniously in the personality will inevitably experience the inner compulsion to serve, help and be an example to his fellow human beings who are still living at the bottom of

the nadir-pit, in ignorance and confusion. That is the meaning of the words: *He who knows his own light, yet remains in the shadow, is an example for the kingdom.* A brother or sister who bears the signature of the everlasting virtue will spontaneously enlist in the ranks of the serving Brotherhood.

Perhaps it would be a good thing to underline, here, the words our text takes as its starting point — the signature: *He who knows his own light.* This refers to the human being who has activated within himself the two monadic currents as a twofold power of the rose, so that, in the light of the other kingdom, he can discern how things stand in the work-field which is in the shadow.

Those who live and work through these two monadic currents will also cooperate in the way necessitated by the fact of inversely proportional polarisation. It is precisely this cooperation which will make those involved invincible, because the two divine currents will both be expressed with equal positivity, without burning each other. This is a result which can only be attained through cooperation, provided — remember — that the cooperating group has entered the state of the everlasting virtue. So, although the liberated human being has become capable of autonomous creation and realisation, he or she will always seek, find and practise cooperation, and thus: group unity.

So one can always tell from a worker's habitual behaviour and the signature it conveys whether his point of departure lies on the light-side of life or on the shadow-side. Those who reject this kind of cooperation, or accede to it only in theory but not in practice, and, when it comes to it, follow rules that serve their own ego rather than ones that serve the principles of cooperation, are still behaving in a way which typifies the human being of the nadir. People who are approaching the

end of their path through the nadir, but have not yet found the everlasting virtue, do tend to behave like this. They pursue their innate urges towards goodness and achievement, but without letting go of their I-centrality, and this only succeeds in accelerating the alternation of opposites. Particularly in a School like ours, such I-central effort constitutes a perpetual source of difficulties, tensions and delay.

What kind of people approach our School? Usually, they are people whose experience of the hopelessness of the nature of death has made them receptive to the Universal Doctrine. The Universal Doctrine touches them, and afterwards they go through all the stages of dialectical confusion — because the lid has been removed from the pit and rays of light are boring their way into the darkness — whilst at the same time they are the offspring of parents who have also suffered in the labyrinth of the land of shadows.

In all of them there is an impulse towards goodness and a certain willpower, as very faint reflex reactions to the two monadic currents. In addition, they naturally have certain talents: one person might have the ability to organise, another might be able to speak fluently, while another might be good at writing, and so on.

From this so varied group of those who are struggling at the bottom of the pit of death, having seen a faint glimmer of the light, the workers are chosen who are to be involved in work for the School — not because they know the light, but because they seek the light, and are therefore given the opportunity to find it, and enter the everlasting virtue, through the experiences and suffering that doing the work will bring. That is why the School is a Spiritual School.

And all who are asked to fulfil tasks as workers are told about group unity and its requirements, set by the holy law and, in obedience, yearning and understanding, they join

in that group unity and cooperation quite spontaneously. In this way, a community of friends comes into being. For friendship, too, is a reflex reaction to the monadic currents. And that is how, through gnostic work, which has to be built from the lowest level upwards, a group is formed that does not yet possess the light, but only tries to do so, full of sincerity and devotion. They do not yet know their own light; their sun has not yet risen. But the radiant light of the Living Body illuminates them unto this rebirth.

Now such a team of workers only needs to have a few members who are overshadowed by adversarial forces — and physical and psychological degenerations offer plenty of scope for that — and straight away delaying actions will arise, as well as serious danger to the progress of the School's work. Yes, sometimes even the very existence of the School is threatened. Why? Well, you know the requirements of group unity. The monadic reflexes of goodness are active in you. The adversary knows how you are likely to think and act during this phase in your life. Carried away by your love for your fellow group members, you will not realise the need to take an objective distance from your relationship with them, and you will not even see the danger this presents. Yet this love is not the real love, but its monadic reflex in your nature-born state. This reflex reaction in your unborn state is mistaken for love. Thus the way is paved for a fatal delay.

The help of divine love, which must be given to all who deviate from the path, is a rectifying, correcting help, the kind of help that will prevent the other person from causing harm. This help has to protect the Spiritual School above all, as the first priority, because the School is the means, the instrument, through which those who participate in the everlasting virtue approach those who still dwell in shadow and shame. The

School is also the place in which people are enabled to carry out the work of developing the everlasting virtue. If these two aspects of the Spiritual School are clearly understood, all kinds of misunderstandings can be avoided. For to lose the School means to lose everything.

So that is why, throughout all the years of its existence, the Spiritual School has been working on the formation of a special group within the group at large. From the outset it was decided that it would be this special group that, starting from first principles, would enter the valley of the kingdom and possess the everlasting virtue.

The Community of the Golden Head, with its thirty-two members, constitutes this special group, which is intended to guide the inner work and therefore to form the governing head of the Living Body of the School.

In addition, there is the Sixth Aspect of our Spiritual School, which has been active for a number of years. The work performed in this group cannot be done by nature-born means, but only through higher faculties. This task is carried out for the benefit of everyone in the Spiritual School.

Thirdly, we have a group which, through Grail magic, is urged towards an inner life that will ultimately lead to conscious participation in the divine soul-life.

It would take us too far from our subject to go any further into these things at the moment, but one thing at least should be clear by now: these groups could not fulfil their task if their basis were in the land of shadow and shame, but only if their basis is in the land of the truly living. So now we can understand Lao Tzu's words:

He who knows his own light, yet remains in the shadow, is an example for the kingdom. Being an example for the kingdom,

the everlasting virtue will not fail him and he will return to the infinite. He who knows his own glory, yet remains in shame, is the valley of the kingdom.

In the next chapter we will tell you more about the path of sacrifice followed by those in whom the powers of the two monadic currents are fully active.

the workers in God's vineyard will be the restoration and rescue of all those who are lost, and they will do this in the power of the divine love with which they have become united.

Having come to this point, Lao Tzu makes clear to his pupils that the sacrifice made by the liberated ones for the benefit of those who are not yet liberated should not be understood in a negative sense. Seen from the viewpoint of the nature of death, someone who sacrifices himself is a 'man of sorrows', just as Jesus the Lord was called 'the man of sorrows'. But the sacrifice we are talking about is just a matter of logic. It means a straight passage, a direct ascent towards the one goal. That is why Lao Tzu says:

Being an example for the kingdom, the everlasting virtue will not fail him and he will return to the infinite.

For people who are still bound to three-dimensionality there is a sharp distinction between 'above' and 'below'. But for someone who knows his or her own light, 'above' and 'below' are the same. Through what is 'below', he goes to what is 'above'. In other words, this logical sacrifice is a path of joy, the open gateway to the infinite. Someone who is completely imprisoned in the nature of death experiences sacrifice not as a matter of course but as a terrible pain which he tries to avoid as far as possible. That is why all who are approaching the Universal Gnosis should change not only the way they approach life, but also the way they perceive it. The result will be that, very often, sorrow will turn into joy, the reality of death will turn into life, and difficulties and grief will turn into profound gladness, without there actually having been any change in external circumstances.

Some people are so accustomed to seeing certain situations in their lives as burdensome, difficult, unpleasant and terrible, that this becomes quite firmly rooted in their mentality, and

they are dominated by the resultant thought-images to such an extent that they are no longer able to change the way they perceive, even though they may have enough new soul-quality to do so. They do not use their imperishable treasure. If they were able to break through to a new way of perceiving, they would immediately know that they had passed through the gateway and they would understand the real meaning of their outer circumstances. That is why Lao Tzu says:

He who knows his own glory, yet remains in shame, is the valley of the kingdom. Being the valley of the kingdom, the everlasting virtue will attain perfection in him and he will return to the original state.

Finally, we need to look at the following words: *When the original state of simplicity was extended, things were formed.*

In the original nadir-state of humankind, when the school of life in matter had not yet fallen into sin, all the things, all the values, all the material forms necessary for life in that training school were brought into existence. All these original things, values and forces are still available even now, for when the 'original state of simplicity' was extended, these things were fashioned indestructibly. And the sage, the liberated human being, will find and recognise them, and accept them with joy and gratitude, so that he can harness and apply them once more. That is why Lao Tzu says:

Making use of these things, the sage will be the natural leader of the workers. Neither harming nor offending anyone, he will govern to the benefit of all.

29-1

The holy, sacrificial vessel

The issues dealt with in chapter 29 of the Tao Te Ching have always been so badly misunderstood. If only people had realised the meaning of Lao Tzu's living words, how different the world would look today!

Open and honest, straightforward and direct, Lao Tzu presented truth and reality to his disciples in just a few sober phrases. Yet now, it will take quite a lengthy explanation to convey to you just something of what he meant. The reason for this lies in the fact that, for ages past, the world and humankind have been developing in a direction which deviates totally from the essential, and now things have set, crystallised, in that wrong direction. Humanity is so thoroughly entangled in the labyrinth of earthy misery — the world has become such an absolute hell — that if we were to say, like Lao Tzu, that *the kingdom* — the world — *is a sacrificial vessel, on which one may not work*, your first reaction would most likely be one of breathless astonishment, followed by indignant protestation, and then maybe derisive laughter at such foolish naivety.

The holy vessel has become a dunghill! Immense astral dangers are accumulating around the world, and it is only a matter of time before they are discharged into the holy vessel. How should we understand these things?

Well, first you need to form a clear conception of 'the kingdom'. Do not think of some Chinese empire or ancient principality, or of instructions for rulers, ministers or other authority figures. The kingdom is, firstly, the earth, a manifesting planet, the kingdom in which the form-aspect of the

human personality must be manifested. The kingdom is also the heaven-earth, the true, divine habitation, given by God as a dwelling place for the real human being, who consists of a spirit, a soul and a body. So the earth-earthly and the heaven-earth should be seen as two-in-one, inseparably connected with each other and forming, together, 'the kingdom'.

Now that is what the 'holy sacrificial vessel' is: a space prepared and maintained by the Logos in which a glorious divine process must be carried out, in keeping with the original decision: 'Let us make man in our image and likeness'. And did you think for one moment that this original divine decision would not be carried out? Many mighty forces, many lifewaves different from ours, are involved in this mighty labour, aiding the development of the monads who are called to become true human beings.

This assistance is a service, offered in sacrifice. It has been going on for an unimaginably long time, and will continue to go on until the great plan has been carried right through to its crowning victory in the holy sacrificial vessel. The Lords of Fate, the Lords of Compassion, the many hosts of angels and countless other sublime beings together form the multitude of servants who are offering themselves in sacrifice. And all are linked together to form one mighty whole, known as 'the ever-living fig tree.* The great sacrifice of the ever-living fig tree, offered in the holy, sacrificial vessel, will never cease until all the monads called to become true human beings have entered that sublime state.

We tend to think we are already 'human beings'. We call ourselves 'human', and 'humankind', but we are not, not yet.

* See J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, *The Brotherhood of Shamballa*, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, The Netherlands, 1986, Chapter 10, The Sons of Will and Yoga.

This delusion has been inculcated in us by theology and distortion of the original truth. And that is why it will be helpful to have the following overview of the whole course of human development.

The holy sacrificial vessel, the planetary two-in-one, has passed through many periods of preparation, corresponding to the various phases in the development of the monadic human being. To convey an idea of this whole process of involution, existence in the nadir, and evolution, which is necessary to complete the holy, sacrificial vessel, Rosicrucian teachings speak of seven globes, the seven forms of the planetary two-in-one.

For the sake of convenience these globes are denoted by the letters A, B, C, and so on. At the moment, we are living on globe D, the globe of the nadir. Globe E, the fifth globe of the series of seven, exists on a higher plane, on the evolutionary side of the monadic human being's development, rather than on the involutionary side. On each globe, seven developmental phases take place, which in one sense are duplications of developments on previous globes, and in another sense are preparations for subsequent developments, on later manifestations of the two-in-one.

So we live now, as we said, on globe D, the fourth one, which is the globe of the nadir. On this globe, three developmental phases lie behind us, during which the prehistoric past was repeated, as it were. We are now in the fourth phase, the Aryan epoch, during which the earth has already gone through many secondary transformations. The Aryan epoch is a decisive one, for during it the entire process of involution, of the preparation of the form aspect of things, must be brought to a conclusion, and the way needs to be paved for the inner side, the core aspect, to be manifested. This will take place for the first time during the three remaining epochs on globe D,

during which the entire future of humankind will have to be manifested as a reality. After that will follow the mighty developments on the next three globes: E, F, and G.

With this cosmological image in mind, you should be able to gain a clear impression of the nature of the holy, sacrificial vessel. If you keep this clearly in mind, you will understand the enormous scope of the plan underlying the development of the divine monads called to become human beings. You will also realise that this plan can never fail, because the sacrificial vessel is sheltered by the ever-living fig tree.

'The plan underlying human genesis cannot fail.' We are making this statement as if it were axiomatic, but really, is it any more than a pious wish? Isn't it rather unjustifiably optimistic, in view of the real state of things here and now, in the nadir? Well, let's think about that.

There is no doubt that, in the present phase of the Aryan epoch, human beings are in the throes of a great crisis, just as they were in Lao Tzu's times. One of the causes of this crisis is the fact that, due to I-centrality and ignorance, and the resultant lack of genuinely liberating soul-power, humanity is not willing to go beyond the point it has reached in the nadir, and move on to the liberating ascent of the arc of evolution. And nascent humanity cannot be forced into that, because it needs to be done in unity, freedom and love, with the help of a newborn soul generated by the two monadic currents discussed in the previous chapter.

If this new soul-state is lacking and three-dimensional confusion blocks the memory of the monad, all further progress will be brought to a halt and the whole plan will be threatened with collapse. Then everyone will be confronted with the bitter experience of fighting and devouring each other like savage animals, locked endlessly in a deadly, self-

destructive struggle, aided now and then by a cosmic revolution. Is that a complete description of our present world situation?

No, a thousand times no! The critical phase we are again going through is the most eloquent proof that the ever-living fig tree will never forsake humanity, and neither will it deviate from the original plan to make 'men in God's image, after His likeness'. It also proves that the fundamental pre-requisite for this remains: self-realisation.

In fact, self-realisation is not only the prerequisite, but also the natural, incontrovertible outcome. Natural laws are inherent in the sacrificial vessel, or the holy mixing vessel as Hermes calls it,* which offer the developing human being only one way out: the attainment of perfection and liberation through self-realisation. To understand how these natural laws work you need to take the following facets of the developing human being into consideration:

firstly, there is a monad, or microcosm, connected with every developing human being;

secondly, two currents of energy emanate from this monad, as we discussed in the previous chapter. These two currents, inversely proportional in polarisation, are known as male strength and female gentleness;

thirdly, there is a monadic self or monadic ego (the microcosm's consciousness), with a nucleus from which these two currents emanate;

fourthly, through natural birth there will always be a personality, an instrument serving the monad;

fifthly, this personality possesses a natural consciousness, an I, the nature-born ego;

* See J. van Rijckenborgh, *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis, II*, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, The Netherlands, 1987, Chapter XXI, The Holy Mixing Vessel.

sixthly there is a karmic being, also called the karmic ego, the astral self, the adversary, or the devil;
seventhly, these aspects of the developing human being, working either in cooperation or in conflict with each other, will ultimately ensure the total triumph of the divine plan.

In the next chapter, we hope to explain why this is so irrefutably certain. If we succeed, you will be able to understand chapter 29 of the Tao Te Ching completely.

29-II

The way to victory

Let us picture the holy mixing vessel we described in the previous chapter, the sacrificial vessel of the two-in-one: the earth-earthly and the heaven-earth. In this holy mixing vessel, the mighty, sacrificing power of the ever-living tree is blended with the sixfold human system from which the true human being will eventually arise. This sacrificing power can also be referred to as the Universal Chain, with its endless line of messengers and saviours such as Lao Tzu, Hermes Trismegistus, the Buddha and Jesus Christ. One could also simply call it God.

