

THE REALITY AND ILLUSION OF THIS CREATION

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There are approximately five billion human beings on earth today, each having a different picture of the world which is dependant on their physical consitution, innate soul qualities, education, culture, upbringing etc. I'm going to explore **some** broad categories of these soul pictures or outlooks **which are prevalent in the west** and to touch upon the reason for these pictures.

With man's present day consciousness we can clearly see the material world, objectively explore its laws and predict its behaviour. There are many who believe that its just a matter of time before the life and psychic soul realms will join the area of the scientific calculable and predictable as is being attempted in the fields of psychology and science.

On the other hand man's present day consciousness barely knows or feels the presence of the spiritual world which borders and interpenetrates our own sphere of existence. The modern day person walks and lives in a world where he is unaware of the workings and living manifestation of the spiritual and even denies its existence . Yet this spiritual world is continually influencing this world and our consciousness (through the subconscious) inspiring and directing many of our actions and the forces of nature. Little is known of the fact that our weather, wars and social upheavals such as the Rwanda massacre etc are largely caused by man's previous inner moral and immoral actions via spiritual influences.

Further, present day man is not conscious of the true nature of his own being in its spiritual aspects, instead, for many who profess a religious confession, the spiritual world is feebly accessed through faith, rituals and traditions which are slowly loosing their influence and their beneficent effects. The materialistic outlook has placed the spiritual world into some nebulous undefined place far beyond our realm of experience. Hence we have a dualistic situation where the spiritual worlds, of our religious confessions, have nothing to do with our present day to day external existence. In fact even the traditional religious teachings which have been handed down from antiquity, have for a large part been misunderstood, as man, with his modern intellect, assumes that the consciousness of the seers who gave the world their teachings was the same as that of the modern intellectual man. This is evidenced by some modern Christian theologians who nowadays, through their interpretation of the bible, dispute the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Many of our contemporaries claim that the spiritual world does not exist, or if it does, it cannot be known of and therefore it is of no importance. Science, on the other hand, aspires and strives to fully understand the world in terms of the calculable, the measurable yet each year as new frontiers of the materialistic world are conquered science pushes back its target date for achieving the understanding of our total existence. But science, in its one-sided pursuit of knowledge and its scientific methods, has justifiably dismissed many superstitions which were under the guise of spiritual knowledge.

The physical world, for many, is nowadays looked upon as the only reality, if not in belief, then in actions. As an example , when a male looks upon an attractive well endowed female, how often does he realise that behind that beautiful physical form there is an individuality who but a few years ago was a little girl and in a few years hence will become old and pass away. In other words there is the same individuality behind an ever changing physical form.

After the arrival of Halley's comet an insidious social impulse has entered the western world and that is the principal of economic rationalism and efficiency, where the human being is left out of the picture. Since the advent of low priced, high powered computers it has become possible to easily monitor work output for a large number of industries and hence be able to objectively move resources around (including people) to where they are most effective. But what has happened is that the human being has been, in many cases forgotten and is treated like any other commodity, - a piece of machinery that can be thrown away as required etc. Managers in western cities are encouraged to produce more with less, even though the company is making a reasonable profit. Hence, staff are being loaded up with work and are therefore required to work longer hours with less leisure time at their disposal. Those who have jobs are enjoying life less because they don't have sufficient leisure time, whilst those who are unemployed are miserable because their self esteem is down because they don't have a job. In America we hear that unemployment is down to 4% but what we are not told is that if you're unemployed for more than nine months there is no social security and you no longer exist as far as the

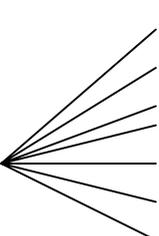
employment system is concerned. The common thread through these situations is that the human being has been forgotten with the cooperation of individuals who can gain financially by doing so. The manager gets a bonus for higher production output, the employee can keep his job and the shareholders get a higher return on their investment (for the short term). It is in the interests of certain negative spiritual beings or forces (arhimanic beings) to ensure that the human being is treated no differently to that of any other commodity used for production and this will in turn will help to ensure that man is diverted from his intended evolution by causing him to lose his connection with the spiritual world and become chained to the earth. This economic rationalism in itself cannot be ignored as it is part of our evolution but neither can man as a spiritual being be forgotten.

Rudolf Steiner tells us that one of the missions of materialism is to free man up in time so that he has the **free choice** to pursue spiritual knowledge or sink into decadence.

