

ONE

1.1 We Need a New World View and Life View

¹“Why do we live? Has life a meaning? Is death the end? Is there any higher power in the universe? If there is, then why does life appear so cruel and meaningless?”

²All thinking people must ask themselves such questions many times in life. Some people accept the traditional Christian answers. Others think that Christianity is untenable: “The results of scientific research have refuted the Christian world picture on important points, the story of creation, for instance.”

³Many people have accepted the scientific world view as their own. It is a one-sided materialism. As a life view it cannot give us hope or enthusiasm before the future. It teaches that man is just an intelligent animal that tries to assert itself in existence; that man’s consciousness is a mere product of his brain and fades out when the organism dies; that our dreams, ideals, and values are only subjective and have no relation to any objective, higher meaning of life; that the universe is ruled by laws of nature that work blindly and is indifferent to the destinies of however many people.

⁴We all have a need to see a meaning of existence. Man does not live just to satisfy his physical needs. He also “eats” meaning and can die of spiritual starvation as well as physical. In order to live and fight for a better world he must draw power from some other source than a materialist view of life.

⁵We need a new world view and life view. That is more important than any new technological inventions. A new world view and life view should be able to afford us positive, edifying values and a tenable, rational explanation of the world at the same time. We cannot get such things either from religion or science. In the long run, people will not be content with either unintelligent belief or one-sided materialism.

1.2 Superphysical Phenomena Widen Our World View

¹Science has afforded us an immense knowledge of physical, visible reality. Yet, many an eminent scientist has recognized that the scientific world picture is very restricted. It is reasonable to assume that the greater part of reality is still unexplored. Logically, then, there is nothing to contradict the idea of a reality beyond the physical. There are indeed many types of phenomena that manifest themselves in the physical but originate in energies of other kinds than the known physical ones.

²Let us survey these phenomena.

³*Telepathy* shows that different individuals (also animals and plants) have a direct psychic communication between them. Information is transferred between individuals without the need for an intercession of the senses of the organism.

⁴*Clairvoyance* is the ability to apprehend such things as – always or just temporarily – are out of reach of the senses, for example at a great distance. Using clairvoyance you “see” also other forms than those normally visible, the psychic atmosphere surrounding all living beings, for instance.

⁵*Remote viewing* is the ability to perceive such things and events as – permanently or temporarily – are beyond the reach of the physical senses, at great distances in space and time, for instance.

⁶*Projection* (or out-of-the-body experience) is the term for a phenomenon where people (usually in near-death states) have felt they were leaving their unconscious organisms, were outside them while being conscious, and were able to observe their surroundings. Upon awakening they have been able to correctly describe what happened around them during the time when no bodily senses were functioning.

⁷*Psychometry* is the ability to read off the past of an object directly in your consciousness, as though there were a contact between it and some sort of “memory of nature”.

⁸*Precognition* (premonitions, prophetic dreams) demonstrates that some part of our consciousness has a wider perception of the present and thus extends farther into the future than does our normal waking consciousness.

⁹*Psychokinesis* is the ability to move or affect things in other ways by thought alone. A special kind of it is levitation, the ability to make one’s body hover in the air. Other kindred phenomena are materialization and dematerialization, the ability to form things apparently out of nothing, and to dissolve them, respectively.

¹⁰Even though some of these faculties are unusual, that fact is no argument against their existence. It only demonstrates that they exist as mere potentials where most people are concerned. Nor is it a tenable argument that “they conflict with the laws of nature”. They conflict only with our present, all too narrow conception of the laws of nature. Levitation, for instance, has been well attested in historical as well as in modern times. One of the more well-known cases is that of Italian friar Giuseppe da Copertino who literally flew in his church before a congregation including the Duke of Brunswick.

¹¹Telepathy seems to be extremely common, especially between close relatives, such as a mother and child. The fact that telepathy has not been studied much is probably due to its being so common. We are quite simply not aware of when we are thinking ourselves and when others are thinking in us. We should ask ourselves whether understanding does not have an important element of telepathy, common and shared consciousness, and whether a lack of understanding is not partly due to the absence of telepathy. All of us certainly have experiences of such phenomena as perceiving people’s kindness or unkindness as “radiation”, when neither words nor glances have been exchanged. Also herd behaviour and special instincts in animals can be explained by telepathy.