Clearly, every entity must have been in living contact with this great, sacrificing stream in the holy, sacrificial vessel ever since the very beginning of monadic development. 'Monad' means divine spark. What is of God imparts itself to the monad. And if we use the words 'monad' and 'microcosm' in one breath, it is because the microcosm is a system which is formed around the monad through the radiation of the divine spark. So, right from the beginning, the divine spark must have been connected to the wonderful, measureless divine power of the holy, sacrificial vessel.

Now this fact is and has always been experienced by every entity belonging to the developmental system as a natural law, as a systematic, universally present influence. This influence transmits to the creature the plan, the idea underlying creation. It is the spirit, which will make the entity truly alive. This spirit remains the same eternally and unchangeably. Now let us suppose, for the moment, that you do not yet know anything about this divine plan, and you

have not yet had any experience of it. Let us imagine that your personality possesses no higher faculty with which you could react consciously to this plan and hence cooperate with it. So on the one hand, there is the monad, the divine spark with its system, the microcosm, and on the other hand there is the personality, still shrouded in ignorance and not yet able to react in any conscious way.

Yet, despite this situation, you would nevertheless be compelled to react. How can that happen, then? It happens by means of the mechanisms incorporated into your present state of being, which were described in the last chapter. There is a monad, a microcosm, which surrounds your personality. This microcosm possesses a nucleus, also called the monadic self, and from that nucleus two currents emanate. Obviously, the microcosm will react unreservedly to the tremendous spiritual power which is offering itself for that purpose in the field of manifestation. That is why we speak of the 'God in you'.

What matters now is that the personality thus encompassed by the microcosm becomes a proper vehicle which can function in the service of the monad, in the service of the divine power which is being offered. To enable it to fulfil this function, the personality possesses a whole series of potentialities, innate within it since birth, and it has a twofold ego consisting of an I-consciousness (the consciousness with which, for instance, you are able to assimilate the contents of this book), and a karmic ego, an astral self.

So this is how the process works: the spirit of the mixing vessel, the tremendous, divine power at work in the earth-system, drives the monad into manifestation. It is the great plan: 'Let us make men in our image and after our likeness'. This plan is etched into the monad, which then radiates it outwards and relays it to the personality. The monad tries to

convey the suggestion, the idea of the plan to your consciousness, your ego, and tries to make your ego into a supple, willing and obedient instrument so that the entire personality-system will be adapted to the plan.

But what if the ego does not react, because it either cannot or will not? In that case, it will be the karmic ego, the astral self, that reacts. There are no exceptions to this. If an impulse from the divine mixing vessel is sent to you via the monad, and your I-consciousness refuses to react, then the astral self will always react instead. Whenever the personality reacts in the wrong way, whenever it thinks or does anything which is not in harmony with that great, motive power, this is always registered by the astral self.

Moreover, the karmic self can never die. When the personality dies and is dissolved, the karmic self continues to exist. It survives death; it is immortal, and will become active again in the next personality to be born in the microcosm. God be praised! For if the karmic self were also to perish every time, the same mistakes would be made all over again.

But as personality succeeds personality, the karmic self becomes increasingly conscious and rich in experience. Since it has come into being as a result of mistaken reactions to the divine law, it is clear that, as soon as it has become strong enough, it will incite you to feelings, thoughts and actions that will cause you much sorrow, pain, and anguish; in short, it will turn your life into one great misery.

Do you ever wonder where all your troubles come from? Do you ever ask yourself why life has to be so difficult and sorrowful? Well, the cause lies in your astral self, which confronts you with your microcosm's entire past in the nadir of materialisation. In the end, the afflictions caused by this confrontation undermine the whole personality-system, and the process of dying sets in.

Sometimes, when we are in difficult situations, we cry out in desperation, 'O God, help me!' But God — the great, sacrificing power of the ever-living fig tree — has always been helping, right from the very beginning. He wouldn't be able to do otherwise. For the suggestions, the radiations of the spirit flow to the personality via the monad. So, in fact, the negative aspects of all that bitterness we go through in life are just a delusion, compared to the divine impulse.

All those dreadful things in life are not part of the Godhead. It is a punishment which the human being brings upon himself. The opposition, the hindrance he experiences from the astral self, is the mirror, the sum total of all those mistaken reactions. The Godhead calls and touches you, and seeks to conduct you in the one direction that will lead to liberation. If you do not react in a positive way, the astral self will thwart you. Your progress will be retarded and ultimately brought to a standstill, and round and round you will go, stuck at the bottom of the pit of death.

So you look in the mirror of your past and are confronted with the sum of all your mistaken reactions. A veritable magic mirror! And this magic mirror annihilates the personality-system time after time. No law exists to set any limits in this respect.

For you, the only law is this: you must learn the lesson. Ultimately, you will have to look right into the mirror of the karmic self, and you will have to experience the results of what you see there to such an extent that your I-consciousness will be purified, and will at last be willing to listen to the voice of the monad, which is the voice of God.

Then the I-consciousness must act, but not in response to advice from other people, the kind of advice so often received when one is in distress. And when it acts, the karmic self will register and vivify the results. When this happens,

what Hermes Trismegistus called 'the absolute good' will come into being.

But as long as you continue to expect anything of this life, as long as you still feel satisfied with the perspectives this life has to offer, the astral self will lose none of its power. As long as you remain in that state of mind, the 'absolute good' cannot be born, even if you follow the advice of the Spiritual School and change your approach to life, perhaps motivated by the wish to extricate yourself from some tight corner.

Only when your reactions really change from within and the results are evident in your life will the hermetic 'absolute good' develop. For, from that moment onwards, there will be two beings alongside your I-consciousness. In world literature, these are sometimes represented as the good angel and the bad angel, the white and the black.

With the help of this new power of goodness, the personality builds up an ineradicable new soul potential. It is ineradicable since the absolute good which, through right reaction, has now taken form is straight away connected with the monadic power seeking to touch the human being. It is connected with the sacrificing divine power operating via the monad.

This power then neutralises and expels the other astral power which formerly caused so much adversity, and never again will it be able to harm the life-system, even though it will be remembered. The person concerned will then know evil in its totality, because its scars will have been etched into his being, but he will no longer have to experience it as such. Meanwhile, the good aspect of the astral self conveys to the person the sum of all the insight and skill it has gained through experience, and with the help of which the absolute good will ultimately be brought into manifestation.

So let us just briefly summarise all this: If you do not react

in the right way to God's voice, the voice of the rose, a reaction will be felt in your life. All the mistakes you make are recorded in the astral self and reflected back to you. So you are gazing into a mirror, and all those reflections can wreak havoc in your life. Through this inhibiting mechanism, you will eventually be forced to listen to the voice.

If, on the other hand, you do listen with your innermost being, and react in the right way, the opposite will happen. The results of the positive, good reaction will develop into an increasingly potent force which will eventually banish everything that stands in your way. The radiation of the monadic self will then be integrated in you. The astral self will therefore convey to you the sum total of all the insight and skill it has accumulated through experience, and this is bound to lead, eventually, to the manifestation of the absolute good, even though it may sometimes take rather a long time.

That is why one can say that all aspects of human life — whether supportive or obstructive — will ultimately lead to the state of victory. The very fact of their existence obliges human beings to demonstrate this magnificent process of self-realisation sooner or later. All will find the path. Through self-realisation, all will enjoy victory.

But no one can have something for nothing. No one can avoid the cup of self-realisation; it must be drained to the last drop. For a lesson left unlearned, or a power or an ability left unused, is bound to cause problems sooner or later. The process of self-manifestation has to be absolute. Only then can God be revealed in the flesh. Jesus the Lord, the human prototype, proved that right to the last moment. It was not possible for the cup he had to drain to pass Him by. The way of the cross of roses had to be followed to the very end.

Now one might ask, 'Isn't this a rather tough, depressing

doctrine? How can the degenerate, utterly crystallised human being of today be capable of making this truth into a reality in himself?'

But to ask questions like that would demonstrate a lack of real experience, and an inner state of mind still subject to the scourge of the astral self, which reflects back to the person concerned the results of his mistaken reactions. Such a person could not attain a single particle of the absolute good, and neither could he gain the power necessary to overcome his astral adversary.

Those who follow this path — and one can only do so after sufficient purification — know that, right from the moment when something of the new soul-power is revealed in the system, unity is celebrated not only with the monad, but also with the ever-living fig tree which stands in the midst of God's paradise, in the divine mixing vessel. The process of self-initiation begins at that very moment. And just one spark of that love-power uplifts one's entire being into a state of such boundless joy and happiness that from then on one will praise the Godhead for its grace and for the glory of its plan.

Humanity is currently straining itself to the utmost — in a mistaken reaction to the divine plan — to achieve aims which comply at least in some small measure with the standards of human dignity. But you know the result.

Only where the soul is, can the spirit be, and only there can peace, love, joy and happiness be found. Only in that way does one transcend life in the nadir and enter upon the arc of evolution. If this is not the case, only negative results can be expected. Hence Lao Tzu's words:

If a person tries to perfect the kingdom by means of action, I perceive that he does not succeed. The kingdom — the world of the two-in-one — is a sacrificial vessel, whose aims cannot

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be attained by means of the nature-born ego. *If one works on it, with dialectical motives, it will be spoiled. If one tries to grasp it, it will be lost.*

If you are willing to learn this lesson; indeed, if you are inwardly capable of learning it, if you are willing to subordinate the life of your ego, with all its striving, to the enfoldment of the All, you will find it possible to reach the top of the mountain.

The idea Lao Tzu sought to convey in chapter 29 should now be clear: he was pointing out the direct route to victory. In the next chapter we would like to tell you more about this direct route, placing it in the illuminating light of the Universal Gnosis.

29-III

No one can serve two masters

The need to engage in lots of activity is one of the things that particularly characterises people who are wandering in the nadir of materialisation, afflicted by the consequences of an incorrect approach to life, the living account of which is registered in the astral self. As long as their vitality lasts, they wage an intense struggle to maintain themselves and their world.

But even in the primeval past, there were people who had discovered how useless, how hopeless all that effort is. In Ecclesiastes we read the words: 'What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? He spends his days in darkness and he works in grief. Even the night gives his heart no rest. For all is vanity'. So how true, in this context, are the words of Lao Tzu:

If a person tries to perfect the kingdom by means of action, I perceive that he does not succeed.

In fact, you know this from experience, so we need not lose ourselves in arguments and examples.

Nevertheless, one may not simply dispose of this pattern of things and its all too familiar results by saying, as pupils of the Spiritual School frequently do, 'Yes, that's dialectics, the alternation of antitheses'. Neither may one point out the uselessness of certain activities simply in order to justify inaction, as many people have done in the past.

The nature of death is like a barren wilderness, desolate and fraught with danger. The four kingdoms of nature are completely out of harmony with each other. So the nature-

born human being *has* to engage in lots of activity, simply in order to go on existing. If he were to stop being active, there would be no food, and society would perish in its own filth.

So the requirements and habits of civilisation cannot be dispensed with, and their cultivation — at least to a minimum — is to be commended. For the term 'holy, sacrificial vessel' certainly cannot be attached to 'the kingdom' as we know and experience it, even with the greatest optimism.

The reality is that, through many deviations from the path, every mortal human being has acquired an astral self highly charged with the sinful sum of the past. This in turn means that the collective of mortal human beings has drawn around itself a correspondingly darkened astral life-field. The end result is that an incessant, daily effort is necessary to hold this fateful course in check as far as possible.

But it would be wrong to think that these practices, necessary for the maintenance of human life, could ever form the basis for any liberating development. When people engage in that kind of activity, believing that by so doing they can make the world and humankind perfect, they will invariably discover that they do not succeed, and even that they spoil everything, that they lose everything.

In the postwar years, the church tried to stimulate new religious life, to keep the interest of young people and give the church a place in everyday life. But the outcome has been negative. By adapting itself to the world of today, the church has adapted itself to present-day astral conditions, and in this way it has aggravated its decline, which in turn has only added to the confusion.

That is why it is important to realise that the world in which we live is only a relatively small, isolated space within the holy, sacrificial vessel of the two-in-one. The sacrificial vessel itself is inviolable; it exists in a state of perfection

and completion. No more work needs to be done on it, and certainly not by a nature-born entity imprisoned in the astral self. *If one works on it, in that state, it will be spoiled.*

Therefore, for the person who really understands this from within, there is only one alternative: to liberate himself, through self-realisation, from the pit of death. So let us try to see these things as they really are. The person who wants to follow the path and enter the holy, sacrificial vessel, will render to the world the things that are the world's. In other words, since he finds himself here in this nature, he will naturally do his duty towards all those with whom he is connected. But he will not do more than that, for he will render to God the things that are God's. The sage will avoid any superfluous activity here in the nature of death, and he will not bind himself to this nature by conceding to it anything to which it is not entitled. He will dispel the delusion that it is possible to glorify this vale of tears.

'No one can serve two masters.' This is what Lao Tzu meant, and the same message has been communicated by all the great emissaries of liberation from this vale of tears. 'No one can serve two masters', no one can pursue two goals at the same time. You cannot serve both God and your astral self. That is why the Gospel of Jesus Christ is only for those who are strong in the true, inner sense of the word. The Spiritual School of the young Gnosis needs pupils who are strong and steadfast, pupils who will really be able to lead the way.

If they do so in the right way, the radiance of their hearts will give warmth to many, and coolness to those who are consumed by the lower fire. Those who are strong will support the weak, and those who are moving will stir into action those who are standing still.

Those who help the government of the people through Tao, do not subject the kingdom by force of arms.

Whatever people do to others, rebounds on them.

Thorns and thistles grow wherever armies have been.

Years of famine follow every major campaign.

The person who is truly good strikes only once, effectively, and then stops, and dares not continue with brute force.

He strikes once, in the right way, but is not conceited. He

strikes once, in the right way, but does not boast of it. He

strikes once, in the right way, but is not proud of it.

He strikes once, in the right way, but only because he cannot do otherwise.

He strikes once, in the right way, but does not wish to seem strong and formidable.

When power reaches its peak, people and things become old. This means they are not equal to Tao. And whatever is dissimilar to Tao will soon cease to be.

Tao Te Ching chapter 30

30-1

Not by force of arms

In chapter thirty of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu deals with an issue which has been very topical during this century, the controversy about the rights and wrongs of using weapons to settle disputes.

In fact, this controversy reached its peak several decades ago. Older readers will remember the campaign for disarmament waged by a variety of idealistic groups using the methods of non-violence. It was a movement that appealed to the minds and hearts of many millions of humane, thinking people and it lasted such a long time that, in the Netherlands, for instance, a law was passed allowing those who, for religious reasons, did not want to bear arms, to be exempted from conscription. Many young pupils of our School have availed themselves of this law, even though the School would not, and could not, oblige them to do so, because the decision has to come from an inner state, which is always subject to a process of growth.

There are also those great, world-famous visionaries who, by their ideals and their personal example, have profoundly moved huge numbers of people, inspiring them to adopt a highly moral standpoint. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the time of practical idealism, which inspired the hope of so many young people in the earlier years of this century, is over. Practical idealism has been rendered out of date by a flood of world events which have made the majority of human beings so implacably realistic that it was as if idealism had been swept away by a storm, having proved powerless to restrain the alternation of antitheses.

This was because the concepts on which it was founded, though excellent in many respects, lacked certain essential values and certainties. Perhaps you yourself have experienced that when you have high ideals which are not absolutely consistent and well-founded in every respect, it is rather like having built a house of cards; the whole edifice is bound to collapse sooner or later. Idealism can only become realism when it is absolutely free of conformity to the world and its values and attuned solely to the divine plan underlying the genesis of the true human being.

The idea, the slogan, 'no more war' arose from a heartfelt yearning for true human genesis. But how can such a yearning ever be satisfied if people do not know the plan underlying that genesis? And if, lacking that knowledge, they just adapt their ideals to the way of life of twentieth century humanity? It is like a person who sets fire to his house and afterwards sits down in the ruins and prays: 'O Lord, give me a house'. Whereas a person who knows and experiences the reality of our times understands that, if he persists in his ordinary approach to life, wars and the rumours of wars, and all the related tensions and phenomena, will continue to exist.

