

The Fool's Secret Journey

THE HIDDEN TAROT, THE ZODIAC, AND THE GODDESS

– A MAP OF DEATH AND REBIRTH –

by

Fred Cameron

Part 1 – The Contraction of Reality

The Empire never ended. ... The Empire is the institution, the codification, of derangement; it is insane and imposes its insanity on us by violence, since its nature is a violent one.

– Philip K. Dick, *Valis*

*And what's needed is for you to learn all things:
both the unshaken heart of persuasive Truth and
the opinions of mortals in which there is nothing that can truth-
fully be trusted at all.*

– Parmenides¹

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THE WORLD AS WE FIND IT

Modern civilization appears in history as a veritable anomaly: of all known civilizations, it is the only one to have developed in a purely material direction, and the only one not based on any principle of a higher order.²

Many years ago I began to wonder why it was that I could easily imagine how things in life could be worse, but had a much harder time imagining how they could be better. Taking the lives most people lead as a zero-point on some kind of life scale, there were hundreds of ways things can get worse: the death of a loved one, a terminal illness, a natural disaster, a divorce, a knock on the front door by an IRS agent, a drive-by shooting, war on my home soil, loss of my job, on and on. These events would move anyone's life well into the negative numbers on my scale. Yet, what kinds of things would move the scale into positive numbers? Certainly an absence of any of these conditions would be good, but would only bring the meter reading back to zero.

What would be better? Everyone living in good health, peace, and harmony would be a positive bump. Financial security would be at the top of many people's list. A better job. I was hitting positives now, but only single digits. What would be even *better*? Hitting it big in the lottery, and never having to work again, sure. All the sex you could want, all the time. Fantastic. All the booze and drugs you could swallow or shoot up. Death to all your enemies. Fast cars, bigger TVs, a mansion, expensive restaurants, on and on.

It was about then I realized something had gone wrong with my list. There I would be, sitting in an upstairs room in my own castle, surrounded by beautiful women, whacked out on speed, sated beyond belief, but alone.

In control of a ship going nowhere fast. I realized I wanted few of these things (unless in moderation—richer *is* better than poorer), but right there was the problem. I had concentrated on *things* and situations I imagined would feel good. But I didn't use drugs, drank only sparingly, was in good health, and had enough money for the time being.

I was still at zero.

What I really wanted, I realized, was to *know*.

- Who am I?
- What are my potentials?
- What is my purpose here on Earth?

Everyone has these questions, and if I had the answers that would be worth a hundred on the plus side of the scale. But there was more. Not only did I want to know, I wanted to *be*. Be what? Several times in my life I have had the experience of a wholeness, a state of such bliss that the few moments of the experience brought tears to my eyes, not because of the experience itself, but from having it dissolve away. What I wanted was to *belong*. The certain knowledge that such a state of existence is real—fullness, oneness, peace, grace, we have no adequate words—and to be separated from it was nearly unbearable. Another such moment comes, for me, at the very end of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (in the books, much more than in the movies, unfortunately). Three of the main characters, one by one, pass “over Sea,” to the “Undying Lands,” never to be seen in the ordinary world again. What was it like where they were going? Tolkien tells us in various places, but we are to take the land “over Sea” as a metaphor for an ageless, golden land of perfection.

Far from being a fictional place, every culture has had stories of this place: Nirvana, the Garden of Eden, Avalon, Hyperborea, the Undying Lands, Heaven, many more. I realized what I wanted to *be* was to be *there*. And what did it mean in Tolkien that some people went there before they died? The Ringbearers, Frodo, Bilbo and Sam, all did. If three ordinary “people” could go “over Sea” while still living, why couldn't I? I'm sure many of the millions who have read these books or seen the movies have had the same desire. It is this desire, conscious or not, that made *LOTR* the most popular book of the twentieth century after the Bible.

How does one achieve such transcendence? Frodo went by ship, but what kind of vehicle does the ship represent? Moreover, Frodo and the others earned their places on that ship; how could I or anyone else earn such a right?

What Happened to Paradise?