¹²The fact that projection phenomena are very common is seen in the fact that many people now dare to speak openly of their experiences of it. Until recently, not many people have had the inner strength to defy mockery from both public opinion and science.

¹³In this connection there is occasion to say some words on that dogmatism which regrettably still compromises science to a great extent. To believe you know without having examined the case carefully is dogmatism. To refuse to examine something, claiming that it “conflicts with the laws of nature”, is dogmatism. To reject facts of reality, claiming that they do not fit in with the prevalent hypotheses, is dogmatism of the worst kind, the belief in your own omniscience and the impossibility of new discoveries that knock over the present hypotheses, which are always temporary. In fact, the entire history of science is the story of how worse, more restricted hypotheses constantly were forced to yield to better, more inclusive ones.

¹⁴In summing up it may be said that the superphysical phenomena described here demonstrate clearly that consciousness can act with a much higher degree of independence of the physical body than materialism assumes:

(1) Consciousness can apprehend reality directly, without the need of using the physical senses. (Clairvoyance, remote viewing, projection.)

(2) Consciousness has a considerably wider range in time and space than have the physical senses. (Remote viewing, clairvoyance, psychometry, precognition.)

(3) Consciousness is not individually isolated or separated but can be shared between individuals. (Telepathy.)

(4) Consciousness can exist independently of the physical body. (Projection.)

(5) Consciousness can affect matter directly. (Psychokinesis.)

¹⁵If consciousness can exist independently of the physical body, then it should be able to survive bodily death. “There is no death” is what spiritualists assert, and from an impartial

standpoint there is more to say for that idea than against it. The spiritualist phenomena are convincing. The spiritualist hypothesis is a plausible explanation of them. Still, many people have an aversion against life in the “spiritual world” as spiritualists describe it. It is trivial, vapid, too human, and does not satisfy our longing for the truly spiritual. This very fact, however, affords spiritualism the impress of truth. Why should man become nobler and wiser just because he has put off his mortal frame?

¹⁶Spiritualism shows us a new life “beyond the veil”. But this life has not much more meaning than physical life such as materialism views it. A very different, larger, and more positive perspective is obtained from the idea that life is a school for winning experiences, for developing consciousness. And then one earthly existence will not suffice. The idea of rebirth, reincarnation, has spread more and more in the West in recent years.

¹⁷A serious researcher, Professor Ian Stevenson in the United States, has investigated people who claim they remember former lives. He has documented twenty cases suggestive of reincarnation. Other researchers have continued this work.

¹⁸Everything we have said so far is more than enough to explode the one-sided materialist world view. It can also serve to introduce a more tenable world view and life view. Such a view will cover a larger portion of reality than heretofore. It is a view that allows consciousness to play a greater, more independent part in the drama of the universe.

¹⁹There are those who think that science will evolve this new world picture from within it. The new world view is fully developed already, however, and has existed for some 2700 years.

1.3 The Pythagorean School

¹This world view is called hylozoics. Hylozoics was elaborated by Pythagoras, the famous mathematician. In so doing he wanted to lay the basis for the science of the future. How far ahead of his times he was is clear from the fact that it is only now that his system has a prospect of being generally comprehended. This is so thanks to the fact that scientific research has reached so far that it is beginning to converge with some basic hylozoic principles. Whereas science deals with physical reality only, hylozoics primarily describes the super-physical reality, for the causes of physical events are to be found in the superphysical. In the future, a direct connection between science and hylozoics will be possible.

²Thus Pythagoras was thousands of years ahead of his times. This is explained by the fact that he belonged to a brotherhood the members of which had systematically developed their consciousness far beyond the limits of normal man. They roused to full activity “organs of knowledge” that still lie dormant within most of us. That gave them a sovereign knowledge of the universe and man, far beyond the possibilities of modern science, which is limited to information obtained through the physical senses and their instrumental extensions. That sovereign knowledge is called esoterics. Members of the brotherhood used to form schools of knowledge in various nations when these had reached a certain degree of civilization. At least a sizeable minority of the people should have been able to liberate their thinking from traditional religion and have begun pondering, in a rational way, the meaning of life and the nature of reality.