This point of view is also expressed in the Bible, for instance in Matthew 24, which says: 'You will hear of wars and rumours of war. This must take place, but the end is not yet.' Why must these things take place?

To answer this question we would like to remind you of something Hermes Trismegistus said: 'The sun's creation of life is just as lasting as its light. Nothing can stop it or restrain it. Countless multitudes of lifewaves throng like a company of guards around the sun. They remain close to the great immortals and from there they also watch over human concerns. They carry out the divine will, by means of thunder-

storms, fireballs and calamities, and also by means of famine and war, as a punishment for godlessness.'

At first glance, this reads rather like something from the Old Testament, evoking ideas of avenging divine justice. But in reality it concerns the scientific fact that the whole solar macrocosm — the entire solar system and everything it contains — forms one formidable and very varied astral life-system, guided and governed by a single, central law.

Now if a being within this macrocosmic system violates the system's astral laws, reactions are bound to ensue; they cannot be avoided. However, they occur not as a punishment, but as an automatic adjustment to rectify the imbalance caused by the transgression. The solar macrocosm is a self-correcting divine system, which simply does not allow any irregularity. So events which we on earth experience as affliction are natural adjustments made by the solar macrocosm's astral self-rectification system to restore the inter-cosmic equilibrium. This natural law which always operates to restore equilibrium may sometimes include an element of violence, not as a deliberate aim, but as a means of ensuring the safety of the beings whose creation is the one, divine purpose of life.

If one understands the irresistible truth of this law, then, whenever one experiences any affliction, whether as an individual, or as part of a group, nation, or community of nations, one will ask oneself this one, all-decisive question: 'What standards, what approach should we choose, what measures should we take, to avoid the consequences of such an astral reaction in future?' People do ask these questions, repeatedly, but not in the right way. Think, for instance, of the lethal way in which East and West are arming themselves against each other as a means of keeping the 'peace'. But

some of these modern armaments can produce such terrible effects that neither East nor West would dare to use them. At the moment, their only function is to serve as deterrents. But anyone with the slightest understanding will realise that the thoughts, intelligences and forces behind this whole lethal arms industry must stir up such astral turbulence that this alone would be sufficient to threaten humankind with disasters much worse than wars.

These disasters have already been generated to a certain extent. The world is divided into two camps. Humanity is split into two halves, and all the means of modern civilisation are being used to maintain this split. All the authorities in both camps support the division on the grounds that if the other group were to take control, everything would be lost. Both groups are armed to such an extent that neither side dares to attack the other. In this way, a state of extreme tension is engendered in the mighty astral currents emanating from the solar macrocosm.

So there you have Gog and Magog, as described in the Book of Revelations. These two astral tensions surround the whole world and everyone in it. Every single mortal being is involved, regardless of whether he lives in the East or in the West. So there are two fiery forces, stoked from below; two fiery poles, inextinguishably ignited. It is Armageddon, arms concentration, the end of an epoch. It is total liquidation, the end of those who place all their hopes in the nature of death. It means the restoration of equilibrium in the solar macrocosm.

Does the Universal Gnosis proclaim these tidings of doom? Is that the inevitable outcome?

Well, that is up to you, to us, and to our fellow human beings. All these things will have to happen — unless, through the efforts of as large a group as possible, a different outcome, a different solution, can be precipitated. But who is optimistic

enough to believe in that? Would it not be more practical to follow the path of liberation with both feet on the ground? Would it not be more realistic to seek that path and try to take along as large a group as possible?

That is how it has been in similar periods throughout humanity's past. 'A harvest has always been brought in from the fields', as one might say, in poetic terms. But the number of those who remain behind is not to be counted.

Since the days of Lao Tzu disasters and violence have hit humankind time and time again, and have become more and more widespread. There is mounting evidence — for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see — that the kingdom of humankind cannot be reorganised by force of arms. Whatever people do to others, rebounds on them. Wherever armies have fought, thorns and thistles grow. Wars are always followed by periods of disaster, and it can only end in one final crisis, an Armageddon.

Gog and Magog constitute the signature of this crisis. They represent a definitive restoration of the age-long disturbance in the solar macrocosm, and the discharge of astral karma into the astral body of our planet, and therefore into the life-field of humankind.

Having heard these facts, there are certain conclusions it would be helpful to draw. As we have seen, the whole world is divided into two camps and the 'Gog and Magog' situation is clearly evident. Also, humanity's astral life-field is closely attuned to all this upheaval and is therefore utterly poisoned, to the extent that only people with a strong new soul power will be able to avoid being harmed by it. Meanwhile, the current astral conditions will ensure that everyone else is drawn right into the situation we have been describing, at the cost of much suffering. People often regard with disapproval anyone who does not want to be drawn into this conflict or to take

NOT BY FORCE OF ARMS

sides in it. So it becomes a matter of conscience, and the questions we would like to ask are these: How should those who seek gnostic consciousness behave in these circumstances? If, impelled by the divine love which has touched us, we want to serve the world and humankind, what is the best way to do it under the present conditions? How, in view of the current world situation, are we to gain entrance to the arc of evolution?

These questions may well have driven you into a conflict of conscience, and we would like to examine them in the next chapter, guided by the Tao Te Ching.

30-II

The person who is truly good strikes only once

The critical phase in human development which has now been entered confronts those who seek gnostic consciousness with the problem of how to behave towards the world and humankind.

Essentially, the gnostic approach to life will help the government of a nation to fulfil its proper role. Now this idea of a gnostic helping his government may sound rather old fashioned and orthodox - primitive, even - or at least not appropriate for modern times when governments are ousted one after the other. But it is possible to understand these words in a way that will be totally new to you, although in fact it has very ancient roots. It is just that this approach has been forgotten in the course of the ages.

A government occupies a central position among the people, not only in the political or legal sense, but also in the astral sense, for it forms an electromagnetic centre on which converge all the astral currents needed or invoked by the nation or bound to it by karma.

Via that centre these astral radiations are activated and spread out over the people. So, apart from the personal relationship which every individual has with the life-field in which he lives, there is also a collective relationship of the nation as a whole to the life-field surrounding it. A government acts as the inductor, the centre of contact. A person who understands gnostic magic will always take this fact into consideration.

Now it may be that part of the nation disapproves of the government. The government may be weak, or even primitive.

It may make decisions which are catastrophic for the nation. Nevertheless, the natural law - known to gnostic magic - still applies: the government is the central figure, the central organ, the respiratory centre of the nation's body. The human body respire and attracts forces via the seven chakras of the astral vehicle, and the body of a nation functions, in a certain sense, in a similar way. So the central organ cannot be bypassed.

That is why the Universal Doctrine always represents governments as being absolutely in authority - a fact which, as we said before, the practitioner of gnostic magic will bear in mind. That is why the Bible, for instance, says: 'The authorities do not bear the sword in vain.' (Romans 13 : 4) The word 'sword', as it is used here, does not refer to some piece of military apparatus, but symbolises the centre of governmental power, just as the sword of the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail is symbolic in meaning.

By now, a query may have crossed your mind: 'Does this mean I must accept without question everything the government says and does, and obey it implicitly? Surely not!'

Our answer is that this question, too, must be considered from the point of view of astral laws. Then one discovers that, in any nation, there are numerous larger and smaller groups, perhaps even amounting to thousands of millions of individuals, who totally oppose their government. The mental and astral effect of this is that the highest level of government - generally the council of ministers - becomes the focus of an almost inconceivable astral turbulence.

Suppose a decision is taken by the chief ministers which plunges the whole nation into turmoil. Instantly, currents of astral force will radiate from all over the nation to that one centre, forming one seething, whirling astral fire. That is why a council of ministers is always the focus of an intense astral

turbulence. In that central focus, every thought and feeling of opposition bursts into flame, to a certain extent.

And when you consider the tendency of various nations with interests in common to group together, and the fact that in such a community of nations one particular nation tends to dominate - think, for example, of the present power blocs in the West and in the East - you will be able to see that two mighty astral vortices must be active in our world. In this way two tracks are formed - to put it in the language of Taoism - two tracks of immense astral turbulence, which are poured out over the whole of humanity via the various centres of government.

So you see, all the turmoil one hears about in newspapers, magazines and other literature, or on the radio, is but a pale shadow of what is going on at these central astral foci. So it is meaningless to try and stop things like violations of human rights merely by passing laws forbidding them.

The fact that the astral results of every single thought and feeling of opposition converge on the government means that government members are in a far from enviable position, and not only because of each minister's own personal astral disposition. Do not think: 'the ministers belong to this or that party, and they will just act in their own personal or party interests, to the detriment or benefit of the nation.' It is not as simple as that! In the centre of government, the entire psyche of a nation comes to expression. That is why it is inevitable that every nation will have the government it deserves. This is guaranteed by natural, astral laws.

So the astral centre associated with a government is the representative of the people in more ways than one. The governmental representatives of a nation may have weaknesses and take misguided decisions which cause delicate situations to arise. But beyond all that there is the nation's

astral representation. Such an astral centre of government, representing the nation, is electromagnetic and attracts radiations and forces from the surrounding astral life-field and from the solar macrocosm. Via that governmental centre, all these forces are directly linked with the entire nation. In this way, in seconds, astral ties are set up, and they are maintained by day and by night. The practical, demonstrable result is that every nation receives the government it deserves.

Of course this is no comfort. Knowing this will not heal the bleeding wounds of our society. But it is the reality of the situation, and we need to discuss this with you.

Why? So that you will adopt an attitude towards the world and humankind which is quite different from the one you have had until now. Individually and collectively, human beings bring their fate upon themselves. So is there no way in which we can serve the world and humankind?

Well, think of chapter 30 of the Tao Te Ching. It depicts a figure, a master, who says nothing, who gives no teachings, but only remains silent. Because of the reality of his inner state, he attracts the forces of the eternal Tao and spreads them over his audience. That can be very effective if the audience is properly attuned, if the listeners have an affinity for that radiation and are open to it. But in our times, the results achieved by such silent speaking would be minimal.

There are ways of facilitating things, however, which have been applied by many workers throughout the ages, and they have also been practised in successive spiritual schools. Think, for instance, of the singing we often do together at our meetings. Why do we sing? Not because we want to be devout, but because by singing together we attune ourselves to each other and synchronise our breath. When we sing together, all our thoughts are focused on the same words, and in this way a rhythmic unity is realised. In gnostic terminology

this is called attunement to the sixth ray, and it inevitably causes a special power to flow into the group. If the group participants are open to it, it will be able to affect them. So this is one of the ways in which a person or group of people could really be helped.

If a person wants to experience this method for himself, aided by the gnostic revelation, he will need to begin by working on himself. For what you are, you will attract. You yourself determine your experiences. If you recognise this, you will bring your own state of being into harmony with the requirements of the path.

You will have to begin by refusing, under any circumstances, to send out thoughts and feelings of accusation, blame and antagonism. This is an attitude of mind which must be strictly avoided, both by individuals and by groups, and in the particular as well as in the general sense.

Why? For ethical reasons? Or because the effects of condemnation are sometimes so ugly and painful? No, it is because every condemnatory thought or feeling arouses a corresponding astral radiation, an astral reaction. If a person acts wrongly because of his or her astral condition, and you condemn this action as people normally do, then you summon that same astral condition and its consequences all over again for the person in question. It is unavoidable, and more often than not you are hurt as well, which amounts to the use of arms. With critical thoughts and feelings we besiege and menace each other.

By force of arms, nothing essential, nothing good can ever develop. Please realise that! You can only help your fellow human beings, your nation and your world through Tao. Those who want to help any group of people through Tao *do not subject the kingdom by force of arms.*

Criticism is a terrible weapon. That is why the Sermon

on the Mount says: 'Judge not, that you be not judged.' Just look at adolescents, for instance. As soon as the years of puberty dawn, and the astral body begins to be configured and activated, a flood of immature antagonism and fault-finding breaks loose. Whatever was innate in them then comes right out in the open. That is why so many adolescents change completely in character during the years of puberty and immediately afterwards. Currents of astral turbulence exert their grip on them, and sometimes make them act in ways they do not like at all.

And that is how misery and sorrow enter our lives. The human being brings his fate upon himself. That is why you need to realise that you cannot subject the kingdom by force of arms. Criticism, we repeat, is a terrible weapon.

'Helping through Tao', what does that mean? Well, it concerns an approach to life so sublime, a gnostic, magical practice so potent, that it takes considerable effort to understand even a little about it.

The first thing we need to be clear about is that neither nations nor persons can be helped by force of arms. If a storm of criticism breaks loose over a person or nation, then it will be to that person or nation's detriment, and things will inevitably go wrong. In addition, whatever harm one does to others will rebound on oneself. 'All who take the sword will perish by the sword.' (Matthew 26 : 52)

An age-old weapon used throughout all times by adversaries of the Spiritual School, is to surround it and its workers with criticism. By spending just five minutes a day on criticism, it is possible to surround such a school with a cloud of difficulties, unless its focal power is capable of rising above it and placing itself in Tao.

There are many varieties of weapons, but the most terrible

THE PERSON WHO IS TRULY GOOD STRIKES ONLY ONCE

of all are the astral ones, which are unknowingly applied by humanity from second to second.

There are people who support anti-militaristic ideals and who very seriously practise the consequences in their lives. But through their constant practice of criticism these people are so wounding, so deadly in their impact that a club-wielding caveman would be proud of it. Do they really think they can serve a government, a nation, or a person, in this way? In fact, one never-ending war is caused by the astral turbulence resulting from humanity's habitual behaviour.

Now Lao Tzu says: *Thorns and thistles grow wherever armies have been.* Great wars are followed by periods of disaster, and humanity has only itself to blame. The human being brings his fate upon himself. Through its disastrous habits, humanity keeps the whole nature of death going.

That is why a new approach to life is so necessary for every practising pupil of a gnostic spiritual school, whose heart is moved by the plight of the world and humankind.

The person who is truly good strikes only once, effectively, and then stops. He stops, because force is not his method, as it says in the text. As you may have gathered, a mystery lies behind this saying, which makes it feasible for a 'single strike' to be genuinely helping and liberating for humanity. We would like to try and fathom this mystery in the next chapter.

30-III

*When power has reached its peak,
people and things become old*

We would like to repeat a phrase from chapter 30 of the Tao Te Ching: *The person who is truly good strikes only once, effectively, and then stops.* Picture the astral state of a governmental centre, anywhere in the world, and think of what we have been saying about these things. Then you will see all kinds of astral eddies above and around the central focus of that governmental centre, which is the object of so much resentment. These eddies resemble a cluster of dark clouds, aglow with red and vivid yellow flames, in which the mental and emotional state of an entire nation is expressed.

This astral concentration is strongly magnetic, generating many ties with influences and forces present in the astral field surrounding the world, and attracting whatever is in equilibrium with it. And that is how, via its government, every nation receives what it has invoked, and therefore deserves. This is an immutable law.

Since this astral process is at work in every nation, one can see that it, in fact, is what keeps the whole nature of death the way it is. And because it is impossible to bring this chain of events to a standstill, humanity is heading for a crisis, an end-phase, in which the impact of this astral burning will be felt to such an extent that a conflagration by astral fire is bound to ensue. Truly a discouraging end! In this way life comes and goes without change — unless humanity totally changes its approach to life.

Nevertheless, even in the midst of this sad reality, the truly good human being, the sage, acts to ensure that a harvest of human souls can still be gathered and brought onto the arc of

evolution and deliverance, and then guided further along it.

The person who is truly good, says Lao Tzu, acts once, with power. What this means is that the community of the truly good ones, or those of its members who have been chosen for this task, send out the astral power of Tao, the light-power of the Only Good, to the astral nuclei or foci of a nation.

This light-power is quite unlike the astral concentrations we have been describing, for it differs not only in quality but also in vibration and power. That is why, when the light-forces of the Only Good, combined with the energies they attract from the all-encompassing astral field, come into contact with the astral foci of the nation, that contact is bound to be highly explosive. So in a certain, very special sense, one can really speak of 'violence' in this situation. But it is a violence which is applied only once, and that one application is more than sufficient.