But the question isn't so simple. For instance, an equally valid question is how did we get separated from the paradise lands in the first place? We know all about them: scholars have cataloged over 350 legends and myths from nearly every known culture around the world, past and present, who recorded a past Golden Age. Since our own Age is certainly the antithesis of anything "Golden," we have convinced ourselves that none of these stories have any truth in them. And yet somewhere inside ourselves we *feel* they ought to be true. They might be true, somehow, as if we retain a memory, an echo of such times that is not entirely false, and that the world we find ourselves in may not entirely fill up what we call reality ...

What is this feeling? It's a feeling of loss, a hollowness—a feeling that something is missing from our lives, and we don't know how to fill the void that is there; we don't know how to repair the rent in our wholeness. Sometimes, when life is good, a feeling of well-being engulfs us and we have what psychologist Abraham Maslow called a "peak experience." All is right with the world, and at least on the inside; we love everyone and everyone loves us in return. Those who experience this feeling know it isn't fake or phony, despite the times when others say we're just imagining some sort of brief fantasy. These experiences usually are brief, because the world we experience is full of loss and fear, and it soon presses in again.

Before we look at what the Golden Age was like in more detail, and how we might have become estranged from it, it will be useful to look at the effects and the scope of what has been lost. We will find there is one overarching cause for this loss, and understanding this will help us discover a way to end the estrangement, and instead experience a sense of reunion and connection with something higher than our ego-selves that is the central, defining feature of a Golden Age.

How we became estranged from Paradise and how we might become reunited with it again are flip sides of the same question. Most cultures that have an account of a Golden Age—and there are many—also have an immediately ensuing account of some catastrophe that ended it. This can be an external, physical catastrophe, usually involving some combination of fire, water, or ice, usually raining down from the sky, or it can be a catastrophic choice some early humans made that ended the Golden Age, for which the rest of us are still paying the price. Looked at from the other end, there have been various suggestions, commands, threats, guilt trips, and what have you, for how Paradise may be regained, either now or at some undetermined time in the future.

The problem with many of these stories and exhortations is that we don't believe them, especially when we see that believing them merely profits the very people who are promulgating them.

The First Question

In the Medieval Grail legends, there comes a point when the Grail seeker has the opportunity to ask what has become known as the "Grail question." The question is often phrased as, "Whom does the Grail serve?" but its essence can be stated more directly for modern times: "Why are things like they are? What's it all *for*? What am *I* for?" The Grail represents the highest spiritual quality that can enter a human being. It is divine Grace. In Christianity it is called the Holy Spirit. For the Grail to serve someone, therefore, that someone has to become able to receive such Grace; he or she has to reach a state of such inner purity to handle the intense energies that it carries and not be burned up by them. Frodo at the end of his quest is directly analogous to the Medieval knight who successfully completes his Grail quest.

However, in the Grail stories, the knight invariably fails to ask the proper question, which signifies that even the best of us don't realize we are unfit—as we are—to perform the task offered to us. Therefore the knight is forced to undergo an arduous task which consists not so much of defeating symbolic external enemies—black knights, mysterious castles, alluring but deadly women, dragons, and the like—but of overcoming the internal enemies that these symbols represent. In the stories, only a very few successfully complete their quest. The Grail slips away from the others.

In our modern times, the existential question, "What is the purpose and meaning of my life?" has many types of response. Many of us never ask the question or even face it; we let life's entertainments and disasters distract us, preferring that the parties and dramas last as long as possible. Indeed, so many of us live lives devoid of all meaning that a new genre called "Reality TV" has sprung up so we can emote alongside other peoples' dramas. This is really living life by sitting on the bench. This is preferable to far too many people than getting in the "game" of their own lives. It's so much easier and more comfortable to look "out there" than "in here."

Others of us largely ignore the question of meaning until we get older, when we see the long line of our life behind us and finally decide to confront the meaninglessness we now see in it. But how do we find some kind

of meaning or purpose, some connection to something greater than ourselves—amid the din, the contingencies and the calamities, large and small, of everyday life? How do we begin to steer ourselves when everyone else seems to be rudderless, just like we are?