³Around 700 B.C. Pythagoras founded a school of knowledge in Sicily, which was then a Greek colony. When Pythagoras appeared, esoteric schools had existed for thousands of years. The novelty of his esoteric school was the systematic and lucid mode of presenting the knowledge of immemorial age. He understood the Greek sense of concrete knowledge, scientific method, and exactness.

⁴This is the reason why hylozoics is the esoteric knowledge system best suited to Westerners with their scientific and philosophical education, their liking for straight facts and dislike of ambiguous symbols.

⁵For close on three millennia, hylozoics has been a living tradition, a path to knowledge of the world and of ourselves. Thousands of men and women have walked that path. Till very recently, the knowledge was kept secret to those outside the school. We live indeed in a world where everything truly valuable is threatened, of course knowledge too.

⁶Only in our times an elementary presentation of hylozoics has been allowed for publication. This was in 1950 when *The Philosopher's Stone* by Henry T. Laurency was published for the first time, in Swedish. It was followed in 1961 by *The Knowledge of Reality* by Laurency. Since 1985 these books have been available in English. They are basic for all hylozoic study today. The greater body of hylozoic knowledge is still unpublished and will remain so for a long time yet. The knowledge of otherwise unknown forces in nature and in man will continually be given only to the very few, to those who have vanquished all temptations to abuse the power which all true knowledge confers.

1.4 *The Hylozoic Mental System*

¹Hylozoics is a mental system. By this is meant a system that man can comprehend and use by his mental consciousness, his intellect and common sense. In problems belonging to the world view, emotion is no source of illumination and no sure guide. Only reason can, at best, decide whether alleged facts are true facts, judge their possibility, credibility, or probability.

²But facts as such do not suffice. Single, disconnected facts confuse rather than explain. Facts must be put together into contexts and contexts be combined into still larger units: into systems. Every thinking man makes himself a system. Every new thing he learns he connects with his former learning, incorporating the new with the system he has already got and goes on building, consciously or unconsciously. All rational thinking is done in systems. And that is so because understanding always goes from universals to particulars, from a whole to details.

³The hylozoic system makes it possible to unite that striving after knowledge which here in the West has during hundreds of years been divided into mutually conflicting movements: theology, philosophy, and science. Such division and conflict is always proof of ignorance. Reality is one and single. Therefore, there can be only one true knowledge of reality, only one tenable world view. Life views, on the other hand, should indeed be as numerous as thinking people, since everybody should formulate his own view of what he wants from life and what he is prepared to give in return.

⁴The more mankind develops, the better shall we agree also on matters of life view. So it is because more and more people will see that their life view should be based on the world view, its facts about reality. In order to know how it should be you must first know something of how it actually is. Our life view is more important than our world view, since it guides us in our practical life, furnishes our conception of right (conception of right and wrong, what we vaguely term "morality"). Being the knowledge basis of our life view, the world view has its unsuspected significance. And here hylozoics will make its contribution.

⁵The hylozoic world view describes existence as a unity with three sides or aspects: matter, consciousness, and motion. Everything is matter that has consciousness (always to some degree) and is in motion. The least, indestructible parts of matter are the monads. The meaning of life is the development of consciousness in every monad.

⁶In every creature there is a monad that is sufficiently developed to be the central individual consciousness in that creature. The various kingdoms of nature – minerals, plants, animals, men, etc. – are different stages in the evolution of individual consciousness.

⁷The human kingdom is not the final stage of this development, only of its organic biological part in the visible physical world. Beyond the physical world there is a great number of ever higher worlds. In these the individual's development goes on beyond the human stage. There are more natural kingdoms above man than below him.

⁸Everything in existence makes up a unity. There is actually no isolation, particularly not for consciousness and energy (matter in motion). All higher development presupposes that the individual, with his self-identity preserved, enters into ever larger groups where co-operation and service of life and development are the essential activity.

⁹All this is ruled by laws. Besides the laws of nature, which concern the life of matter, there are laws of life, which concern consciousness and its development. It is man's duty to learn about the laws of life and to apply them to the best of his ability. The laws of life most important for man and which he can apply himself are: the law of freedom, the law of unity, the law of self-realization, and the law of activation.

¹⁰The *law of freedom* says that every man has a right to do whatever he wants to within the limits of the equal right of all.

¹¹The *law of unity* says that all life makes up a unity and that higher development is possible only when man overcomes his selfishness and learns co-operation and service.