And see what happens next. These light-power projections have the effect of dispersing the astral concentrations of the nation and scattering them in all directions, so that every individual member of the nation is thrown back on his own resources. Each individual then not only experiences the results of personal and collective karma, but at the same time is brought into direct, personal and bodily contact with the light-power of the universal life. This is a process from which no mortal being is exempt.

That is what the holy language of the Apocalypse really means when it talks about the return of Christ and the last judgement. When a certain limit has been reached, the forces of the light intervene to restore the disturbed equilibrium of the solar macrocosm. The delusion that veiled reality is swept away, and in the resultant disarray it is possible for the uplifting astral radiations of deliverance to make contact with each person individually, providing him or her with a new,

independent opportunity. Then it will have to be proved whether each individual possesses sufficient openness to receive the light of the Only Good and to live in its power. That is how the harvest is gathered. Such a crisis of separation and sifting develops at the end of every phase in humanity's progress.

There are countless individuals who have become enmeshed in the astral doom of their people to such an extent that there remains no possibility of disentangling them from it until such a fire of judgement can be unleashed. But through this once-only intervention of the Only Good, justice can be done to such people, too. So the intervention of the Only Good is always completely successful. When the concentration of the astral clouds has reached its peak, so that the 'time of the end' has come, the Only Good takes action to return all living beings to 'the Way of ways', as Lao Tzu calls it. But we need to be aware that this unavoidable action also has its tragic side, tragic because of the fact that humanity has allowed things to go as far as that. That is why it is said of the sage that:

He strikes once, in the right way, but does not boast of it. He strikes once, in the right way, but is not proud of it. He strikes once, in the right way, but only because he cannot do otherwise. He strikes once, in the right way, but does not wish to seem strong and formidable.

Once more, the human race has entered the Gog and Magog phase, so one can foresee what will happen to it now. The two groups into which humanity is divided have reached the peak of their power, and that is why Lao Tzu says:

When power reaches its peak, people and things become old. This means they are not equal to Tao. And whatever is dissimilar to Tao will soon cease to be.

So one can see that this situation could also pose a threat to the Spiritual School from time to time. For the Spiritual School and its pupils, gathered in the Living Body, occupy an exceptional place in the midst of the people and their activities. In an absolutely real sense, those who participate in a Spiritual School, a Living Body, are *in* the world, but not *of* the world. So a Spiritual School stands aloof from the turbulence in which most nations are enmeshed, for in it — in the group, in the Living Body — exceptional astral conditions need to apply.

But this is not always easy, for while every pupil needs to perform his task, his obligations *in* the world, he is also called to be not *of* this world. And that is why every pupil who has consciously chosen for the Gnosis, and is determined to walk the path, needs to attune himself completely to the astral field of the School, and should persistently refuse to make even a single astral concession to the nature of death.

If we put it this way, you will see how problems and hazards can develop for the School and its Living Body. Suppose the majority of the group were to be attuned primarily to the nature of death. Then the whole group, the entire Living Body, would inevitably be drawn into ordinary ways of acting and reacting and would soon come completely under the control of the astral field of the people. That would put any Spiritual School in manifestation out of action. Its name could no longer be identified with its reality. So if a Living Body is put in jeopardy by being drawn into the astral turbulence of the nature of death, the closing words of chapter thirty of the Tao Te Ching are fulfilled:

When power reaches its peak, people and things become old. This means they are not equal to Tao. And whatever is dissimilar to Tao will soon cease to be.

From time to time, this pattern can also be observed in the

way certain worldwide movements reach their peak, but then become outmoded, and afterwards collapse. This happens because they do not pay enough attention to the dangers we have been explaining. The moment such an organisation allows itself to be drawn into the stultifying flux of ordinary human behaviour, everything goes wrong, and all is lost. This is something we also need to be careful about, for instance, with respect to our family life.

So it is understandable that the leadership of a School like ours may well need to intervene occasionally, to keep the School's astral centre free of contamination. At such times, a single, decisive action will be taken, so as to bring the life of the Living Body back to normal straight away.

Think, in this context, of the archetypal image of the celestial ship, used by the ancient Egyptians. A celestial ship must be able to sail. Where to? To the goal we are shown by the Gnosis. It must be able to attune itself completely to the sea of living water, so that it will be able to sail on it. And not a single astral influence of the nature of death may be tolerated, because any influence of that kind would act as an anchor restraining the ship in its passage.

So if purifying action is taken, it is only to keep the ship of the Living Body on the right course, the Way of ways, Tao. Thus the Living Body of the School is able to retain its quality and value as a place of real protection for all those who genuinely desire it.

As long as it is granted to us, we will steer our celestial ship onward, along the Way of ways. And we very much hope that all of you will give us your cooperation. These words are addressed particularly to all those who are collaborating in the holy work, and especially to the nucleus-group. We ask you, especially, to foster the development of the new approach to life in every member of the group, particularly

now that we have entered the critical phase in this period of human existence. The new approach to life is the paramount necessity; it must be adopted by all, for the good of all. We hope and pray that you will realise this, and join us in doing everything you can to protect the astral purity and integrity of the Living Body.

*The finest weapons are instruments of disaster.
Everyone despises them.
Therefore, those who possess Tao will have nothing to do
with them.
In the house of the sage, the left is the side of honour. The
man of war esteems the right.*

*Weapons are instruments of disaster; they are not the sage's
tools.
He uses them only when it cannot be avoided.
For him, serenity and quietude are of supreme value.
For him, victory is no cause for rejoicing, for that would
mean to delight in killing.
And he who delights in killing can never reach his goal,
which is to govern the kingdom in the right way.*

*The left-hand side is the most auspicious with regard to
everything that brings happiness; the right-hand side is
reserved for misfortune.
The second in command stands on the left; the commander in
chief stands on the right.
Thus they stand as they would at a funeral.
He who has killed many people must weep and mourn for
them.
The victor in battle should be allotted the place reserved for
those mourning the dead.*

Tao Te Ching chapter 31

31-I

The finest weapons are instruments of disaster

In its deepest essence chapter 31 of the Tao Te Ching contains no mystery. Its message is factual and to the point. There is, however, one curious thing about these anti-militaristic teachings, which reflect the profound realism so typical of Lao Tzu, and that is their great antiquity. It certainly shows how deeply humanity has fallen in the few thousand years since Lao Tzu's time, and how seriously our habits have degenerated. What, in Lao Tzu's time, was only tolerated in cases of extreme need, is thought of as quite normal and acceptable — even unavoidable — today.

So there is an almost immeasurable difference between the inner standards of civilisation people lived by then, and those we live by now. And nothing is better suited to unmask the delusions people nowadays have about their level of civilisation than a clear reflection on this chapter.

The finest weapons are instruments of disaster. Everyone despises them. Therefore, those who possess Tao will have nothing to do with them.

Clearly, the ideas expressed in these words were so obvious to people at that time, that Lao Tzu did not consider it necessary to explain them in any further detail. Nowadays, however, militarism is the subject of endless debate among deep thinkers. Military service for one's country, nation or state is considered to be a worthy occupation. And there are military academies, which only accept students who have a good social background. It is a study to which many talented and educated young people feel attracted. In our times, those

who bear responsibility for historic feats of war are hailed as heroes, and accorded great honour and praise.

This problem should be seen as a worldwide phenomenon, the current signature of the whole of humankind. The present world economy is strongly dependent on the arms industry. And more often than not, the industrialists involved are prominent citizens, not only in terms of their wealth and economic position, but also in terms of their moral status. Nobel, for instance, who set up the widely respected Nobel Prize fund, was an arms manufacturer. So, against the background of a society in which warlike behaviour is not only accepted but even admired, we can contrast the ancient words of Lao Tzu:

The finest weapons are instruments of disaster. Everyone despises them. Therefore, those who possess Tao will have nothing to do with them.

These words prove that there was a time when weapons were universally despised by all who sought the spirit in whatever way; a time when anyone who possessed Tao could not possibly have anything to do with weapons.

Shouldn't one draw certain conclusions from this? In our world, at the moment, we have the best weapons. They are so exceptionally efficient that they could only be devised by the cleverest and most eminent scientists. These weapons are capable of destroying the whole of humanity in just a few minutes. As a result, the awareness that weapons are instruments of disaster is gradually beginning to percolate through to the great majority of the world population.

However, it is from a totally wrong standpoint! For this awareness has not developed because of Tao, but because of an immeasurable fear. Whereas, in earlier times, weapons were despised out of purely ethical motives. Do you see the

difference? Do you see the clear evidence of dialectics in all this? People have always had weapons, of course, but now they are becoming afraid of them, boundlessly afraid. For the weapons of which people are now so very much afraid, are distributed fifty-fifty. Were that not so, people in the West would not be so fearful.

The weapons are divided between two opposing parties. In former times, this was generally not the case. Normally, one group was armed and the other group was not, or at least barely. So the group that had the weapons did not need to be afraid. But now the circumstances are quite different.

We only want to make clear to you that the protest against atomic weapons is certainly not derived from Taoist motives or directives, but from factual situations, from the results of worsening decadence. In the past fifty years the last vestiges of humanity's former, positive morality have perished. They have been replaced by superficial, social scruples, a thin veneer of civilisation. Those who possess Tao want nothing to do with that kind of thing.

What is Tao? It is the collective term for everything that is real and eternal in the human being. It is the growing soul, which must wake up, which must be brought back to life so that it can unite with the Spirit, with the Father, with God, and in this way become a Pymander.

But who can afford the luxury of possessing a soul nowadays? Or still less to listen to such an anti-social influence? How ridiculous, how anti-social, how unrealistic! That is why there is at most delusion, studied carefully, persevered in thoroughly, for a few hours each day. People talk about the Gnosis. But to practise Tao? How could one think of such a thing?

Modern life is anti-gnostic. It is impossible to rise to the top of the social ladder, and at the same time to serve the Gnosis.

Is humanity deliberately wicked, then? No, but it is afflicted by the most terrible evil that exists, the evil of ignorance. Humanity is lost for lack of knowledge. People no longer possess any knowledge of the purpose for which they were born. That is why the human instrument, the personality, has gone off the rails, and why the only reality left for humanity to clutch at is fear. For human ignorance has gone as far as it can go, and the only thing left is fear, a boundless fear which gnaws at the liver.

In former times, a military authority was a strategist, one single person who directed a huge army as if he were playing chess. He had to be genuinely skilled, and such skill commanded admiration and respect. So the astute army general, dressed in his smart uniform, was a pillar of society, beaming with congeniality and polite refinement on public occasions and behaving exactly as dictated by the laws of his land.

But the advent of atomic weapons has put militarism in a much starker light. There is an atomic bomb, somewhere, and a button. And there is a missile, and another button. And there is another atomic bomb, and another missile, and another button. One bomb is in the east, the other in the west. And all know that if one button is pressed, the other will be as well. Within a few minutes everything could be destroyed — not only an army, or part of an army, but also all those clever military strategists, and the whole society they profess to serve.

Humanity is standing on the brink of suicide, on the verge of an abyss. That is why only fear is left. With their delusions, their talk, and often with complete insanity in which everybody is dragged along, people try to deny or mask the extremity of their need. But the delusion of being able to conquer everything by force of arms has been destroyed, because both friend and foe have their finger on the button.

The latest delusion is the conquest of space. Modern society has turned its attention to another subject — and the whole world lies at its feet.

But again there are two rivals, competing with each other. One is launched into space to spend a few moments up there before falling back down again to earth, the trick being to stay alive and be received by the president. The other one does still better. He is launched into space and is able to orbit the earth at a height of a few hundred kilometres before descending again to the ground, to be received by the president.

Astronauts, people call them. It is the height of delusion! A delusion which one only becomes fully aware of if one knows something of the high aim underlying human existence.

So humanity is in the grip of deeply corrosive delusions, and we are driven to describe them not for reasons of sympathy or antipathy, but because of the profound compassion to which we are moved by seeing how many millions of people are plunging into a world of pretence, a masquerade. What a deep, deep fall!

So now you may realise, perhaps for the first time in your life, what a gnostic spiritual school really is, and is meant to be: a safe territory in the midst of the horror, an enclave which is kept free from all the fermentation, decay and disintegration going on in the society surrounding it, an enclave in which one can only dwell if one has adopted a completely new approach to life.

Did you know that those responsible for guiding the fate of humanity are making preparations for the end? As of old, their preparations take two forms. On the one hand, efforts are being made to prepare people for the Gnosis, for liberation as indicated in the holy language. And liberation will be possible providing those who are called, and who need the call, are willing to apply positive new rules in their lives.

On the other hand, preparations are being made to save a small number of human beings should the earth be ruined and turned into a wasteland. With this small group of survivors it would then be possible to repopulate the earth under new conditions, over the course of several million years.

So there are three possibilities: first — total destruction; second — redemption for those who walk the path of liberation; third — survival for a small group of those who will continue to exist in some remote corner of the world, under totally changed conditions.

These preparations have had to be made, because the world is in so much danger of being turned into a wasteland. And to show that we are not merely fantasising, and to make it clear that there is a choice you need to make, while there is still time, we would like to tell you about an article which recently* appeared in the Australian newspapers.

The article reports Professor Ernest Marsden's startling chance discovery of the only natural laboratory for radiation research in the world. During the previous winter a group of New Zealand zoologists and botanists had been carrying out agricultural experiments on an island called Niu. Although already established plant species grew abundantly there, it was found that new varieties did not appear to thrive. In February 1961 a soil sample from the island was sent to the University of Wellington, where it was analyzed by Professor Marsden, one of England's most well-known nuclear physicists and a pupil of Lord Rutherford.

His first sensational discovery was that the Geiger-counter went wild when brought into contact with the soil from Niu. There was no doubt that this soil was extremely radioactive. So, without more ado, the Professor packed his bags and

* This was written in 1961.

sailed straight to Niu with a team of scientists. There he found beautiful, tall people, almost giants, in excellent health. In some mysterious way they had been spared from illnesses such as leprosy, tropical fever and tuberculosis, common on other Pacific islands. The average height of the island's five thousand inhabitants, both male and female, is about two metres. They have robust, athletic bodies and are amazingly intelligent. They are strong, hardy, and of notably good disposition, and all this despite the fact that the level of radioactivity in their bones and teeth is ten times higher than normal. The air, the soil, and the sea surrounding the island contain twenty times more radioactive material than normal. And the food contains concentrations of radioactivity up to one hundred times greater than normal.

Until now, no satisfactory explanation has been found for this abnormally high level of radioactivity, although Professor Marsden has suggested the presence of a deep-sea volcano as a possible causative factor. But all this remains only theory.

Anyway, it was considered more urgent to discover how the islanders had been able to withstand the lethal doses of radiation present in their environment and to develop their immunity. But no satisfying answer could be found to that question either, because the inhabitants of Niu have only been burying their dead for the last hundred years, and the bone samples taken from the dead interred during that period all showed similarly high levels of radioactivity. Before that, the dead were taken out to sea in boats and cast overboard.

Only one effect of this radiation-exposure, which seems to have been going on for at least a hundred years, could be observed among the inhabitants of Niu. The level of female fertility is exceptionally low. Tests have shown that one woman in four is sterile, and one child in ten is stillborn. But

this situation must have improved somewhat in the last twenty years, because almost half the island's inhabitants are less than fifteen years old.

However intrigued the research team were by their investigations, they were not able to forget for one moment that their presence on Niu could be fatal to them, for unlike the natives, they possessed no immunity to radioactivity and had very few means to protect themselves from it. All their food had to be shipped over from New Zealand, and it had to be rich in calcium so as to give their bodies some resistance. And their living quarters had to be carefully isolated so as to protect them as much as possible from exposure to radiation.

With a kind of melancholic optimism Professor Marsden describes Niu as the cradle of a new humanity, and is of the opinion that the island people could be the only survivors of a nuclear holocaust.

This report serves to illustrate the fact that there are forces which will always love humanity unconditionally, and that these forces are making sure that there will always be ways of preserving life on earth whatever may happen.