The problem with this question is that it has different answers at different times in our lives. Children want to be firemen, astronauts or sports stars; later on these same people want to be good providers and care givers when they become parents. Older people may retire from the workplace and consider their life's purpose to be fulfilled; others may start a new undertaking with a new purpose. Still others may again hit the same existential crisis they perhaps first faced in their thirties. Where do we find greater meaning if we haven't already experienced it?

To have a rudder to steer us through life means to have a stable, constant center with which we can keep our balance as the currents of life around us shift. We change emotions and demeanor from moment to moment, sometimes drastically. For instance, we don't act the same way in front of our boss as we do with our small children. Or we are happily singing to the radio while driving down the road until someone cuts us off—then our happiness explodes in a red cloud of rage. Do either the happy or mad person reflect the purpose of our life? The needs of the personality and the contingencies of our situation largely govern our behavior. Only later do we discover that shifting circumstances and our responses to them don't determine who we really are and who we really want to be. We ought to *mean more* than the zigzag course of our lives. The crisis that strikes in mid-life or later in life is a signal—if it comes at all—that we have become aware of the meaninglessness of our pursuits and of ourselves. There are many such signals, but we largely ignore them all. We settle for less and, at the last, often come to regret a futile and wasted life.

But what if, in all this, we are not asking the right question, or at least the initial question. There is a related question, albeit rarely asked, a prior question, that may serve as a possible guide for the purpose of one's life. It is this: "What is the purpose of human life on Earth?" If all of humanity, somehow, had a definite purpose, then it would be vastly easier to see how we each fit into that purpose. The purpose of our own life would then have a context, a direction into which it could fit. It would have a meaning, since real meaning can only come from something larger than our individual selves. We would feel ourselves to be part of something larger; the ship would now have a rudder and we would see how to help steer it in the right direction.

Might there really be a purpose for human life on Earth? If there is, we are totally unaware of it. We are constantly swept up in tensions and conflicts between groups—nations, religions, corporations—even one individual against another. We vie against one another for food, money, living space. Even our pastimes—sports, “reality” TV—pit people against each other. Who is the best, the fastest, the most ruthless, the most beautiful, the richest? Amid all this, how could all of humanity possibly have a single purpose? And if we do have such a purpose, something truly catastrophic must have happened in the past that caused so many of us to have completely forgotten it. That there may have been just such a catastrophe is discussed in the next two chapters. Here it is only necessary to set the stage for understanding its continuing impact even perhaps after more than 10,000 years have passed.

Piercing Faux Reality

We no longer ask what the purpose of the cosmos might be, much less our purpose in it. The first page of the Book of Genesis states that man is to have “dominion over” the fish, the birds, the cattle, all the Earth and every living thing that moves on the Earth. We interpret this bald assertion as giving us free rein to do with the Earth as we please, to denude it of trees, to pollute its air and water, and to overpopulate it. That it and we ourselves might have a role in a cosmic hierarchy of exchange, service, need, and purposeful evolution completely escapes us. Had that phrase “dominion over” been translated instead as “responsibility for” or “husbanding of” the world would be a different place. We believe that the Earth was created for man, but we ignore the other half of it: that man was created for the Universe. It is truly remarkable that in neither case do we ask why.

Whatever kind of God we believe in, or if we believe in none at all, we all ask the question, “For what purpose are we here?” To answer, as the neo-Darwinists do, for example, that there is no purpose—all is blind evolution—leads to nihilism and meaninglessness. But these are exactly the things we have rejected in the search for our life’s meaning, so we are forced to reject a purposeless existence and posit some kind of Supreme Creator who had and still has something in mind for us. To form an idea of what this purpose might be, we have only to see the human race as part of a vast hierarchy of patterns, functions and energies that comprise the cosmos. To assume we don’t have our own part to play in this hierarchy—both as a race and as individuals—is to take an ignorant swipe at Him or Her.