¹²The *law of self-realization* says that every man must develop in his own manner according to the conditions set by his individual character.

¹³The *law of self-activation* says that all your development is the result of your own work, all knowledge the result of your own mental effort.

¹⁴Three laws of life that rule man whether he wants it or not are: the law of development, the law of destiny, and the law of sowing and reaping.

¹⁵As rational beings we have to choose between two paths, two kinds of self-realization: the will to power or the will to unity. The will to power leads to aggravated suffering for all, especially for those who have abused power. The will to unity has the effect that nobody demands more than his share and that everybody sees service of the common good as his highest task in life. That will prove to be the only traversable path to happiness and joy for everybody, the welfare of all and the illfare of none.

¹⁶In the following, the fundamentals of the hylozoic world view are presented. Where it has been possible, these basic facts have been illustrated by recent scientific findings and ideas, all to make it easier for the reader to understand. Hylozoics is here to make a mental revolution. May the reader not be overwhelmed but soon find his bearings in the new (and yet so strangely familiar) ideas!

1.5 The Three Aspects of Reality

¹The Greek word hylozoics could be translated "spiritual materialism". This implies that there is a spiritual reality and a material reality. No world view that excludes either aspect of reality is tenable in the long run. We are used to doctrines that make a sharp distinction between a spiritual, or higher world, and a material, or lower world. Hylozoics has another perspective, however, than exoteric philosophy, theology, or occultism.

²Pythagoras abolished the imagined opposition of spirit and matter, explaining that it was the outcome of ignorance of both. He taught that everything is matter and that universal matter possesses "spirit", or consciousness. Thus matter and consciousness are two aspects of one and the same reality.

³A third aspect of reality is motion. Everything is in motion, and everything that moves is matter.

⁴The whole cosmos and everything in the cosmos has these three aspects. There is no matter devoid of consciousness (even though it still be potential). No consciousness can exist without a material basis. And motion manifests itself in matter as energy and in consciousness as will.

⁵The three aspects of life are equivalent. None can be identified with or explained from any of the other two. Nor can anyone of them be explained from anything else. You cannot define them, only observe that they are self-evident. Therefore, they are absolute, and in their totality

they ultimately explain everything.

⁶Philosophical and scientific materialism has taken only the outer reality, the objective matter aspect, into account. The inner reality, however, the subjective consciousness aspect of emotions and thoughts, is as absolute and peculiar, and cannot be equated with objective phenomena such as chemical and electrical processes in nerve cells. The one-sidedness of materialism makes it untenable.

⁷On the other hand, so-called philosophical idealism has disregarded the matter aspect and asserted that objective reality was subjective experience only. The consequence of that view is absurd: everything material is just an illusion.

⁸In contemporary physics they say that “everything is energy”. According to hylozoics, energy is the same as matter in motion. It remains for science to discover consciousness in that dynamic matter, discover the universal existence of consciousness.

⁹Perhaps it is clear from the above examples of one-sided views that all three aspects must be taken into account to make our world view complete so as not to mislead us.

1.6 Everything Is Alive

¹When hylozoics says that all matter has consciousness, this of course does not imply that consciousness manifests itself in the same way in all kinds of matter. Just as there are various material life-forms, so there are various kinds of consciousness in them. A man can think, imagine, and make plans, which animals cannot. His consciousness is much more extensive and intensive than that of higher animals, not to speak of lower ones.

²Although animals cannot think as we can, yet they display intelligent behaviour. They act expediently, flexibly, show they have a will of their own, they remember, and they learn. That one-sided materialism which holds the brain or at least nervous system to be a necessary condition of consciousness must yield in the face of recent discoveries.

³The e-coli bacterium, a most primitive organism, consists of one single cell. It has neither a brain, nor even a head or a heart. It has just one DNA molecule as a chromosome and a life-time of twenty minutes at the most. Still it can learn to recognize various chemical substances, remember them, and evince a purposive behaviour in swimming towards “pleasant” substances and away from “unpleasant” ones. According to biochemist Dr Koshland, who made these observations, these bacteria display individual behaviour despite identical genes and environment. They develop a personality which remains to the end of their lives.