These forces are also behind the Spiritual School's invitation to you. So would it not be a good idea to accept that invitation, and react positively to it? Only you can answer, and only by your actions.

31-II

The poisoning of the human life field

From the point of view of the majority, the campaign against the use of armaments reached its last peak in the early years of this century. After that, this struggle for humane values flared up from time to time, but it was a flame that burned lower and lower until finally it was virtually extinguished by the two world wars.

Then another flame was ignited, and quickly became a blaze. But this flame was quite different. It was more destructive, more terrible. Social standards were no longer simply accepted, but questioned, and many people came to the conclusion that these ideals no longer had any relevance to modern life. They began to live according to what they had seen, heard, experienced and learned, and the world became a chaotic place, a world of murder and shameful deeds, with police departments waging ceaseless war against these depravities.

The situation has now become so grave that only a tiny proportion of the horror ever finds its way into the press. This breathtakingly rapid decline is the direct consequence of the instruments of disaster our society is deliberately manufacturing as a means of preserving 'peace'. We see no sense in examining this subject from a political point of view, any more than Lao Tzu did in his time. But we do want to discuss humanity's bleeding wounds from a psychological angle. So, to begin, we would like to take the following example.

Imagine you are working in an armaments factory. In the offices, planners and designers are busy. Meticulously and in great detail, the designers are drawing the firearms to be

manufactured. Using the information they have been given, they calculate the weapon's probable effect and range, and all the gadgetry it is going to need.

So, in the end, these employees will have made a thought-form, a mental image visualised right down to the finest detail. As soon as their work is done, it goes to their superiors who develop the original mental image still further by looking at the design, calculating and recalculating, and visualising how the product would function under all eventualities.

You know what happens with a thought-form like this; it grows and grows until, in the end, it becomes like a monster, living and packed with vitality, and so it is bound to become extremely large and dynamic, with a powerful radius of action. For it is kept alive and vivified by a double tier of management personnel. These people leave nothing to chance, because of the high economic stakes involved. For if the new weapon is put into production, special machinery will have to be made and, perhaps, entire factories may even have to be rearranged. The factory workers will have to be trained, and all this will cost millions.

So the planning must be faultless, and this means that the thought-form will become charged with vitality to the fullest possible extent, and will become the source of an enormous wave of pestilence. For — and how can it be otherwise — this monstrous thought-form is already shooting, destroying and waging war, and in this way it corrupts humanity's respiration field through and through.

Did you imagine that those who made and vivified this thought-form would be able to go home and forget all about it at the end of the day? If you did, you don't know what life is like for these managerial personnel. Psychologically, they are seriously damaged. They are no longer capable of letting go

of this mental monstrosity. It is a kind of insanity, legalised by society, and for which they are even paid. For every human being is bound indissolubly to the thoughts-forms he has woven.

So when a member of the management in an armaments factory goes home from work, the thoughts he has been working with all day long surround him and emanate from him, and infect his whole family even if he does not talk about it, because of course, in an industry like the arms trade, everything is top secret. In this way, their families, too, contribute to the growth of the monster, which very soon grows far beyond the confines of the factory itself. It becomes an aeon. Such an aeon can poison an entire nation.

This is still an understatement of the facts, because there is not only one such factory in the world; there is an entire arms industry, whose staff are poisoning the life-field of humanity with a living reality of blood, fire and smoke.

Do you see, then, how all humankind is victimised by ignorance, by all those planners and scientists who know so much, but know nothing of the one thing needful? What you are and what you do is projected into the environment around you. Particularly when you think with such precision and concentration, the thoughts you project will be very much alive and charged with vitality. Do you now understand why the Universal Doctrine states that five minutes' ill-considered thinking can undo the work of long years? How much more harmful, then, will be the scientifically-applied, daily mental activity of the planners involved in the top echelons of industry.

So now we can see clearly what a catastrophe, what a poisoning, is unleashed on humankind because of ignorance. In this poisonous morass, so densely packed around humankind,

everything is bound to go wrong. So the fact that — even now — there are still some human beings who have not entirely given way under the weight of it all can be called a miracle. Is it not clear that, under all this pressure, young people are almost certain to go off the rails, and to show signs of dehumanisation even at a very young age?

Yet this tragedy also has a farcical aspect. Those involved in the upper echelons of industry, who in fact rule the world, spend their free time collaborating with priests and other clergy to find ways of helping young people to be better behaved. They do everything they can to render harmless the poison they themselves have made, the explosion they themselves have unleashed. But do you see how that false sentiment, which is not based on any rational grounds whatsoever, only makes the situation worse?

And what about the ordinary workers? What about the majority of human beings, who are doomed to manufacture, to make concrete, the thought-forms of their superiors? Intellectually, they have not yet reached the same level as the other group. What is best in them has not yet deteriorated into the worst.

Intellectually, the working classes are still developing, and that is why they are victimised. On their tired and bowed shoulders, they carry the karma of the world. And mentally, their plight now is even worse than it was years ago, when few provisions for their welfare were made by the state, and less concerted effort was made to have control over their minds. All these people are victimised — and how! — by the doom of ignorance, an ignorance which is applied as a science by the upper echelons of industry.

Such, then, is humanity's miserable state; such is the bottomless pit into which it has sunk. And although the trend we

have been describing would alone be sufficient to guarantee humanity's suicide, it is only a single aspect of the overall problem. So wouldn't it make sense to bear Lao Tzu's words in mind? Weapons are instruments of disaster; they are not for the person of integrity. The sage does not rejoice in their possession, for that would mean having mass murder in mind. The whole arms industry and everything connected with it, everything caused by it, should be consigned to the place allotted to those mourning the dead. Life is one great masquerade, a camouflage for death.

Although still living, humanity is already as good as dead because of what executive groups, in their ignorance, have done. Humanity is living-dead, its sepulchre still somewhat whitened on the outside, but inside full of dead men's bones. The slippery slope people were warned about in Lao Tzu's time has now become a reality, a certainty.

So if you still want to learn a lesson from Lao Tzu's words, it must be one which is drawn from humanity's actual state, and which considers what can still be done to escape this living death in a totally new way, and to serve ignorant humanity in this fearful situation.

Talking and explaining is not enough. There is already so much talking! There are millions of books filled with protests against nuclear science. Piles of them, metres high. Many, many texts. But it is no use. Weapons are instruments of disaster.

Today, there are many scientists and academics who have come to the conclusion that their knowledge is being applied in the wrong way, and a number of them have joined to form an international community to protest about what is going on, and to try to turn aside the dangers. These people have realised clearly that things have gone seriously wrong, and now they are trying to unravel the webs of thought they have

woven, and to disentangle humanity from them. They are weighed down by fear.

These people may well know what they have unleashed, but if you read what they write, you will see that their efforts are not making any real impression on the problem. They are like voices crying in the wilderness. And they have been crying for many years, without success. Their deep concern for the problem is a good sign, because at least it shows that they have realised what they have done, and are trying to undo the consequences. But even though the signature of goodness shines from these people, their efforts are bearing no fruit, apart from providing yet another indication that 'the writing is on the wall' for humankind.

Another indication that 'the writing is on the wall' is the fact that the Spiritual School is now approaching humanity. The Spiritual School is approaching you, to help you in your efforts to avoid the deadly danger with which the human race is threatened.

But those who are able to, those who really want to succeed in doing that, will need to make some radical changes. They will need to change their approach to life in a fundamental way. And it remains to be seen how many people are genuinely prepared to do that. For they will need to attack the results of wickedness, brought about through ignorance, at their roots; they must eradicate those thought-forms, which are so dangerous in their radius of action. So if humankind is to be helped, before it is too late, the only solution is a radical alteration in our approach to life.

So this is the heart of the matter: are we 'voices crying in the wilderness' with respect to you, or are you ready to make radical changes in your approach to life, changes as radical as

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those made by the Manichean brothers and sisters in their time. If we can find a group strong enough to do that, there will still be much that can be done.

31-III

Love your enemies

Aided by Lao Tzu's three thousand year-old text, we have examined the stark reality of human life today, and have seen just how far it has degenerated. From what we have said so far, it should be clear that we are not among those who delight in humanity's downfall, and that it was not to give ourselves some kind of sadistic satisfaction that we sought to show you how the world and humankind are perishing because of their ignorance.

If you share our ideas about these things, you will no doubt be feeling very deeply, as we do, the need to ask the following question: 'What can be done right now to help humankind? Should one talk to people? Should one publish magazines, or write books to make them see sense?' But words on their own would not help. For we know the executives in the upper echelons of industry, and we know their employees, to use the terminology of the last chapter; we know how their minds work. Whatever we said or did would be contradicted, and would only add to the confusion.

We have seen how humankind is being ambushed and poisoned by its mental conceptions to such an extent that destruction is imminent. Well then, let us try to help humanity by striking at the root of the evil. Let those who participate in the Spiritual School also create a mental conception. Let us meet humanity on its own territory, on the mental, astral plane, which is where the primary cause of the degeneration, the dehumanisation, is to be found.

But there is a complication here, and we need to understand it clearly. Lies can have no existence in the astral world.

Things can only exist there if they are absolutely and positively authentic. If you are just pretending, you will not be able to produce a durable mental conception. When the planners in the arms industry conceive and draw up plans for some new weapon, it is because they are actually going to manufacture it. So the mental action precedes the material action. So if we, in the Spiritual School, want to stop all this, or at least to slow it down, if we want to purify the astral sphere, then our material and mental actions will need to go hand in hand.

What we want to make clear is that everything we talk about in the Spiritual School, everything we want as pupils, must be put into practice in our lives in the purest, clearest and most positive way. Only on the basis of such an approach to life can we make straight what is crooked in the astral sphere, and calm what is seething with rage. If we want to help suffering humanity — whose wounds, though self-inflicted, have been created in ignorance — we will need to deal with these problems on the astral plane, for only there can their evil effects be cancelled out. This can only be done on the basis of an approach to life which is put into practice in the most positive way, and it will need to be pure, natural, and without affectation.

Suppose — and now we are entering the domain of the occult — suppose someone were just to decide to spend five or ten minutes a day liberating pure astral streams and sending them to endangered places. The results achieved would be minimal. But if one were able to liberate an unbroken stream of love, on the basis of a genuinely pure way of life, success would be assured. By applying such magic, one would be able to eliminate any consequence of upheaval in the astral sphere within a few seconds. And how else could this be done than by the quintessence of love?

We use the word 'love' with a certain amount of trepi-

dition, because all too often people associate it with all that syrupy make-believe so familiar here, in our nature. But the love-power we are talking about is love in the sense meant by the Sermon on the Mount. By the absolutely pure embodiment of that love, practised in every aspect of one's life, right through everything, in the material sphere, one will possess a powerful basis on which to heal the cause of all the devastation brought about by human ignorance. If one's mental activity rests on a foundation like that, one will become so strong that one will be able to do everything.

The Sermon on the Mount also rests on that foundation, as do the familiar words of Matthew chapter 5: 'I say unto you, love your enemies. Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who abuse you and persecute you, that you might become children of your Father, who is in heaven. You will then be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.'

The Sermon on the Mount portrays the person who differs from the nature-born human being in everything he is and does. And it is soul-rebirth, the possession of the living soul-state, which makes one capable of living and acting in that way. So all your efforts need to be aimed at awakening the living soul-state. Prepare yourself to extend that power to good and evil alike, for the approach to life we are suggesting is founded on this awe-inspiring magic of love. It is a practice which is urgently necessary in a time like ours. It is the only way of doing anything for the world and humankind: the mobilisation of the power of love.

31-IV

The love of the gnostic magic person

We have seen the reality of modern society, and examined its causes, and concluded that humankind is being deceived and poisoned, and is in danger of annihilation because of its mental activities.

Through their mental creations, sustained over long periods of time, human beings have turned their entire astral life-sphere into an almost hopeless confusion. The conflict, the chaos, the disasters caused by all this in the material sphere have become so vast that one is moved to ask: 'How can this endless torrent ever be brought to a halt?' And the problem is made even worse because, whenever human beings are faced with disaster of any kind, they always resort to brute force as a remedy. They ask themselves, 'What power can be applied to eliminate this danger?' People keep on looking for weapons to avert the threat of disaster, oblivious to the fact that by doing so they only intensify the causes and make the results much worse. Remember Lao Tzu's words: *The best weapons are instruments of disaster.* We have shown you how incontrovertible these words are. So now the task, the problem facing us is this: 'What should the Spiritual School do in the face of this great emergency?'

Clearly, the time has come for a new and powerful course of action. Now the gnostic Spiritual School must prove what it is, what it is capable of. Now the opportunity must be grasped, and we must answer the question: 'What must we do to avert the immense dangers threatening the human race?'

Let us step back for a moment, so that we can examine the problem as objectively as possible. Must we intervene in

external events? Must we make protests, for instance, as so many people are doing? Should we write letters to the authorities? Should we draw attention to the dangers by acts of civil disobedience? Or should we perhaps act in a revolutionary way, trying to instigate political moves that would prevent the powers behind the scenes from being able to carry out their designs?

But none of those things would work because, in one way or another, they all involve conflict. Even if one were only to oppose the mental activities of humanity on a mental level, by thinking contradictory thoughts, it would still involve conflict. And as we know, mental weapons are the most terrible weapons.

The finest weapons, as Lao Tzu says, *are instruments of disaster*. And pupils of the Spiritual School are better able than anyone else to know that it is mental weapons, especially, which must be shunned as the fiery pest they are. So the real tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that, although a very large number of people realise that things are going seriously wrong, and are aware of the extreme peril facing the human race, they are prevented — by ignorance — from being able to act in the only way capable of providing genuine succour to seeking humanity. So this is the point we would like to stress, with as much emphasis as we are able: the only possible way of helping humankind must be sought in the application, the most radical application, of the power of universal love.

Having said this, we realise there is much more we need to tell you about the power of love and how to apply it, if we are to avoid being misunderstood. For there are so many different opinions on the subject that we could easily be lost in a labyrinth of ideas, if we are not careful to explain exactly what the School of the Rosycross means by this. So, to bring

ourselves closer to an understanding of what love does mean, we would like to begin by explaining what it does not mean. We would like to describe for you how love tends to be sought for and practised by the *church-going* person, by the *humanist*, and by the ordinary, *egocentric* human being. In contrast to all this we would like to describe love as it is practised by the person who understands *gnostic magic*.

In the church, ideas about how to love tend to be inextricably bound to delusion, and therefore to ignorance. The church authorities inculcate in their congregations such literal acceptance of the Holy Scriptures, treating them as a written document of which not one jot or tittle may be lost, that the actual words become a formidable obstruction to true understanding. In this way, the faith of the average church-goer tends to have the effect of attuning him not to God, who is love itself, but to a text which interprets that love. And that is something quite different from being attuned to love itself.

Church-going people often put their faith in persons who preach love. But they tend not have enough inner knowledge to verify the truth of what is being said. Not that there is anything wrong with preaching love, but if the listener lacks that inner ability to check things, he will always be dependent on external authorities, which means he will run the risk of being exploited. And if one is exploited, it is either because one possesses no soul quality at all, or because, if one does possess some soul quality and therefore undergoes the influence of love, one does not yet have a freed, fully autonomous soul. For there is a tremendous difference between the person whose soul has become free and autonomous, and the person who only possesses soul quality. A bound soul is always vulnerable to delusion in one form or another.

This applies to those who seek humanitarian values, too. The desire to experience a universal brotherhood of man is

clear evidence of the possession of soul quality, even if the person concerned does not know that such an experience is not possible in dialectical nature, and that the Kingdom of God cannot be founded in the nature of death. Similarly, the wish to see evil — though quite definite — as a temporary phenomenon which can soon turn into good, is also an unmistakable indication of the presence of soul quality. But without the additional dimension of gnostic insight, the pursuit of humane values can only lead into a morass, and following such guidelines would be like burdening a baby with the leadership of the world.