On the other hand the danger to those that profess a conscious spiritual pathway (this group is in the minority in the west and are different to those that have a religion) is to deliberately ignore the recent developments in scientific and materialistic thoughts and processes, claiming these to be ‘Maya’ or illusion, in the fashion of the Ancient Indian civilisation or the monastic lifestyles of old, where the age was right and proper to regard the material world as being illusionary. Today however, life itself eventually corrects this attitude to the material world. Many of the ‘flower children’ of the seventies were forced to gain knowledge of local politics, business skills and technological skills in order for their ideals to survive. It is common in the Steiner movements, as with other spiritual streams for much bitter social disharmony to occur on occasions because individualities have failed to reckon with the gifts of our materialistic age as these can mistakenly be seen to be irrelevant.

So why do people get caught in an illusionary spiritual idealism and why has the knowledge of the surrounding spiritual world been withheld from mankind in general, to the point where there can be a total denial of its existence and why is it so hard for modern consciousness to approach the spiritual world ? ie. why has mankind been placed into this illusionary world? For this to be answered adequately we will journey back in time to view our ancestors (ie. ourselves) , their outlook and the evolution of their consciousness with the view of being able to gain glimpses of the Purpose of man in as much as it can be answered satisfactorily at our present level of consciousness.

Man’s journey through earth evolution can be divided up into seven major epochs and each major sub period can be broken into seven smaller sub epochs. During this journey man evolves both physically and consciously up to what he is now and further into the future.

Major Earth Epochs	Post Atlantean sub Epochs	Major Characteristic of the Post Atlantean Epoch
Polarian Hyperborean Lemurian Atlantean Post Atlantean Sixth Epoch Seventh Epoch	 Ancient Indian Ancient Persian Egypto-Chaldean Greco-Roman Present Sixth Seventh	The beginning of religion - The world is Maya Working with the Earth Working with the laws of space Man becomes a personality, logical deduction Individual freedom Common individual wisdom and brotherhood “War of all against all”

Only in Lemuria can we first speak of the individual man, but here mans’ actions were largely instinctive. His actions were largely determined from without by spiritual beings external to him. His consciousness lived, so to speak, in the bosom of the gods or within the living spiritual world that surrounded him. Although he was conscious he was not yet self conscious but felt himself to be part of the whole divine world. At this time, spirits in opposition to our immediate creators interfered in man’s intended course of evolution (the temptation and the expulsion from paradise). Man now descended further into matter than was intended and he now took on a solid physical body, became mortal and, with this event, reincarnation began.

In Atlantis man evolved further to take on the bodily appearance which we see today and only during this period did he develop the ability to say 'I' to himself and realised that others were 'you'. During sleep he 'walked with the gods, but during the day he was no longer in their presence. He still saw the spiritual world weaving within nature, he did not yet fully see the physical world in sharp outlines but mainly its spiritual emanations, eg if a plant was poisonous he would sense the poisonous nature in the plant's etheric or life body.

After the sinking of Atlantis, which is represented by Noah's ark or Manu and the seven Holy Rishis, we come to our present major epoch ~8,000 BC, firstly to the ancient Indian sub-epoch (each sub epoch last for 2,160 years - the change of a zodiacal sign). In the Ancient Indian period we come to a people who for the first time do not associate directly with, nor perceive the gods, but who retained a memory of the time when they once did. Religion and religious practices, for the first time, came into being in order to place the individual back into that state where he could once again commune with the gods. The physical was looked upon as **Maya** (illusion) and was only useful for supplying the basic necessities of life. At this time, to regard the physical life as illusion was right and proper and suited to his evolutionary requirements. Much good was obtained through this attitude and the greatness of the Ancient Indian Civilisation could not have been achieved without this attitude.

In the ancient Persian period man looked upon the earth as the object of his conquest and during this period agriculture for the first time flourished. The spiritual world was becoming more distant from his consciousness. During this period the great Zarathustra gave his teachings of Ahura Mazdao and Arhiman - the god of light and the god of darkness.

In the Egypto-Chaldean period man now plotted the laws of space as is shown by the construction of the pyramids. He still saw spirituality working in the movements of the stars, but needed intermediaries to speak with the spiritual world and these were the priest/kings.

In the Greco-Roman Period man became a personality and developed logical thinking. The spiritual world receded to the point that atheism became possible for a number of individuals. However, thinking still had a living spirituality within it and man, for the most part, felt that thinking originated from without.