⁴Bacteria are organisms. It is clear all the same that the borderline between organic and inorganic matter does not set a bound for life itself. Also mineral life-forms give proof of intelligent adaptation to their environment. Therefore, they must perceive it in some manner. It is well-known, for instance, that many freshly synthesized substances must learn to crystallize. Having had the experience once, they find it much easier later. No two crystals of the same chemical composition are entirely identical but have their peculiarities and individual patterns of reaction – that is, habits. These must be due to unique experiences and memories.

⁵Science has begun to discover the consciousness aspect of existence, hitherto much ignored. Tompkins and Bird have given many examples of “green intelligence” in their book, *The Secret Life of Plants*. Dr Rupert Sheldrake has gone even farther in his book, *A New Science of Life*. In it, he suggests that all forms of nature, organic and inorganic (so-called lifeless), are preceded by and constructed from invisible morphogenetic fields that act intelligently and in a manner aiming at wholeness. This idea is in harmony with hylozoics.

⁶There is some sort of consciousness in everything. In fact, all forms of nature are forms of life, since there exists nothing lifeless. But how do we account for the differences in extension and intensity of consciousness? Hylozoics says that they are due to differences in the degrees of consciousness evolved in various forms of life. Alongside of chemical and biological

evolution, which concerns material forms, there is also a psychological evolution, which concerns consciousness in the forms.

1.7 The Evolution of Consciousness

¹What does “evolution of consciousness” actually mean? The acquisition of new and more favourable inner qualities, the loss of older and less favourable ones, the winning of new abilities, faculties which increase the prospects of the individual to choose and so afford him greater freedom.

²Where man is concerned, evolution implies that worse qualities are replaced by better ones in the direction of the ideal. This should imply: a deeper sympathy, a stronger empathy, a better understanding, a sharper intellect, and a firmer will. It should also lead to greater ability in more fields of action. Evolution also implies that the various conflicting elements of the personality are balanced into a greater harmony, so that the “lower self” is put under the control of the “higher self”.

³We who are now human beings have our qualities and abilities thanks to having developed to this stage from total unconsciousness and impotence. Perhaps you think of the development from the prenatal stage to a mature man or woman. According to hylozoics, however, that development is only a repetition. Entirely new qualities and abilities cannot be so quickly acquired. We are human and can reach human maturity because we have been humans many times before. Reincarnation is a principle running through all life.

⁴When we are born into a new life, we have latent human qualities acquired in thousands of previous lives. The faster we reach human maturity and the deeper that maturity is, the more lives we have lived before and the richer was their content. Memories from these former lives are not directly accessible in our waking consciousness (but how much do we remember from the earliest years of the life we are living now?). The general experience we have had in previous incarnations can quickly be roused from the slumber of latency, however, when we are faced with similar situations anew. This explains not just the different depth in the understanding of life in different people but also their innate predispositions, talents, genius. “All knowledge is but remembrance”, said Plato, who was a Pythagorean.

⁵Differences in degree of consciousness among men thus are due to the fact that some people are older and others are younger “souls”. And if men, animals, plants, and inorganic matter are included in one great context of life, namely evolution, then the various kingdoms of nature can be explained as the chief successive stages of that evolution.

⁶Hylozoics does that. We who are now men were able to become human for the first time – thousands of incarnations ago – because we had reached as far as was possible in the preceding natural kingdom. The animal kingdom had nothing more to teach us. Correspondingly, we existed as plants during still earlier epochs, and before even those we were minerals.

⁷The biological evolution of life-forms concerns the refinement of the material envelopes for the benefit of the indwelling life. That evolution has furnished the instruments that were necessary to the development of consciousness. Throughout the animal kingdom and up to man, we can trace the refinement of the nervous system including the brain as the essential feature of the evolution of organic matter. And yet the brain is just a tool for consciousness.

⁸The evolution of consciousness is the meaning of life.

1.8 The Monads

¹A life-form is worn out, it dies and dissolves, but the consciousness that was in it passes on in a new form. How is that possible? For if consciousness always has a material basis, then that basis must be something different from and more enduring than the brain and other parts of the nervous system.

²Hylozoics explains the matter thus: The individual consciousness there is in every form of

life is bound up with an indestructible material nucleus, which remains also after the dissolution of the form. Pythagoras called that nucleus the monad. He said that the monad was divine in essence. By that he meant that it is possible for the monad to expand its consciousness and will so as to eventually embrace the entire cosmos.