To prevent misunderstanding we need to stress, before we go any further, that there are many ways in which soul quality can be gained. The experience of suffering, for instance, often brings about an increase in soul quality. When people are beaten and trampled by life, you must have noticed how they nearly always become milder in character, because of all the suffering they have been through. It is like that, for instance, with people who are very ill. Because of their afflictions, they assimilate soul quality. They are touched by the all-encompassing field of what Plato called the 'World Soul'.

The World Soul encompasses everyone, without exception. Whenever anyone forgets his ego for a moment because he is immersed in suffering, then the World Soul always touches him. In this way the person is charged with soul quality by the all-encompassing field of the World Soul, even if he does not know what is happening, and is therefore in ignorance.

That is how you can come across the kind of people who are very noble, full of soul and full of love, but who either do not know of the one path or refuse to walk it. Such people are like the 'rich young man', full of potential but lacking the one thing needful. They turn away from the path because they

believe what they are seeking can be found in the world. They do not know it is not of this world. They think they are already standing on the path, and do not realise the love-power they have experienced came from the World Soul. They are not able to consider this idea, because they are unaware of it. So they misinterpret the love-power they have experienced as being part of matter, part of our world.

The approach to love taken by the totally I-centred human being is familiar to all. It is always expressed within sharply defined limits. And it is partial, for within those limits nothing is tolerated which could threaten the person's own ego in any way. In the interests of a so-called 'uninhibited love-life', social taboos are overturned without hesitation. People who believe they must follow such a 'modern' path do not belong in the Spiritual School. Human beings who are totally absorbed in their own ego are on the lowest level of life; in fact, they are not living, but dying.

Having said all this, we would like to explore the nature of divine love, the love which is above everything, the love which makes everything free. For that love is also the power with which all the dangers in the world can be completely dissolved. It is that power with which the Spiritual School will have to work if it is to help, and if possible, to save all those who possess soul quality. So it is that power which you will need to possess and, if necessary, to use. That love power must be freed, and it can be freed by those who possess a soul which has been freed.

As long as a person's soul quality remains bound to the nature-born personality, and in particular to the vital body, the etheric double, then whenever there is a problem, the ego, the personality, will be involved, even if the person does not want that to happen.

When problems arise between pupils of a Spiritual School, this is almost always the cause. Most pupils possess an abundance of soul quality, but it is bound to, and interwoven with, the nature-born ego. If only they had pure soul quality untainted by anything else, no problems would arise between them and they would completely understand each other and be united in harmony.

But time and time again, whenever interpersonal contact takes place, the ego is involved. And every ego is different, and has various kinds of karma. That is why people keep on coming into conflict with each other, even though they do not want to. Only when the soul is freed, disassociated, from the nature-born personality, and can function autonomously, like Jesus Christ, our Lord, does it gain its full power.

When we say this, we do not mean something which happens when you die, but a new state of life, in which the candidate genuinely possesses a soul which has been made free, just like Jesus the Lord, the prototype of all truly modern human beings. Only if a person becomes a follower of Jesus the Lord in that sense, will he no longer place the nature-born personality in the forefront in his liberating work, but will allow it to play a subordinate role. Only the nature-born personality who has brought to a good end his work in imitation of John — the work of making straight the paths for his God — is capable of work in the gnostic magical sense. We feel sure we are telling you about values and forces, aspects and possibilities of the gnostic life about which you may never have heard before. Yet there are many pupils who are involved in preparing themselves for this work. And we should count ourselves fortunate indeed if we were able to provide everyone with clear indications about the way in which, in one short lifetime, the soul can be set free and disassociated from the nature-born personality.

You must not imagine the prototype, Jesus Christ, as a distant ideal. The Spiritual School assures you that anything you could possibly want to achieve in nature would be more difficult than the imitation of Christ, understood in the gnostic sense. So we hope we will be able to show you where to look for the key to life, for your finding it could be of profound significance for the whole human race.

31-V

You are the salt of the earth

We would like to explain how gnostic magic is applied, and to show how worthwhile and necessary it is, for it is the only means of saving the world and humankind.

So we will begin by considering, again, the figure of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, whose followers we all need to be. If we choose Him as our example, we will see that He was man and God, which means to say that He was a nature-born human being and also, in the true sense, a soul-born human being. Everything in his life proved that He was completely free as to the soul. As far as his soul was concerned, He was a free citizen of the heaven-earth, while as a nature-born human being He had made the highest state attainable in nature his own. For, as to nature, He was completely transfigured. So in that respect He was completely *in* the world, while as a soul-being, he was not *of* this world.

As such He was capable of expressing himself in all aspects of our cosmos. He was one with the Earth Logos and one with the Earth Spirit. He ascended into heaven and descended to the earth, which, as the Gospel puts it, is the divine footstool. So his sovereignty was complete throughout the cosmos, and to Him was given all power in heaven and on earth.

But you need to see this entity as the prototype for your own imitation of Christ. You need to realise that He himself is inviting and urging you to become like Him, because you have the ability to do so — if only you are willing to stop seeing Him an unattainable idol, or as a fairytale — if only you would begin to understand the imitation of Christ as the high

vocation all of us are called to pursue. For then, as a participant in a gnostic Spiritual School, you would see the entire process of gnostic magic opening before you, in Him, through Him and unto Him. Then you would discover how this high, serene love wants not only to make you free, but also to grant you all power in heaven and on earth.

If you reflect on this, you will realise that it is not a state which arises from one moment to the next, but that there is a process of growth, a path, which everyone will be able to follow at their own pace. And even if progress on the path is very gradual, there will still be a daily increase in grace, power, and divine Love, if only you are willing to let go of all the fairytales the church has suggested to you and which have burdened you from your youth onwards. You need — if we may repeat it once more — to see Jesus the Lord as the prototype of the one true Human Being, who you, too, must become.

So do not ask, 'Where must I begin?' Begin at your own beginning, in the circumstances life offers you at this moment. Make your paths straight, wherever you live, wherever you are. In all things — which means, in everything that lies within your personal range of action — become like John. That is the fundamental requirement.

One person's radius of action may be larger than another's. But remember, if someone with a larger radius of action than yours does not utilise it, whereas you, with perhaps a smaller one, do use it, you will still be greater than he is.

So we can begin our imitation of Christ straight away, here and now. If we do so, together, we will be able to form one group, united in the most complete and perfect sense, and filled with the greatest possible respect towards each other. We will form one, steadfast multitude, a community of John, walking a straight path through the desert, to the one goal.

Thus we will be among those who have been baptised with the living water, the living water of the World Soul, which surrounds us all.

We need to stress that the entire fallen cosmos is encompassed by the World Soul, and that everyone who is even slightly open to it, everyone who forgets his own ego, even if only for a moment, will receive the radiations of the World Soul in his system.

Clearly, it is not enough merely to say this, or to focus on it in a mystical way. It is not enough only to attune oneself inwardly to that path. The primary necessity, right from the outset, is the adoption of a concrete, radically different approach to life. That is what is required of you. If you can sense the World Soul's serenity, if its radiation-values penetrate right into your innermost being, choose an approach to life which is in harmony with that. Such an approach to life will naturally differ in every respect from the approach of those who are still ignorant of the one goal of human life.

The structure and guidelines of this approach to life are given in the Sermon on the Mount. Right from the moment when you first became more or less conscious of life's realities, you may already have been trying to put the Sermon on the Mount into practice. It was for that purpose that the human race was given the Sermon on the Mount. But if you live on the level of the ordinary nature-born human being, because you are unaware of the goal of human life and of the need to become like John, it will be impossible for you to practise the Sermon on the Mount, and you will find yourself locked in a constant struggle with everything it represents.

So we would like to ask you to read and reflect on the Sermon on the Mount every day for a period of time. And if you want your efforts to bear fruit, it is logical that you will need to change your perspective, so that the vantage

point from which you are seeing things is attuned to the Sermon on the Mount. So you will need to seek another level in your life, a level that may lie high above the level of the ordinary, average human being. And on that level you will need to base your approach to life.

Pupils of a gnostic Spiritual School have proved, by the very fact of their pupilship, that they have long been seeking a different level of life. Why else would they have become pupils?

But here, a warning needs to be given: let no one climb too high. Climb only to a level at which you can remain without falling or behaving in a way which is a parody of the real thing. Do not say: 'I am standing on this level,' while in practice you are far below that level.

Climbing to such a new level and maintaining oneself there is called 'climbing the mountain'. Only on that new level can the prototype of the noble, true Human Being be met. So, if you want to respond to our proposal, listen, now, to the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount.

'And Jesus, seeing the multitude, went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to Him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown away and trodden under foot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.'

Throughout human history, whenever there has been a period of time during which the conditions were right, there has come into existence a large group of human beings whose inner nature was out of the ordinary. Intuitively, such people are aware that there must exist a very actual, very different, new way of living, an approach to life which goes far beyond anything possible within the scope of mysticism or humanism, and which is certainly not within the scope of the ordinary ego. The more time goes by without the members of such a group having found what they are seeking, the more a certain kind of tension increases within them.

Imagine a person who has that kind of disposition, and who in fact, is affected by the World Soul. Because of what he yearns for, the forces of the true light are able to touch him. He tries to make the path as straight as possible, but so far, he can only perceive the desert of life. Because he is touched by the World Soul, and because he is in such a state of expectation, an intense tension will arise in him: `Surely there must be a way out? Surely there must be a solution for the human race, for the whole of human existence? Isn't the light always victorious in the end?

This psychological disposition, this state of tension, prepares the person concerned to such an extent that, eventually, his level of awareness is bound to be raised, or at least he will become susceptible to a heightened level of awareness. When this critical point has been reached, because the tension has reached its maximum, the members of that exceptional group will have to prove whether or not they are really disciples of the sublime, noble prototype, Jesus Christ our Lord.

That is what is meant by the opening words of the Sermon on the Mount: `And Jesus, seeing the multitude, went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to Him.'

So the position Jesus the Lord adopts is a higher one, and it cannot be otherwise. He places himself on a higher level than the one people are accustomed to in dialectical nature, and He expects those who really understand to come to Him.

It is pointless to gaze upwards from the ordinary, nature-born level in the hope of catching a few reverberations from the Sermon on the Mount. No, one needs to be capable of raising one's inner being to the level of the mountain. Only then will you be able to understand completely. And only then will you understand what, before that time, you regarded as impossible.

To you a voice is calling: 'Go from glory to glory.' To you is proclaimed such an all-encompassing, tremendous optimism, a message of such majestic and glorious attainment, that everything we have so far tried to convey to you about the soul pales into insignificance by comparison. If you can raise your inner being above the ordinary, nature-born level, if you can raise yourself inwardly, etherically, to the higher level of life which is called 'the mountain-top', and in this way prove that the soul quality already accumulated within you has become active, you will hear the following declaration, resounding with tremendous positivity, like a mantram burning inside you: 'Blessed are those who yearn for the spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'.

As soon as this new state is realised in your system, and you are thus linked unmistakably to the World Soul, you will have entered the radius of action of the divine realm. You will have entered the state of blessedness. If only you consistently adopt an approach to life in harmony with that state, you will experience blessedness continuously, as a consolamentum. That continuous state of being will provide a consolation which makes bearable all the sorrows one might have to undergo as the result of life in nature.

Such people will be capable of the heroism of meekness, through which it is possible to overcome and inherit the earthly realm. They will be able to lift the scourge of ignorance and its results. All who, in that high, serene state, hunger and thirst for righteousness, are bound to be satisfied. It is certain that, being merciful, they will obtain mercy; being pure in heart, they will restore to life the God in them; and, being peacemakers, they will know peace, the profound inner peace of the children of God.

Doesn't all this point towards rapid soul growth? Doesn't all this point towards soul-awakening, towards an ever closer

contact with the centre of the new realm? That is why there is blessedness, too, in being persecuted for righteousness' sake, and in being reviled and oppressed. For the counternature cannot tolerate it when the divine nature breaks loose from under it and goes its own way. So the fire of persecution only serves to prove the counternature's weakness, and to show that it is in retreat. To you it is given to live in that high state of being, to enter that great reality. So clear reflection on this task is needed. It is a task which can be yours only if you have heard the Beatitudes from within, if you have experienced their power, and are determined to go on living on the new level o

31-VI

The purifying salt

'You are the salt of the earth.' These are the words spoken to those who, standing on the mountain, have received the blessing of the beatitudes, and have thus been linked with the living salvation of the kingdom. Such people receive a task to which their entire being will need to be devoted. This task has to do with that well-known aphorism of the classical Rosicrucians, which states that the *sal mineralis* must become the *sal menstrualis*.

We have explained the inner state one must enter if one wants to experience genuine soul growth, which culminates in soul maturity. It will be clear that such positive soul growth is only possible through the consistent practice of a totally new approach to life, which transcends the ordinary in every respect.

It is an approach to life which affects every aspect of your existence. First and foremost, it must be applied to yourself, to your thought-life, for instance. It must be carried through into your private life, in your own home, and continued in public, in all your interactions with your fellow human beings. When a person adopts that consistent approach to life, a radiation emanates from him, because then he is acting consciously with the light-power which is touching him.

We have already mentioned before that the World Soul encompasses every human being and will enter the personality whenever it is open to it. Through the new approach to life one is able to retain the soul-power thus gained because one is working with it. So, when someone practises such an approach to life, a light will emanate from him, an influence,

a power, which will be experienced by all others.

Now it is that light which acts as a purifying, cleansing salt, in every aspect of life. That is why Christian Rosycross carried salt with him when he went on his journey. How would a Rosicrucian, how would a pupil of the Spiritual School, be able to work without that purifying salt? Therefore, anyone who wants to do something to help humankind, must at least possess that salt, must at least be able to differentiate that light-radiation. That is why we state that, to the light of the soul, everything must give way. Nothing can withstand it.

Of course that is not true of negative soul-quality. We have discussed how someone can be charged with the radiations of the World Soul without knowing it, and then is unable, because he lacks the right insight, to do anything for others apart from adding to the difficulties and obstacles afflicting them. In this way, the light is placed under a bushel of ignorance.

But as soon as one is able to raise oneself above the level of seeking life to that *new* level of life, the candle-flame is ignited, the light of the candelabrum becomes perceptible. Then the soul-power is rendered active and dynamic, and the electromagnetic influence of that light will be capable of stilling all the storms which rage in the astral sea. In this way, the light will have to shine. And that can only have one result: the glorification of God, our Father.

We cannot refrain from telling you time and time again that there is but one means of avoiding a serious human catastrophe, and that is the approach to life described in the Sermon on the Mount. We were emphatically urged to try to guide you towards that sublime new life-practice. It is an approach which is totally alien to the average person. It is a life-practice which you cannot learn by rote, and which does

not allow itself to be fixed in verbal formulae: 'Now I must do this and afterwards I must do that.' Neither is it a practice which allows itself to be described in a book. It is a living reality, profoundly interwoven in every aspect of one's life and practised in everything one is and does. It is practised in relation to every person with whom you come into contact and every thing you meet. The positively applied light of the soul is a power to which everything must give way. It is with this weapon of love that you must learn to work.

You will have noticed that we stand before a turning point in our work. All pupils are now expected to practise their pupilship in a totally new way, and to profess it by action. Only then will they enter the training school of the Gnosis. We hope and pray that you will resolve, from within, to join us in entering this training school, in which we will be made ready to work for the salvation of humankind.

Tao is eternal and has no name.

Its essence is simple and small, yet not even the world in its entirety would dare to seek governance over it.

If princes and kings were able to sustain it, the ten thousand beings and things would yield to their governance.

Heaven and earth would unite and cause a gentle dew to fall, and the people would enter harmony spontaneously, without needing to be told.

When Tao was apportioned, it was given a name.

With that name, one has to know how to contain oneself.

He who can contain himself will not enter into danger.

Tao will be spread throughout the All.

All things will return to Tao, like mountain streams, which return to the rivers and then to the sea.

Tao Te Ching, chapter 32

32-I

Heaven and earth will unite

We would like to consider chapter 32 of the Tao Te Ching, for this testimony, communicated by an entity of the highest eminence and handed down to us in a remarkably unspoilt condition despite its great antiquity, confirms the words of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross. We have been telling you about the need for gnostic magic, and about how a priesthood and a new temple-structure will be necessary if gnostic magic is to achieve its full potential in the temples of the Rosycross.