G. I. Gurdjieff made this question the central focus of his life: “What is the sense and significance of life on the earth in general and of human life in particular?” This is the same question we are asking here. After many years of searching, he found the answer. He asserts in *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson* the following, which he calls the doctrine of reciprocal maintenance:

In all probability there exists in the world some law of the reciprocal maintenance of everything existing. Obviously, our lives serve also for maintaining something great or small in the world.³

The clearest explanation of this idea is given by John G. Bennett, who was a student and proponent of Gurdjieff’s.

Reciprocal maintenance in its special sense connotes that the universe has a built-in structure or pattern whereby every class of existing things produces energies or substances that are required for maintaining the existence of other classes.⁴

Without getting into details that would get us too far astray, Gurdjieff envisioned a hierarchy of twelve “essence classes,” starting at the bottom with unorganized energy (heat), then atoms and molecules, then crystals as static nonliving forms. The classes proceed upward through soil, plants, invertebrates, vertebrates and then man. The last four essence classes are harder to describe, because we have little or no knowledge of them. On the next level higher are the demiurges or angels. It is possible, according to Gurdjieff, for man to attain this level. Beyond it are levels that correspond to the divine will, which is associated with the creation and maintenance of the world, and two further levels that represent different aspects of the Creator. The point to be made here is that man has a role to play in this hierarchy that transcends his own level; man’s purpose concerns both the levels below and above, and has to do with the transformation of energies among these levels.

We can return to the passage in Genesis and see that in this light the words “dominion over” are an ignorant (or some scholars think willful) mistranslation of the purpose of human life on Earth. Suppose part of our purpose is to in some way transform energies that are integral to our own beings (even though at present we may have no knowledge or experience of any such energies within ourselves) to the essence classes below us—the cattle, birds, fishes, and so on—so as to assist in the furtherance of their

own evolution into higher classes? Or at least to facilitate the transformation of energies between our level and theirs, instead of just killing them for food? Are there more subtle and useful ways we could absorb their energies? Asian and native North American shamans certainly thought so. And since this is a theory of *reciprocal* maintenance, we should expect to give to and receive assistance from the class above us to aid our own spiritual advancement and evolution.

The problem is, we hardly have any inkling that there really are levels above us, or if we do, we intercept precious little “assistance” from that level and certainly send even less. It is a central tenet of this book that the reason we are unable to perceive such higher influences—as we would under normal circumstances—is because an event that occurred on the Earth millennia ago that upset the easy energy exchange between our own level and those above us, something we will return to in more detail in later chapters. As a consequence, we are left to our own devices until such time as a strong connection can be reestablished. More importantly, in the meantime there are certain actions we can take to reestablish it on our own; the Fool's Journey is comprised of a set of such actions and procedures we can perform on ourselves, first to strengthen influences directed toward us from higher levels of existence so we may hear and experience them clearly, and second, to move ourselves towards and then into the next higher level. For it is only when this higher level is experienced—at least momentarily—that we can come to know our true purposes in the scheme of existence in which we're embedded.

Before such actions and practices can be approached, it is necessary to understand where they can lead. Stated another way, we must see what we have been in the distant past and what we may yet become again, for there is no human evolution involved in order to rediscover and resume our true human purposes; there is only recovery and reestablishment of what we once were long ago. Finally, it is only by means of this recovery that we can banish our fear of being alone and all our other fears as well, for we will be able to experience directly that we are indeed not alone after all, that we are all an important part of a process that involves the entire cosmos.

We have lost access to our souls

We don't know anything about them: Are souls real? If so, where “are” they? When and in what ways do they interact with our conscious selves

while we live, and what happens to them when we die? We think we know these things, but we really know nothing about them. Any real knowledge about them has been missing for a long time. Perhaps they were once more present in the misty long ago—and there are plenty of stories and legends about that time—but for whatever reason they went missing, and in the millennia since then we’ve built civilization upon civilization largely without these integral parts of ourselves. Where were compassion, conscience, kindness, tolerance and forgiveness? If we had only had access to them, we could have done much better.

The sad fruits of this estrangement are still with us today. Any kind of modern inventory is frightening; we don’t see our world for what it is only because it’s so familiar, and we have taken for granted that things are as they must be. But let’s take a short inventory anyway, and not try to take anything for granted. Although much of the world is a beautiful place, there is much in it and in ourselves that is not beautiful.