³The hylozoic term monad can be translated “self-atom”. Monads consist of matter just as everything else in the universe. But, in contrast to all other matter, they are not composed of atoms. They are indivisible primordial atoms; the very building blocks of everything in the cosmos.

⁴We are used to regarding man as a body that (possibly) has a soul. Perhaps we understand that it really is the other way round: man is a soul that has a body; or expressed more exactly: a monad that is clothed in a physical life-form.

⁵If by “death” we mean the definitive end of life, then there is no “death” in the entire cosmos. There is only the dissolution of temporary envelopes for the monads, their life-forms. Since life-forms are composed of cells, molecules, atoms, etc., those forms must dissolve into their component parts sooner or later. Since the monad is uncompounded, however, being just one primordial atom, it cannot dissolve. It is immortal.

⁶Like all matter monads also have consciousness. To begin with and before monads have entered life-forms, their consciousness is only potential – not yet awakened. Life-forms are the necessary instruments which monads need in order to awaken to consciousness and subsequently to develop it more and more. When consciousness awakens and becomes active, the monad becomes a self in its life-form.

⁷The consciousness of the monad develops consecutively in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms. The monad is in every kingdom a unitary and indestructible self. But only in the human kingdom does it become conscious of itself.

⁸The monads are the building blocks of everything. They are the primordial atoms which physical cells, molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles ultimately consist of. Why do we say then that one monad is the inmost nucleus of every life-form? The life-forms consist of nothing but monads, do they not?

⁹The explanation lies in the very different degree of consciousness developed in the monads. Monads that collectively build physical atoms, and thus indirectly the forms of physical matter, have an undeveloped consciousness, relatively speaking. They function as material primordial atoms only. The little consciousness they have is just sufficient to fulfil functions in the life of atoms and cells. A relatively small number out of the immense multitude of monads have reached such a degree of developed consciousness that they can each take possession of a life-form as their own and be its dominant consciousness, its self. But all monads will reach that stage eventually and become selves in minerals, plants, animals, and men.

1.9 The Unity of Everything

¹Nothing exists in isolation; everything influences everything else. Nay, even more: everything mirrors everything else, perceives everything else. With what degree of clarity this is done is another matter and shows the degree of consciousness developed. And “everything” is a being at some stage of development.

²We are all one another in some sense. We all make up one common cosmic consciousness. Like all water-drops are united in the ocean, so the individual consciousness of all monads is united in one common consciousness. This is the cosmic total consciousness in which every monad has an unlosable share.

³The most important thing to know about the nature of consciousness is its unity. There is only one consciousness in the entire cosmos. But we human beings are still too primitive to be able to perceive unity. It is only when the sense of responsibility – not just for ourselves or

our family or even nation, but for all life – awakens in us that we begin to participate in the consciousness of unity. In fact, we are all – minerals, plants, animals, and human beings – included in ever greater hierarchies of life.

⁴If consciousness undergoes an evolution, if monads form hierarchies of life from minerals to men, why should all this end with man? If the self is immortal and develops continually in new forms, then this evolution must eventually carry the self to a superhuman stage. This lies in the future for all monads who are now human. However, there must even now exist such beings as have already attained to superhuman levels of knowledge and ability. That is mere logic. They make up the continuation of the hierarchies of life beyond man.

⁵These hierarchies of superhuman beings are, according to hylozoics, the intelligent powers that direct the entire process of evolution, that set its direction and goal. This idea is not overly fantastic; a modern scientist, biologist Rupert Sheldrake, considers it as a possible hypothesis. The following ideas expressed in his book, *A New Science of Life*, accord with those of hylozoics:

⁶“If such a hierarchy of conscious selves exists, then those at higher levels might well express their creativity through those at lower levels. And if such a higher-level creative agency acted through human consciousness, the thoughts and actions to which it gave rise might actually be experienced as coming from an external source. This experience of inspiration is in fact well known.

⁷“Moreover, if such ‘higher selves’ are immanent within nature, then it is conceivable that under certain conditions human beings might become directly aware that they were embraced or included within them. And in fact the experience of an inner unity with life, or the earth, or the universe, has often been described, to the extent that it is expressible.”

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