That is why we are speaking about this ancient prophecy of Lao Tzu, because the world is entering a time of total transformation, and humanity is standing on the threshold of a new age. If the pupils of our School really understand the significance of the times we are living in, and if they are genuinely aware of their God-given possibilities, it will be possible for this prophecy to be fulfilled — fulfilled by the community which has assembled in the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross. So let us analyse chapter 32 of the Tao Te Ching, and try to apply it to the situation we are in today. Let us consider whether the potential for attainment really is present.

Tao, 'It', the power we call 'God', is transcendent with respect to what it has created, but at the same time it is the power which moves and governs the entire All. All created things, yes, all creatures, bear the awareness of Tao at the core of every atom of their being. So nothing is closer to us than Tao, the divine power which comes to judge the living and the

dead, but which is also the power that leads to blessedness.

Humanity experiences Tao's power of judgement throughout almost every moment of its existence. The question now is whether this divine power of judgement can be transformed into the divine power that leads to blessedness, to fulfilment. That is the great problem facing humankind. If you are a sincere pupil of the sevenfold Spiritual School, you will know that together, as a group of fellow pupils of the Rosycross, we can solve this problem for ourselves and our fellow human beings with the aid of gnostic magic.

So it is crucial that you keep on examining, every single day of your life, what the elements of gnostic magic are, and whether your approach to life is really in harmony with them. For the salvation of the whole human race — right now, in the present — depends on it. If only a relatively small group of human beings were able to sustain Tao in dialectical nature, as a radiative factor of the kind meant by Lao Tzu, then the whole of humanity would have to submit to it. What is more, *heaven and earth would unite and cause a gentle dew to fall, and the people would enter harmony spontaneously, without needing to be told.*

We understand this, and that is why we would like to go on deepening our perspective of gnostic magic. We need to begin by stating that Tao needs to be the core essence, the underlying foundation of all gnostic magic. No other power exists, no other influence, neither in the material sphere nor in the reflection sphere, that could take the place of Tao.

The pupil also needs to understand the need for a vehicle which is in harmony with Tao, and is therefore capable of transmitting and working with it. He will need to know that vehicle, to possess and experience it, as the soul. So the pupil's first priority after having gained wisdom and insight, should be to attain the soul, the soul-body. One may safely

say that all pupils possess a powerful soul-principle and that most already have a soul-body. So they ought to be able to practise gnostic magic.

But it is especially those in whom is growing that so remarkable, necessary and sensitive vehicle we call the soul, who need to exercise the utmost care and attention with respect to their approach to life. For surely you know the words: 'The soul that sins must die'? This saying should not be regarded as a kind of mystical slogan no longer meaningful in a world like ours, but as an unavoidable fact applicable to anyone who has gained some soul quality.

When a person gains soul-power, the spirit, Tao, is always immediately attracted and activated in that person's life, because of the magnetic power which is one of the soul's attributes. Where the soul is, there the spirit is, also. So it is clear that, whenever the person in whom soul-power is present reverts, even momentarily, to the mundane approach to life, the spirit, Tao, is not able to function as a renewing power, as a divine power which imparts blessedness, but only as a disintegrating power, a fire of judgment.

Let us assume for the moment that you possess soul-quality, and that you are therefore approaching Tao, in whatever way. At times there may be only a few minor details of your approach to life which are attuned to the ordinary, mundane level. Nevertheless, Tao will then always function as a fire of judgment. That is why soul-sensitive human beings, people in whom the soul is developing, are so frequently afflicted by adversity. For the stronger their soul-quality, the more powerfully the spirit functions as a power of judgement. The stronger the current, the stronger the shock. This is such a simple truth that even a child could understand it.

The power of judgment always acts correctively. That is why those who are approaching the fundamental power

underlying gnostic magic, those who genuinely long for that divine power which leads to blessedness, need to be exceptionally alert with respect to their approach to life, in order to avert the fire of judgment. For they are entering the phase of transfiguration and are therefore arousing all the phenomena connected with the soul. So they need to transform the fire of judgment into the grace which imparts the blessedness of the children of God.

Your approach to life needs to be attuned to the intentions of the spirit right down to the finest detail. Only in that way can you avoid all those familiar, and perhaps, as yet, unfamiliar afflictions and situations that could delay your progress on the path. Even more importantly, only in that way will you become suitable and worthy to practise gnostic magic, which has become so urgently necessary.

But now let us go further. Let us suppose you are approaching Tao, the original foundation of all things, and that as a result the soul is growing in you. Let us assume your approach to life is attuned to Tao, right down to the finest detail, so that your whole existence is becoming open to the spirit. The result will be that your radius of action and your state of consciousness will gradually expand, and in this way you will be guided further and further along the path, day by day.

Clearly, this is bound to have a profound effect on your mental activity. The time will come when you will think in quite a different way than others do. What is of great interest to them will not be important to you. You will even lose the ability to concentrate on such things. Perhaps you have experienced that already, in which case it is proof that you have died to that part of the reflection-sphere we call the mental sphere. It is as if you have bored a kind of shaft through the mental part of the reflection sphere. Then you can

pass through the mental sphere without being part of it. Or, to use the terminology of the gnostic gospel of the *Pistis Sophia*, you can travel through it, without the powers and aeons of that sphere being aware of it.

The next indication of your progress on the path will be a transformation in your desire-life. Many pupils worry about their desires. However, if you are genuinely focused on Tao, in the deepest sense of the word, your desires will change fundamentally, so fundamentally that in this sense, too, you will become unworldly.

This alteration involves not only your inner orientation and soul-development, but also your physical well-being. Your bodily needs will change, too, and if you do not adapt yourself to these changes, your body is likely to become ill. So if you have any physical problems, it might be worthwhile to consider them from this angle.

All this is proof that your astral body is changing in a fundamental way, so that the chakras no longer rotate in the same way as they did before. Instead of turning from left to right, all the greater and lesser wheels of the chakra system have started to turn in the opposite direction, from right to left. When that happens, you can pass through all the astral planes of the reflection sphere, without the forces of those spheres being able to influence or restrain you. Indeed, they will no longer even be able to perceive you.

The same process takes place in the etheric body and the etheric sphere, so that ultimately you will have bored a shaft right through all the dialectical etheric spheres, and your threefold self of spirit, soul and body will have become a unity.

That is the fundamental principle of gnostic magic: making yourself personally free from the etheric spheres of ordinary nature. How does one do that? By being exclusively focused

HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL UNITE

on Tao, and accepting all the consequences. As a result, your needs and interests will change fundamentally, and you will bore a shaft through all the domains of the archons and the aeons of the reflection-sphere.

Then, as we said just now, a unity will arise between the threefold spirit, soul and personality-state, and, through that unity in you, the spirit will be connected with humanity, with the world, in its hour of desperate need. From that moment onwards, the lower nature will yield to the governance of your renewed, true self. Then you will be able to apply gnostic magic, for you will have become capable — if we may put it in a somewhat old-fashioned way — of practising the highest yoga God has given to his children.

32-II

The people will enter harmony

Imagine how it would be if there were a number of men and women who had done what we described in the last chapter; a group of people who, individually and as a group, had driven a shaft, an unimpeded passage through all the main levels of the etheric sphere. The result would be a tremendous opening extending right into the domain where spirit, soul and matter are united, a channel through which all the forces of blessedness could flow into the material world.

However, it would not be possible to allow those currents of sanctifying energy simply to act in a world like ours without any modification, for they are so powerful that they would turn into forces of judgment, forces that would act in a destructive way, so that the world would very quickly perish through fire. Because of the conditions prevailing in the material sphere, and because reflection sphere forces have such a grip on the world and humankind, no one could react harmoniously to these enormously powerful vibrations in their unmodified form.

So they have to be transmuted, and extended to humanity in an organised way. That is why, before a group of servants carries out its intention to influence humanity with the merciful forces of salvation, it prepares a sanctuary, a temple. Such a temple must fulfil certain necessary conditions which enable it to serve as a basis for the work, as a sanctified place in which the work of applying gnostic magic can be carried out.

The possession of such temple-work places in which the gnostic work could be performed was also the aim of those

who stood behind the construction of many of the beautiful and majestic cathedrals which have arisen in the course of the centuries.

You may have realised by now that, by telling you about this work, we are venturing onto completely new terrain, terrain on which most pupils of our School have yet to set their first, hesitant footsteps.

Until now, many pupils have seen the temple only as a place where services are held, a place for meetings which could be held elsewhere if the temple did not exist, or which could just as well be listened to on a loudspeaker in another room if the temple became too full. In other words, they are seeing the temple from the protestant perspective, which reduces the sanctuary's significance to a merely social level.

If you think this over, you will see that the development of a School like ours is far from complete and that a great deal of preparation still remains to be done. In this respect, banal social habits and practices will not help any more than going to the other extreme, and performing our religious observances in the formal, liturgical way that has been traditional down the ages.

We need to undertake a practice which is founded on inner quality and inner preparation. So we hope you have understood the point we are trying to make, and are determined to prepare yourself inwardly so that you can be ready as soon as possible to carry out this holy temple work, for the time for it has come. The temple work has become necessary. It will have to be performed on an inner level, and it will emanate from our temples as a new radiation-field that will span the whole world with its beneficial effects.

What does this mean in terms of the tasks gnostic magic has to fulfil? Let us answer this question in the language of Lao Tzu:

If princes and kings were able to sustain it, the ten thousand beings and things would yield to their governance. Heaven and earth would unite and cause a gentle dew to fall, and the people would enter harmony spontaneously, without needing to be told.

Let us examine this task more closely. First of all we would like to draw your attention to the term: *ten thousand beings and things*. For the ancient Chinese, this term was a way of referring to the masses, to everyone living in this nature. When the gnostic magic radiation-field becomes active horizontally, spreading over the whole earth, the primary result is that everything born in nature comes under its influence.

These king-priestly influences do not function in a judging way but bring peace and tranquillity, because they are radiations which have been received and transformed by the priestly host. Their primary function is to disconnect the material life-field from influences emanating from the etheric spheres. This establishes a fresh basis for the masses and their authorities, and the result is that they settle their disputes, bridge gaping chasms and make the impossible possible without needing to be told, without any form of coercion or compulsion.

So that is how heaven and earth unite. If that were to happen, only a very isolated reflection sphere would remain, and it would soon dwindle away quite naturally because of the radiations of the higher nature released via the shaft formed in the temples of the gnostic Brotherhood, which would cover the earth as a 'gentle dew'.

That would cause the conflicts between people, and between the higher nature and our life-field, to disappear of their own accord. That is why the Gnosis and its servants never need to involve themselves, for instance, in political

disputes, or to pour out vials of criticism over the world and humankind as the dialectical person tends to do.

So there is no need for you to criticise those who, in fact, do not deserve it. For the masses live as they live and do what they do because of the influences of the etheric sphere which, owing to its magnetic nature, absorbs all humanity's sins and then revivifies and reflects them back again, thus causing a progressive degradation of human values and standards of behaviour. And the authorities simply lead the masses in a way which reflects their nature.

In this way the masses remain confined in a self-created prison. It is their oppression that causes them to live by the old testament law of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. Everyone jostles for the best positions, fierce disputes rage and people keep on wounding each other with a constant barrage of caustic criticism.

You should realise clearly that you do not need to follow in the footsteps of the masses in order to help the world and humankind. You do not need to declare yourself for or against any activity; you do not need to declare yourself for or against one nature-aeon or another.

You need only awaken your living soul through a worthy and conscientiously practised new approach to life, so that you can stand in the temple as a priestly human being. Then, from the temple centre and the life-field surrounding you, filled with the radiations of the higher nature, you will unlock far-reaching new possibilities for countless people. In this way you will be able to intervene quite impersonally in all disputes; indeed, you will even be able to make wars impossible and bring peace on earth.

In this way, through your actions as a new human being, you will realise the divine will on earth, in the service of all life-waves. As for the etheric spheres, they, too, will no

longer be fed from the material life-field. Delusion will no longer be able to gain a foothold and in this way the etheric spheres will be cleansed in a completely natural way. Deprived of their sources of nourishment, all delusional forms will fade away like mist. All artificially fed nature-aeons will have to adapt to the divine will and law, and they will change entirely.

As a result, the character of dialectical nature will be utterly transformed, and life will once more fulfil its purpose in the unfoldment of the All. The earth will again become the training school of eternity, and the deeper meaning of the cycle of birth and death will be restored. In this way, the whole of humanity as it exists at present will be realigned with its destiny. And all this will have been achieved by the practice of gnostic magic.

The great adversary knows this! It knows its hour has come, and that is why a final struggle against everything belonging to the darkness will be necessary. You need to understand the term 'struggle' in the right way. It means something quite different from the kind of struggle known and applied in the everyday world. It will be a struggle carried out by divine Love, employing all the means it has been given in order to help it gain the victory. It will be a victory in which all will participate and to which there will be no end.

So we have introduced you to a task which is now beginning to be carried out. It is a task which is being undertaken by and for human beings, in keeping with the divine will and law. When it is done, no one will be able to say 'I did that', for it will have been accomplished by the divine power of blessedness, which is intended for everyone. He who can understand, let him understand!

He who knows others is astute, but he who knows himself is illuminated.

He who overcomes others is strong, but he who overcomes himself is omnipotent.

He who can restrain himself is rich, but he who is filled with energy has the power of will.

He who does not deviate from his essential nature will live long, but he who dies, yet is not lost, will enjoy everlasting life.

Tao Te Ching chapter 33

33-I

He who knows himself is illumined

Have you already found out how incredibly difficult it is to know yourself? If you think back over all your efforts in that direction you will most likely conclude, heaving a sigh, that 'attaining self-knowledge is just not possible'. But self-knowledge is essential, for it is the first step towards self-improvement. So it is very sad to have to note that, despite the ardent sincerity with which so many people strive for it, their efforts yield such meagre results.

Indeed, the Bible speaks the truth when it says: 'He who conquers himself is stronger than he who conquers a city', or, to put it in Lao Tzu's words, *He who knows others is astute, but he who knows himself is illumined*. Most people are quite capable of observing what other people do and determining the rights and wrongs of their behaviour; they are readily able to distinguish what is futile, what is negative, and what is hopelessly wide of the mark, because they are astute people who are accustomed to pronouncing judgment on everything and everyone, and telling their opinions to anyone who will listen. For have they not seen it themselves? Have they not heard it and perceived it themselves? People can tell you everything about their fellow human beings, right down to the smallest detail. But one should give no credence to these opinions, because those who voice them are not able to perceive the inner motives behind other people's actions or words; at most, they are only able to guess at them.

For most people, the only way to form any conception of self is to listen to what others say about them. A friend or relation, for instance, could tell you quite plainly who you are

and what you are like, so plainly that in the end you believe it. For surely your friends and relations are just stating the facts? What reason would they have to do otherwise? But do you realise how utterly misleading this kind of 'self-knowledge' is? Your wife or husband, your brother, sister or friend tells you, 'That is how you are.' And eventually you begin to believe it, and to attune your whole life, your whole state of being, to the opinions of others. In the end, you will even start believing that you are doing quite well in your quest for self-knowledge.

If you can be sufficiently objective, you will realise that there have been times when you, too, have been the victim of this kind of situation. If you want a classic example of this, think of Jesus the Lord, and other eminent workers and their sublime servants, who were unable to have any effect in their native surroundings, in their own birth-place, on their own relatives. Think of the winged words: 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' 'Surely nothing? For we know him too well.'

So even though your knowledge of human nature may perhaps be useful in assessing other people, more often than not your judgments are inaccurate, and involve many misconceptions and miscalculations. If one realises this and dares to acknowledge it, one has to accept that one is still groping in the dark in one's quest for self-knowledge. As far as knowing oneself is concerned, most people are either much too optimistic or much too pessimistic, and not in the least realistic.