- There is widespread malnutrition and starvation in the world, particularly of children. On even the most basic levels, in the main we refuse to help one another, especially when the “other” is in a different group—ethnic, religious, political, geographical, or economic, and children and women are usually the innocent victims. This is called inhumane, a word we should keep in mind while trying to define ourselves.
- There are incessant local and not-so-local wars. Some of these amount to genocide. There is even a new phrase we have recently added to our current vocabulary: ethnic cleansing, a euphemism if ever there was one. There is posturing, lying and threat of war; there is horrible combat and unforgivable loss during it. Of all things, “religious” war is still abroad in the world, a situation which defines that word better than any dogma or doctrine can.

We live in a world without a soul because we refuse to exhibit one ourselves. Beyond these two there might seem to be little left to add, but the list goes inexorably on.

- Lying, cheating and stealing are widespread among us. Especially lying, which is nearly universal. We steal from each other, we cheat and cheat on each other, and we lie not only to each other but to ourselves, which is much more egregious.
- Greed is rampant in every sphere of social and economic life, as are its fellows: hatred, envy, competition and strife. A whole new genre of TV show entertains us each evening which glorifies greed; in these so-called “real-

ity” shows, whether on a remote island trying to “survive” at the expense of others or at the poker table playing Texas hold-’em where winner takes all, we compete now more than ever for what we perceive to be limited resources. Lack has truly become institutionalized. (The alternative type of social interaction, in case you’re wondering, is cooperation. Doesn’t get the ratings, though.)

- That we pollute our environment need hardly be mentioned. Our air and water are polluted; our food, if we are not watchful and discriminating, is filled with chemicals instead of nourishment. Of course, this is just another form of greed by the major polluters.
- Economic concerns rule our lives, and economic institutions rule our societies. The immorality of corporations is the cause of all the man-made pollution of food, water and air in the world. The legal status of corporations is the same as that of a human in most places in the US, but of course they are not persons and have no souls, which by their example is perhaps why we can’t find ours. The inhuman—a word so similar to inhumane—corporate greed for profits, for a rosy bottom line, is the reason. Their idea of competition and conquest of all rivals has not only been responsible for the spate of “reality” shows, where everyone is out for themselves, but is also responsible for the personal greed we have seen in the last decades at the highest corporate levels. As a result of this corporate hegemony, we have allowed ourselves to be defined as merely the consumers of their goods and services, and employees of their endeavors, which over the past hundred years has eclipsed any knowledge of ourselves in any other role. Time for leisure, parenting, study, personal growth, and so on increasingly occurs only between times of employment, which we must not abandon, lest we become economically destitute. We can hardly imagine what we might do if we weren’t at our jobs all the time. Still, many do abandon their jobs, or are forced to if laid off or “outsourced,” which brings us back to stealing and other crimes of the hungry and desperate.
- Drug and alcohol use is rampant among both adults and teenagers, even grade school children. To these latter we give little Ritalin pills to keep them quiet and in line. We take refuge in alcohol and an amazing variety of drugs when the pressures of life seem onerous and unbearable, or simply when life seems meaningless. (Perhaps this is because much of life as we practice it is meaningless.) Other kinds of drugs become necessary (or seemingly become so) when our physical bodies begin to break down due to environmental pollution and the emotional pollution of stress and

indeed meaninglessness. Disease, both physical and mental, are also in this category. Both kinds are far too widespread. But fear not. There are plenty of disease(d) corporations to supply even more drugs that target (for better or worse) anything you might have.