Generally, in our present age which began with the renaissance, there is no direct experience of the spiritual world, in nature and in man's inner life and in his thinking. The world appears bereft of the spiritual, to the point where it is common and normal to refute the possibility of its existence. Yet at the same time man now has the possibility of freedom by virtue of his previous and present development. But only because the spiritual world has receded from man's instinctive natural consciousness has man been generally freed from the bondage of traditions:- religious and cultural, family and group. Thinking is now in the possession of man. Inspirations still pour in from the spiritual world but man, for the most part, attributes these inspirations to himself. There are many well documented cases of these inspirations. Kekule, when he discovered the formula for the benzene molecule, had a symbolic dream about its form. Ex-Beatle Paul McCartney tells us of how he woke up one morning with a tune in his mind that wasn't his and which wouldn't leave him until the song 'Yesterday' was written down for the world to enjoy. But for the most part these inspirations are attributed solely to the human being. **But Why?**

In the brief review of man's evolution it is seen that there was a gradual gain of individual consciousness at the expense of the awareness of the spiritual world to the point where man has the actual possibility of true freedom. Had man still lived, so to speak, in the bosom of the god's he would have evolved to develop strong ego consciousness but he would not have had the possibility of freedom, that is, to act out of himself without outside cohesion. The angels, for instance, are one stage higher in their evolution than man but can only do the will of God (they are referred to as the messengers of God). It was ordained that man was to have the possibility of freedom and for this to occur the spirits in opposition to man's immediate creators intervened in man's evolution . As a result direct revelation of the spiritual worlds receded from man's consciousness (ie. the world from which the material was derived) so that freedom could be nurtured. This has resulted in our materialistic outlook which has now outlived its usefulness. Exclusive materialistic thought had its right and proper place in man's evolution up until the end of the nineteenth century.

In previous ages, when consciousness of the spiritual was present, man did not, in reality, have a will of his own. His life was governed by the dictates of the spiritual world. As time progressed, and as the spiritual world receded into the background man took on more responsibilities and self direction to the point where today he is

largely free of blood ties, traditions, culture, folk, religions etc. There are those that say (and with good reason) that man is too free of his previous virtuous values and traditions which had constrained his behaviour to do only good; this new found freedom has unleashed negative social results (marriage break-ups, sexual and drug abuse, increasing violence, etc). However man must now develop and substitute internal individual values for previously imposed values. Rudolf Steiner tells us that, now as self directing ego strength is acquired, so will the presence of the spiritual world return to man's consciousness (to those that consciously strive for it.).

Hence the situation we have here today is that we live in a realm that could be considered the scaffolding of a proposed building. The building is the objective, the scaffolding is the means by which the building is constructed. This world with its materialistic outlook is one part of the scaffolding by which man is achieving his destined place in the spiritual world (this exclusive outlook of materialism was proper for a period of time but has outgrown its usefulness). In future the material world will no longer exist in its present form as is evidenced by the rise and fall of civilisation and the evolutionary progress of man. The fruits of this material world will carry on in man into the future. What man gains through materialism on earth has its unique place in the evolutionary cosmic processes. Man's evolution was previously directed from without but now this must be undertaken with the full conscious cooperation of man and not in the sub-conscious manner in which it has taken place to date

However the opposing forces or spirits will endeavour and are working hard at keeping man away from true knowledge of the spiritual world by trying to construct and maintain an illusionary world for, what seems to be, eternity that will satisfy an individual, to keep him from looking further. Countless sentient pleasures are put in front man so as to tempt and prevent him from looking further than the satisfaction of his immediate cravings ie. to numb man into becoming a highly intelligent brutal or servile animal which seeks only to satisfy his cravings. Evil and illusion have their mission in man's evolution and by overcoming them man will reach his full potential. Rudolf Steiner tells us that through the greatest evil will the greatest good arise and unfortunately man still has much to experience.

Further, there are opposing spiritual forces or powers (luciferic) who tempt man to ignore the material world for the spiritual world, especially in conscious spiritual movements. In this present day and age the outside world will generally painfully teach the adherents of this view that to ignore the material world will inevitably bring about major problems.

Much individual strength and effort is required to overcome today's negative materialistic illusionary influences in order for the spiritual world to become visible. There are no shortcuts and this means that one must work hard in, through and, only then, beyond the materialistic outlook ie the middle road. The beneficent spiritual powers will not interfere in man's freedom, the choice is ours, but once an individual makes an effort to rise towards the spiritual then, the beneficent spiritual powers can help. Through initiates like Rudolf Steiner we are able to obtain a picture of what is a right and proper view to suit the evolution of the current age. The choice is up to each individual and must be undertaken consciously, with much effort and in full freedom.