'But why?' you may ask. Well, because they possess no sense-organ, no inner faculty, with which they could perceive themselves and their behaviour objectively, and trace the inner motives which gave rise to that behaviour, and the astral

forces behind them. For most people, the book of cause and effect, the book of their own individual karma, is hermetically sealed.

This also applies to occultists, even though they believe themselves capable of discovering their own karmic state of being. In the modern Spiritual School, occult methods — which aim to penetrate the mysteries of existence with the aid of the I-consciousness — are rejected.

The I-consciousness is capable of penetrating the mysteries of existence, but only to a certain extent, and the result is always that it becomes very much more entrenched, with an existence even more firmly bound and enmeshed in the reflection sphere. Occultists unleash influences and forces which they have learned to fear, and which they try to escape or neutralise by means of certain tactics, by using their ingenuity, but in the long term this is of course impossible.

An occult disposition, to the extent that it occurs among our members, can be recognised, for instance, by the inability or unwillingness to give up dependence on astrology, as a method of investigating one's karma intellectually. The horoscope is understood as a series of influences and radiations that will have a good or bad effect on oneself and one's interests. So the person with an occult disposition uses the horoscope to gain a picture of the web in which he was imprisoned at birth and — whilst remaining suspended in that web — he tries to use his understanding of it to make things as favourable and easy as possible for himself. Of the spider that wove the web, and why, the horoscope tells nothing. So astrology may conceivably provide the person with a means of making life in nature somewhat more bearable, but not necessarily. It may perhaps make the person rather more alert to danger, and better able to benefit whenever new

dialectical possibilities arise. But for the rest it is only a stay of execution, making the person neither better nor worse, but only somewhat more astute.

As far as eternal salvation and true life are concerned, this kind of astrology has nothing to offer. And because people generally tend to become dependent on this science and to understand it in an occult way, we have abandoned it totally. As you may know, there was a time when we gave lessons in astrology. For years we taught those gathered in the Rosycross how to read the horoscope and draw up birth charts. But we have said goodbye to all that, because only when you seek the soul, and want to unravel the web of fate for the sake of soul development, can an understanding of the web in which you are currently enmeshed be of any use to you, as an overview of the task facing you in your life as a whole. But if you think that the information derived from studying aspects is, in itself, self-knowledge, this can only be detrimental to your progress.

The occultist has still more strings to his bow, such as the tarot, the cabbala, and handreading. We, too, used these things in our younger days but, since then, we have found that the way to true self-knowledge is quite different.

It would be wonderful if you could realise this, for then you could be spared a long road of experience, accompanied by much trouble and sorrow. At the heart of all this is the need for you to uncover a mystery, which consists of the following steps:

the first is knowing oneself, through which one attains illumination;

the second is overcoming oneself, through which one becomes omnipotent;

the third is unlocking a new form of energy, through which the magic faculty of the will is generated,

and the fourth is entry into the everlasting, new life, which happens when the end of the journey through matter has been reached.

You would do well to study this formula, and try to put it into practice so that you can taste the fruits of it. It is a formula that comes to you from the primordial past, bringing with it the glory of infallibility. The question is, how does one attain self-knowledge, and so become illumined? And what does it mean to be illumined?

To find real answers to these questions, one needs to have had a certain measure of experience; one needs to have drunk from the bitter cup of suffering. For it is experience that makes such questions well up in the human heart, questions like: 'What is the purpose of my life? What does it really mean to be human? What is the destiny of humankind?'

If you do not ask these questions in an intellectual way, but because you are driven by an inner need, because these issues are really problems for you; if these questions well up from the deepest depths of your being, then the urge to seek will emerge in you of its own accord. It is an urge that will be felt as a vital need, as a 'to be or not to be'. Then, the whole of the Universal Doctrine will open for you, the whole of the divine plan for the world and humankind.

This process of seeking is made very much easier for pupils, for all the literature of the School of the Rosycross is available to them, and they study it, driven by a real inner need. And because this urge to know is founded on an inner need, the process of study is quite different from what is ordinarily understood by the term.

This study leads to the discovery that the I-consciousness is only a motoric activity whose function is to keep the personality alive and well, and that the personality is only a part of the

whole creation, intended to serve as the basis for the development of the true human being. Furthermore, one learns that the life of the personality, as one knows it, is not life in the ultimate sense of the word, which has to do with the true human being, but is a purely animal existence.

When the student understands that — and it will be understood if he is motivated by an inner need — a point of contact latent in the personality will awaken and begin to bloom: a point known as 'the rose of the heart'. From within the rose, a voice will then begin to speak, the voice of the monadic flame, which is the part of the higher human being that must be connected with the lower human being via the soul, as a result of which the composition of the lower human being will be changed and transfigured.

When the pupil begins to be inwardly aware of that plan, when it opens up for him and is no longer understood merely as an intellectual concept, he will begin to live and grow in the direction intended for him by the divine plan. That is what it means to be illumined. Only then will there be knowledge of the self, and knowledge of God. Then one really knows that 'the Kingdom of God is within you.'

So that is what illumination means. In the light of that knowledge, the path of victory, the path of self-conquest, can be walked.

33-II

He who overcomes himself is omnipotent

Now that the coming new day of manifestation is almost upon us, we need adopt quite a new approach towards it, as we have been explaining. Yet this new approach has very ancient antecedents, for it dates back to the end of the Aries era, when the message regarding it was first conveyed to slowly maturing humanity. Then, throughout the Piscean era, this same message was illustrated and exemplified by various great forerunners and messengers. In the coming, new era, the age of Aquarius, the message will have to be put into practice by the whole of humanity. The mighty symbols of this threefold process of transmitting, exemplifying and practising are the Lamb, the Fishes, and the Waterbearer, who pours out his pitcher of living water over all humankind.

So the time of fulfilment is almost upon us, and it *can* come, it *can* become a reality, because the necessary capabilities now exist within the human being. More than four thousand years have been given to human beings in which to mobilise all these resources so now there is no reason why pupils of the Spiritual School should not prepare themselves, with joy and gratitude, for this magnificent task of liberation.

We have explained the first aspect of this process of self-realisation in the terminology of the Tao Te Ching: the attainment of self-knowledge, through which one becomes illumined. We would now like to go further, and discuss the second aspect, which is overcoming the self, through which one becomes omnipotent.

Once a human being has drunk deeply enough from the cup of

bitterness, and has eaten long enough from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, a new inner need develops, a powerful urge to discover the purpose of his life, the plan that lies at the foundation of his existence.

The more he understands of that plan, and the more his desire, his heart, is fed with that understanding, the more his heart becomes accessible to the light of the Gnosis. This is the state of illumination, which opens the way to the miraculous fulfilment. The rose begins to flower and the higher human being, which encompasses the pupil as a microcosm, begins to speak to him. In this way the candidate enters what we, along with many of the ancients, refer to as the phase of mystical illumination, of the nurturing of the plan touching him.

In that fundamental, new state of being which is now emerging, the person's attitude to life will change; the standards by which he evaluates things will alter. Everything which, until now, he considered important, will fade into insignificance in the light of the new day, because a new rational-moral faculty is being set free within him. We call it 'rational' as well as 'moral' because, now that this change is underway, the head sanctuary, as well as the heart sanctuary, can begin to perform its true function again. So head and heart, heart and head, work together in an illumined, rational-moral state of being. Now the great work can begin. After *knowing* oneself, one must embark on the process of *overcoming* oneself. What does that mean?

The human race is standing at the beginning of the age of Aquarius, which means that the ages of Aries and Pisces now lie behind it. This means that, since your microcosm takes on a new personality once in every seven hundred years on average, it has experienced around six lives in the last four thousand years, and is now in its sixth or seventh life since the beginning of the Aries era. So in the sense of your material

existence, you must already have received and experienced the message about your vocation, far back in the past. Subsequently, the way to follow that path of salvation must have been illustrated and exemplified for you. That is why it is time, now, for you to put that mighty task into practice.

What we mean to say is that, until now, the pupils of our School have not fully utilised the countless opportunities for liberation given them during past periods of existence. Perhaps they even knew some of those great forerunners and their servants personally, and heard them speak, but without making any use of that opportunity. Perhaps, during their last lifetime, it was the mighty movement of the Cathar Gnosis that called them.

Throughout that whole series of past existences, they may not yet have been mature enough to follow the path of victory, and then they would have accumulated a great deal of karma, which may have turned their astral strait-jacket into a prison so confining that only now are they ready to walk the path of victory. Or it is also possible that they are unable to advance any further during this lifetime than the stage of mystical illumination, as is the case with a great number of people.

But let us assume for the moment that you have been through the phase of mystical illumination, and your heart and head are now ready to follow the path of victory. Let us assume that you are determined to follow that path — because that is the most important thing! If only you are willing to persevere, you will be able to accomplish everything, for all the necessary abilities are present within you. Then all you will need to do is make sure that your head and heart remain in that new state of being. You will need to keep your heart and head 'in the light', as we often put it, and not allow yourself to be handicapped by the grip of nature. Then you will be able to accomplish the process.

If you keep your heart and head in the light, in that state of illumination, this will create the optimal conditions for connecting the microcosm with the personality. The connecting power, the uniting element, will then manifest the soul. In other words, when the microcosm and the personality are connected, the soul arises in between the two, as a new body. For when the personality-system is kept in the light of the Gnosis, its radiation is able to connect more and more closely with that of the microcosm, and in this way, together, they weave the living soul. That soul-body has an existence which is *in* the world, but no longer *of* the world. So by bringing the soul into existence, the human being is able to enter the path of transfiguration.

This is a distinct phase which is entered once the process of overcoming the self has been completed and the candidate has therefore entered the state of omnipotence. What does it mean to be omnipotent? It is said that God is omnipotent. So the Omnipotent One is God himself. So being omnipotent means unlocking and participating in the core essence, the nuclear power, of the Godhead.

This divine nuclear essence is present in every atom, and corresponds to the fire, to the fifth ether. So when the candidate becomes able to control the fifth ether, the fire ether, this means that he is able to control the nuclear essence of the atom. It is that control which gives him omnipotence. Control over the atom — that is omnipotence. It may sound strange to put it this way, but it is as if every pupil who follows the path in fact becomes an atomic reactor and applies nuclear fission. Through the process we have been describing, the atoms from which you are composed begin to manifest and radiate their true nature, their inmost forces, and as a result,

that majestic transformation unfolds. Control over the atom means omnipotence.

In the cave of the Grandmaster in the Sacred Mountain at Ussat-les-Bains in France, there is a drawing of a celestial ship, sketched in the style of ancient Egypt, with just a few, simple lines. The ship's mast is a sevenfold cross, held upright by a strong hand, so that an equally strong vertical current of divine power can descend from the higher nature.

The horizontal beam of the cross opens out at each end into three. One of these threefold end-points is supported by an eagle, while the other is supported by the figure nine, the mighty symbols of the divine fire and the divine power. So this picture is a representation of the fact that, when the candidate is able to liberate, assimilate and apply the fire ether, the Holy Spirit, in the proper way, he will be carried along on the wave of omnipotence. His celestial ship will be kept pointing towards the one great aim with a firm hand. Through the vertical — the horizontal. Through God — omnipotence. Through the fire ether — liberation.

So the phase of mystical illumination must be followed by unification, by coalescing with the flame, with the fire, with the light, and through that, being united with God.

You know the term, 'divine omnipresence', don't you? Well, that divine omnipresence, that divine power, is contained in the fifth aspect of the atom. If the candidate opens himself to that power, he becomes one with God. He is united, right down to every atom of his being, with the core essence of the All-Manifestation, and in this way the divine power, omnipotence, becomes available to him.

Then the third aspect of the formula given to us by the Tao Te Ching can follow: unlocking this new energy, and thereby

developing the magical faculty of the will.

The will is the highest and greatest power a human being can possess. That is why the will is called 'the high priest'. When, through the process of transfiguration, the lower human being has merged with the higher human being, by means of the soul, the will can function as a truly royal, priestly faculty, because now it is linked with the fire of the Godhead. Then it will be possible to draw a fiery cross, all-encompassing and absolute, flowing vertically out of the divine nature and spreading horizontally over the whole world.

Now the thing you need to focus on is not how much progress you have made in that process, but how much you are participating in it. The important thing is to make a start, to join in. Then the strong will be able to help the weak, and a unity will develop, the group unity we spoke about earlier. Then we will no longer fulfil merely a calling, announcing role in the world, for together, we will possess a power that can actually bring about change. In this way, together, we will build the Spiritual School as a mighty citadel amid the turmoil of the times. Then, as a result of applying the new power of volition, we will see the whole world, the whole of humankind and the whole of our society change.

33-III

*He who dies, yet is not lost,
will enjoy everlasting life*

We hope that, by now, you will have understood what Lao Tzu was trying to say in chapter 33 of the Tao Te Ching. In a few, powerful lines he sketched the entire formula for liberation, so that his pupils could see the whole thing, as it were, at one glance. We want to impress this sketch on you, so that you will never again forget it. So, to conclude, we would like to focus on the last aspect of the magical formula: the completion of the work, the end of the journey through matter: entry into an everlasting, new life.

The human manifestation as we know it, the physical human being living in the material world, is not the real, noble human being intended by God, but constitutes the instrument with whose help the great marvel of creation must be achieved. To make that possible, the lower human being is encompassed by the higher human being. However, the ensouling factor, the igniting flame that would lead to 'life' in the true sense, is still lacking, for it has yet to be constructed from basic principles. So all the resources necessary for that construction process must be brought together and mobilised so that, as a result of their functioning and their receptivity, an exchange, an interaction of forces and radiations can come about.

The result will be a life full of intense experiences. When these experiences have been sufficiently etched into the developing human being — and, alas, this is a process attended by much sorrow and pain! — an acute longing begins to

develop in the person concerned, a longing to know the real purpose of life, and to be able to fulfil that purpose. The result is that the person begins to seek, and love for the one goal develops in his heart.

Eventually, the time comes when full understanding arises in the head sanctuary. This allows the higher human being to approach the lower human being much more closely, and a mutual contact develops through which the radiant power of the higher human being is able to illuminate the heart and head of the lower human being. This radiant, fiery power, which links and combines the higher and the lower, and which can only be manifested when all the necessary requirements have been met, dissolves away what we call the 'crystallisation' or 'gluten' factor in the lower human being.

The gluten factor is operative in the blood, among other things, and when it is dissolved away, the result is the atomic transformation we described to you earlier. This atomic transformation makes the lower human being, the instrument, receptive to the influx of the fire-ether. The lower human being then becomes clothed in flames, wreathed in the Pentecostal tongues of the fire ether, and in that state he attains unity with the higher human being. The result is a new human being, growing and developing day by day — through fire.

Then, amid the flames, the soul-being appears before the inner eye, a being derived from light, from the fire of Vulcan, clad in the raiment of kings, the Golden Wedding Mantle. And the moment comes when it is no longer possible to say, 'Here is the lower human being, and there is the higher human being,' for, by passing through the fire, spirit, soul and body have been fused into one new being.

Once this work has been completed, and songs of victory ring out, the candidate enters his true Fatherland. He casts off his old material garment, now consumed to the last fibre, and

from the ashes of his former dwelling the reality intended by God arises; it ascends to the Throne of Thrones and enters the everlasting life.

Those who mourn beside the lifeless heap of ashes have no understanding of what a miracle has come about. But those who do understand, they gaze upwards and see the Firebird, the Phoenix, soaring up to heaven on broad wings, entering through the opened portals. The new human being has come home. The great, glorious work has been accomplished.

It is as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3: 'Each man's work will become manifest. The Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire'. And Gustav Meyrink's words, too, come true: 'We, who met in ages long past and have struggled through the forces of darkness, may now greet the light, through the liberating deed.'

Brothers and sisters, we are forging the lance. Encompassed by its radiance in our peaceful rooms, may the fire mature within you. We who are linked in the Universal Chain, we greet exultantly all those who have regained the victory.

*Those who from delusion's grasp break free,
find the path to true reality.
Those who unto not-doing attain,
are linked as one, forever, in the Chain.*

Amen.