- Nearly as devastating, we can't get along with each other. Forget nations. We are all—off and on—at mini-war with each other. Marital and parenting problems head the list, but ask nearly any high school student how well his or her classmates all get along, or how they get along with their parents. Family war and peer war. We simply haven't been able to devise adequately successful social institutions—such as marriage, the right to be parents, and effective and meaningful education programs—to successfully handle these problems in nearly as many cases as we ought to. Instead, we have created other institutions such as the legal profession and the State's confiscation of minor children from their derelict parents (or parent), who come in after the other institutions have broken down. Why don't we devise better solutions?
- Crime against one another has always been with us. What is most disturbing, though, are crimes against children, which perhaps have always been rampant and only now are increasingly coming out in the open. Institutional homosexual abuse of boys by priests and girls by nuns (especially in Ireland, even in recent decades) seems out of control, but so do the instances of parents abusing their own children, sexually, emotionally and physically. Seemingly random acts of violence in our schools and homes by disaffected adults or other children are meant to terrify us, and they do, but the blame for such actions does not lie only in isolated, twisted minds, which are merely the effects of their true cause. The real cause of everything on this list is:
- Fear. We are afraid of nearly everything. We fear the next nation over. We fear the people in the next neighborhood. We fear the person at the next desk, who maybe is gunning for our job. We fear the stranger, the other person's kid, the other kid's parents. We fear our employer, the medical establishment, the insurance companies, big business, big government, big science and big religion. Many around the world fear the local militia. We fear for ourselves when we make a crucial decision in our lives that might have negative and long-lasting consequences. We fear the forest, and anything rural or natural. We are taught to fear, encouraged to fear. It is fed to us and we gobble it up. At a certain point in life we begin to fear time and how much of it we've lost and can't recover. We fear death and we

fear life. Hollywood horror movies are laughable compared to our everyday fears, but maybe distraction is their purpose. It is certainly their use. Enough. That much is bad enough. And if fear is at the bottom of it all, maybe we'd better have a look at it and where it comes from.

About Fear

Fear explains every crime on our list; it is the root cause of greed, envy, genocide, war, and all the rest. Fear doesn't need a visible, impending foe, however. Fear comes in many forms.

Fear of death lurks within us, but we often hide or suppress it. It's not the most important fear, as many might believe, since it is often too abstract and remote while we are in the midst of life. Instead, fear of lack and fear of being alone top the list. Fear of lack is based on the supposition that there will not be enough to go around, therefore I will get all I can, any way I can. Sooner or later, this means the strong take from the weak. The less strong have two choices: either oppose those stronger and likely get defeated by them, or join forces and abet the stronger in his actions in order to enjoy his largesse. (It's nearly always the masculine gender.) Note that this applies just as much in the corporate-economic sphere as it does when military force is used. We abet the economic machine by consuming all sorts of unnecessary stuff, yet we feel we have to work to assist these same companies to produce it, lest we become economically destitute.

Once the strongest control the assets and the access to them, they must protect themselves by becoming even stronger, and taking more territory, power or money—a vicious circle. Fear of lack is the underlying cause of greed in all its forms, and the cause of all territorial wars. It is also the root cause of our economic woes, and of our stress, ill health, drug and alcohol abuse. We are driven by what we have come to believe is economic necessity; if we don't work in and for the economic system, we fear we will have no money and will wind up sick, homeless, dead, or all three. We abet the strongest and most successfully greedy. For those who opt out of the system because they just can't or don't know how to compete, crime is often the solution to lack. Austerity isn't usually considered an option against barrage advertising and peer pressure, although not that long ago voluntarily doing with less was called thrift.

Perhaps our deepest felt lack is that particular emptiness we feel inside when the world slows down enough for us to recognize it. This genuine lack of something intangible hurts so much we push ourselves to absurd

lengths to both bury it in constant activity and to satisfy it by creating demands on the outer world and other people. We will come back to this point again and again until we begin to see how to assuage it in a real and meaningful way.

Fear of being alone is next. When we have no friends and no community, we seemingly soon have nothing. This is therefore similar to the fear of lack, except now there are additional motivations. We don't wish to be too different from our fellows and risk being ostracized, so we form bands of like minds and, at least initially, like geographical location. We have our own customs, habits and rituals, codified usually in a set of religious beliefs or cultural practices. Fear of being alone is fear of being different, so anyone with different beliefs is a threat, lest the group be broken up. This is the root cause of all religious wars, genocide and ethnic cleansing. We fight to not be wrong, and thereby be alone.

