

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

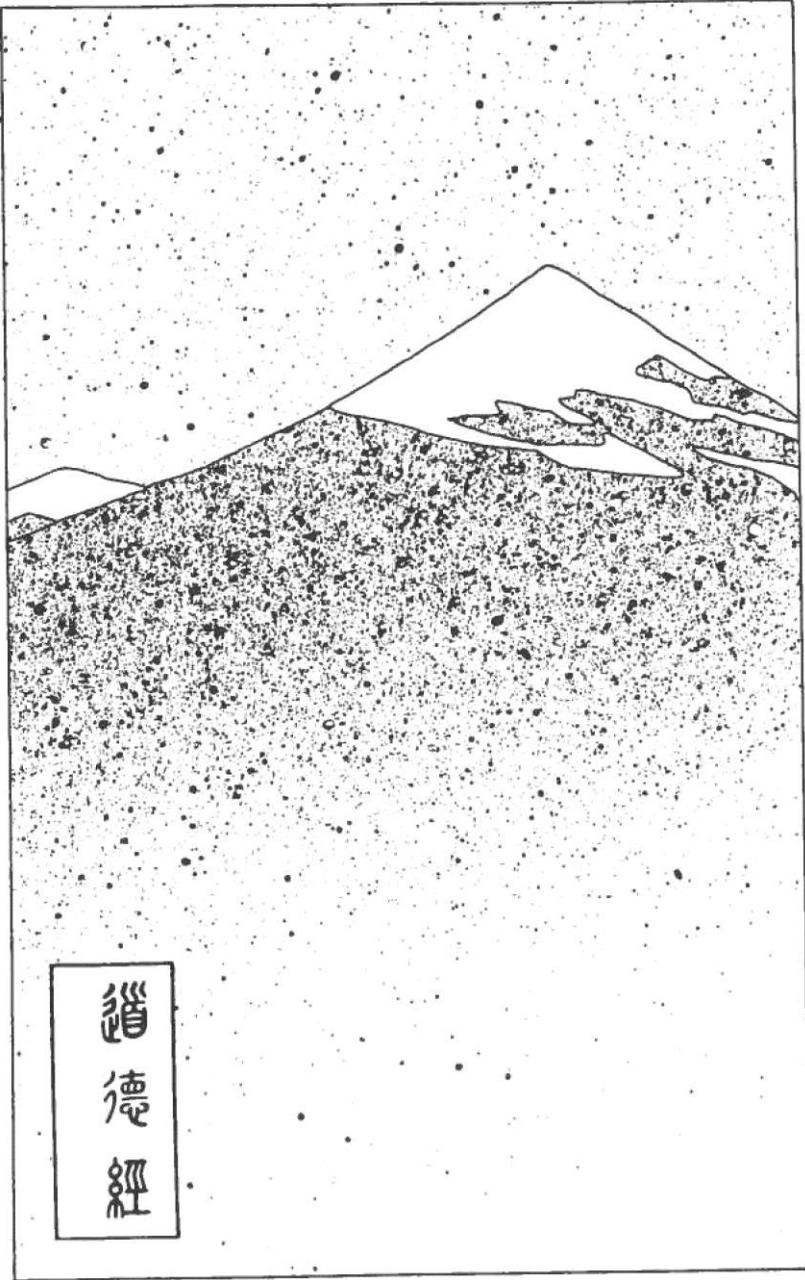
your heart sanctuary to the radiation-power of the new life, you will be touched by the spiritual essence? The heart must exist in the state of *not-being*. If it is in the state of *being*, it will be filled with a thousand and one worries, desires and concerns of ordinary nature. Just as the mind is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