In the last decade assuaging the fear of being alone, for many, has escalated to a new level. The Internet and cell phones have provided a myriad of ways for tens of millions of us to never be alone. There are You Tube, Twitter, Facebook and many other Internet sites that keep us connected with all of our friends. Hour by hour, if not minute by minute, posts apprise our entire peer group of every exciting (and unexciting) activity. Aside from being insanely egoistic, this practice gives its users that mommy-daddy-is-close-by feeling so we never have to confront what's really going on inside us, which is the peril of being alone socially and psychologically. If this weren't enough, even when we're on the move, our trusty and ever-present GPS-equipped cell phone alerts the whole world of our whereabouts in real time—a little blip on someone's cell phone display that can show what aisle of Wal-Mart we're in. The outside world can seem like a lonely, dangerous, unfriendly place, but if we are digitally-equipped we can take all our friends with us all the time.

The number of our fears seem legion. We fear the unknown. We fear death, which nobody understands. We fear the contingency of nearly everything. We fear for our health and the impersonal anonymity of the sterile hospital operating room. We fear contracting some terrible disease and we fear those who already have one. We fear risk and change, the personal consequences of which are unknown. Even amidst our favorite group we are alone if we allow ourselves to admit it—digital devices notwithstanding—and this is terrifying. Our major religions say we must be God-fearing. What kind of sick God demands fear? We are told we must

fear and hate those of different religious persuasions, which, if we take a look around the world today, the situation is no different than it was a thousand years ago—only the weapons used by the warring religious groups are different. Fear is taught, and we can easily see who the teachers are.

The Root of All Fears

Is it possible all our fears have a single root cause? Asked differently, was there ever a time when humankind didn't have these fears? Any of them? In nearly every culture around the world there are ancient memories preserved in myths and legends of a Golden Age. In those times everyone was happy; there was plenty for all. There was no danger, no strife, no hunger, no fear. What there was, was an always on, 24/7, full time, high-speed, two-way, broadband connection to a different level of being, a conscious connection to a spiritual level of reality, something greater than the individual. We find this unimaginable today. We may imagine there is a "God" defined in various ways "somewhere up there," but a conscious, full-time connection? No. Yet in the following chapters we will endeavor to see that not only was this the case—in whatever real ways such a Golden Age might have existed—but it can again be the case, if not for humanity as a whole yet, then for individuals who are willing to work to recover it. For reasons that will become apparent as we go along, I am calling these people Fools or Warrior-Fools, technical terms that will become clearer as we proceed.

To repeat: The root cause of all fear is the same. We call it loneliness, but it is really estrangement. It is the disconnected state of our awareness of the spiritual realms around us of which we are members, and, consequently, of our own spiritual nature—however much this is unknown to us at present. Therefore, lack of spiritual awareness is the cause of all the ills of the world. We are so disconnected, and have been for such a long time, that we are almost completely unaware that any such spiritual realms exist at all.

If we became consciously reconnected to the spiritual realms from which we were forcibly disconnected—in a real and active way, our fears would disappear. This reconnection is the goal of every genuine spiritual tradition, including the Fool's Journey. Inexplicably—although this is how it works and always has worked—when this reconnection occurs, the contingencies of life from which our fears arise disappear, because the Universe gradually begins to operate on our behalf. Our inner realignment causes the life around us to realign also. The cold, hard scientist or materialist can

deny the truth of this, but being “cold” and “hard” are qualities that insure this type of change will not happen for them.

So that the subtlety of this point is not lost, we can look at what it means that the Universe begins to operate on our behalf. There are many ways, but here are a few. All of them require that a certain type of inner work has been done, so as to produce a certain inner development and strengthening. But it is then possible that, say, during a mugging on Fourth Street you will instead be on Fifth Street. It is possible that your unreasonable boss or abusive spouse will leave your life. It is possible that some pleasures you previously enjoyed become hollow, but are replaced by much greater ones you never imagined nor anticipated. It is possible you will come to realize your unique purpose for being on the planet at this time.

These changes occur not by traveling anywhere in the worldly sense, but by making a journey—becoming aligned—in an inner sense to different realms of existence and experience. As we are, we bring into our lives that which we resonate with. Your “vibration” of anger, say, tends to bring forth a similar response in me when we meet, just as a vibrating tuning fork evokes the same vibration in a similar one. Anger evokes anger in response. But if I have worked to eliminate anger in myself by having developed an inner “place” or “state of being” where anger doesn’t exist, then not only won’t I get angry at you anymore, I won’t allow your anger to affect me. This is not the same as just trying hard to suppress my anger; it implies a state where I don’t *have* to get angry, because I have come into contact with a place, realm or state of being (all synonyms) which is beyond the individuality of anger. In a very real sense, I have gone beyond my individuality to a state or realm of community where you and I are merely different aspects of the same One Thing. Why, then, would I get angry at myself, just because you came along? A consequence of the Fool’s Journey, and also a prerequisite of it, oddly enough, is to see and treat others as we see and treat ourselves. Somebody, memorably, said that a while back.

The Cracks in the World

Do different realms of reality exist? They do, but they must be directly and individually experienced. They are non-objective, meaning no instruments that take objective measurements can detect them. They are instead subjective; only inner experiences determine if they are real or not. Therefore no one, however well academically credentialed or evangelically disposed, who has not personally experienced them can validly comment on

them one way or another. (Which does not prevent such people from doing so, of course.) Only direct awareness of such realms, the spiritual states and connections we may experience inside ourselves, constitute proof of their existence. In fact, it is only with the greatest mental gymnastics, instilled by habits and concepts that were formulated long ago, that we manage to deny their existence, other than in a theoretical sense, usually within one religious framework or another. (Scientific materialism is one such framework.) We let these concepts rule our beliefs, with the result that the concepts *become* our beliefs.

Remember, though, these concepts are just second-hand opinions we decide to believe. All too often, we are afraid to step outside these beliefs, because then we would increase our fear of being alone, outside the majority's beliefs. So we are stuck. There must not be any accessible spiritual realms because most people don't believe there are. We dare not go outside these beliefs lest we be cast out in one way or another by our peers, and then be alone. We fear there is not enough to go around for us all as a group, so how much less would there be if we were alone? This is a neat and overarching vicious circle that keeps us within the concepts our cultures have adopted, which is the very definition of a culture. And yet, there are constant signs and influences that flow to us all that belie the validity of our materialistic concepts.

Subtle (or sometimes not so subtle) events creep in through the cracks of our solid reality all the time. They are not consensual; they are individually experienced. When we relate them to other people, they say, "No, we didn't feel or see anything. You must have been dreaming." Or they will have less charitable reactions. "You were hallucinating." "You just made it up to gain attention," which might be said to us as children. "You must be mentally ill," which is said by those in authority who got in their positions by being the very ones who were most successful in suppressing those very events within themselves that they are now offering up judgments against in others. More opinions.

Note that our Fool readily steps outside and beyond cultural and conceptual beliefs if need be, a willingness fundamental to the Fool's make-up. Nor is he or she bothered by the reactions, expectations or behavior of others; being willing to seem the fool in their eyes is another essential trait.

Costs and Consequences

What does all this matter? Sure, we all have our little fears, but we manage

to get through the days and years of our lives. This is true, until it ceases to be true, often abruptly. Maybe we look in the mirror one day and see that we've gotten old—the years have flown by and we hardly noticed amid the distractions arrayed about us. Or perhaps a traumatic event violently rouses us out of our dream and forces us to face our own possible and imminent demise. Often it's the loss of a loved one and we realize that if our life was cut off, it would be a failure because it ultimately has had no meaning up to now.

How might we go about regaining this meaning? Where is it, and what might life be like were it regained? We'll look at these questions in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

Part I – The Contraction of Reality

1. Translated by Peter Kingsley in *Reality*, p. 27.

Chapter 1 – The World As We Find It

1. Guenon, Rene, *Symbols of Sacred Science*, p. 1.
2. Gurdjieff, G. I., *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, p. 1094.
3. Bennett, J. G., *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, Bennett Books, Santa Fe, 1992.