

Truth vs. Nonsense: The Battle Rages On

Presentation on December 8, 2013, 4 PM at the Quest Bookshop in Seattle, by Stanton Stevens

Online resources:

<http://www.laurency.com> – All that has been translated into English is available here, as well as the entirety in Swedish.

The Basic Esoteric Dictionary, The Explanation, Knowledge of Reality, all good starting points
http://www.lucitrust.org/en/books/books_on_line - The teachings of the Tibetan, Dwal Khul, via Alice A. Bailey

<http://theosophical.org/> - The Theosophical Society, the first re-introduction of esoterics to the public.

Books:

Only two Laurency books are available in print in English (though all are in print in Swedish). Both are available at Quest bookshop, or can be ordered from the Laurency website mentioned above.

Knowledge of Reality - a review of Eastern and Western philosophies, contrasted with Hylozoics.

The Philosopher's Stone – cosmology, evolution, the stages of humanity, higher worlds

Three new chapters book *Knowledge of Life Four* were very recently translated from Swedish. They are called "Culture", "Religion", and "Theology", and can be found at <http://www.laurency.com>.

Also:

Introduction to Esoteric Philosophy <http://www.laurency.com/L5e/L5e6.pdf>

This article is especially appreciative of American common sense philosophy, mentioned in today's talk. Two quotes can be found at the end of the quotes section of this handout.

See Ed Alden, or ask at the bookshop desk, for a CD with all the Laurency material in English, and many Theosophical texts.

Ongoing:

Rainbow Bridge meditation group - meets every Tuesday evening in Port Townsend.

stanton.k.stevens@gmail.com

Alice A. Bailey study group – Led by Karen Johannsen: ksjohannsen@gmail.com

Quotes:

“A thought is harmless unless we believe it. It’s not our thoughts, but our attachment to our thoughts, that causes suffering. Attaching to a thought means believing that it’s true, without inquiring. A belief is a thought that we’ve been attaching to, often for years.”

— Byron Katie

“Don't believe everything you think.”

— Byron Katie

“I am a lover of what is, not because I'm a spiritual person, but because it hurts when I argue with reality.”

— Byron Katie

“All the advice you ever gave your partner is for you to hear”

— Byron Katie

“The world is his who can see through its pretension, see it to be a lie and you have already dealt it its mortal blow.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Truth never envelops itself in mystery, and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped is the work of its antagonist.”

—Thomas Paine

Knowledge of Life Two, by Henry Laurency

Chapter 9, Esoteric Philosophy

9.26 Knowledge

7 “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it...” It is precisely in order to “eat of that tree” that man incarnates, for it is the meaning of life. Without knowledge, man is little more than an idiot.

Knowledge of Life Three, by Henry Laurency

Chapter 8, Mysticism

8.4 The Original Meaning of the Word “Mystic”

8 To the mystic (emotionalist at the stage of emotional attraction) there are still “mysteries”, since he is reduced to belief, his conviction may then be however strong. To the esoterician there are no mysteries. He has a knowledge of reality, of the meaning and goal of life, the path of self-realization through the application of the laws of life. He knows where he stands on the gamut of development and what remains for him to be acquired to attain the fifth natural kingdom. He does not deny his common sense

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but understands that this sense is the condition of realization, that common sense is the highest sense. He is definitively free from authorities as regards life. He cannot be misled by teachings, prophets of any kind. He has acquired self-reliance and self-determination and is divinely “indifferent to whatever happens to him”, for he knows the Law. He lives to serve mankind, evolution, and unity. He is fully aware of the fact that human beings are at different stages of development and have quite different emotional and mental needs, and he tries to help those whom he is able to help on their levels, not to make one-sided propaganda for some certain view. He sees to it that esoteric world view and life view are made available to the relatively few people who have once been initiates and have therefore remained seekers after the “philosopher’s stone”. They should be given the opportunity of remembering this knowledge anew. But he understands that this view is not for those on lower levels. He tries to help people develop their common sense and not to blindly accept what they cannot understand, which would just strengthen their credulity and obstruct their developing common sense.

8.5 The Nature of Emotionality

4 Life is a dream. Existence is an illusion. People live in appearances. So it seems without esoteric knowledge. Having received the knowledge you stop voicing such quasi-philosophical nonsense.

8.6 The Attractive Tendency

2 People at lower stages of development need idols. Let them have idols of the highest kinds they are able to grasp. When we are filled with admiration for the works of geniuses and the feats of heroes, we are lifted up somewhat ourselves. Life loses something of its greyness and ugliness. Our longing to “become like them” further stimulates us in our striving. Idealism consists in affording us ideals wherever we look. If we discover nothing but ideals everywhere, we are unconsciously made better, more content, more joyous. It increases our confidence that we shall sometime be as they are. You do not “falsify” reality if you refuse to see shortcomings. Everybody knows that they exist without needing to emphasize them. We do not look at the other side of the picture as it is hanging on the wall. Literary realism paints only or chiefly the other side, makes it more difficult for us to see what is good, to seek after what is noble. You do not live in a world of illusions merely because you refuse to live in the slums and on the dark side of life. Those to whom life did not assign the scavenging department need not dig in the dirt and poke about in the garbage. Soon enough everyone will have such experiences if they prove necessary. We need not worry about that. Mankind becomes better by seeing the better and worse by seeing the worse. You do not reach higher levels if you do not see them and do not strive for them.

3 Anyone who wants to reach higher strives to stimulate his attractive tendency, and you cannot do so if you concentrate on everything that causes repulsion.

Knowledge of Life Four, by Henry Laurency

Chapter 2, Culture

2.2 Physical, Emotional, and Mental Culture

5 Mankind lives in its illusions and fictions, in veritable Augean stables of idiotisms divorced from reality, hostile to reality. This is true of theology, philosophy, and not least science. Science can at least defend

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itself saying that it has kept to physical reality and has never claimed to comprehend anything beyond it. The others take their imaginings for reality.

2.34 Culture is Simplicity

1 Culture is simplicity in everything, and the condition of culture is the striving for simplification. Thus it is the direct opposite of what people in all ages believed was the proof of culture. The more they managed to complicate life in all respects, the more they could make the obvious incomprehensible, the greater they thought they were as geniuses and guides to a supreme culture. In our times they overreach themselves throwing the simplest ideas of right and wrong into vertiginous conceptual expanses and making rules and norms and commands inscrutably profound. Have theological, philosophical, and legal concepts of right idiotized them to the extent that they do not realize that everything discussed in terms of morality should concern social problems, how to enable us to live in a society without frictions?

Chapter 4, Theology

4.20 The Church Is the Stronghold of Intolerance

12 The reason why theosophy, ever since it made its first appearance (Blavatsky’s book *Isis Unveiled*), was systematically fought with fury and all the perfidious methods of theological hatred was its pitiless disclosure of the theological falsification of the teaching of Christos and all the infamies of the Church during its entire existence. It may be added that it is better to be “without a sense of history” than to have a totally falsified view of the past.

13 Even today the prayer of humanists is: Good Lord, do not let the Church regain its position of power. The Church never rose above the general level of development. And that level is still part of the lower emotional stage (the spheres of repulsion).

4.21 Theological Ignorance of Life

6 According to the Christian creed, Christos will return “to judge the living and the dead”. These are three serious errors in one single clause. He will return to serve. God can never judge. There is no death. God can never separate anyone from him, since he is one will all. He need not judge, because the law of sowing and reaping sees to it that “justice is done”.

19 ... People have been found willing as a rule to do that which esoterics exhorts us not to do: to keep science and religion in separate thought-tight compartments. They have gone on to apply this principle for so long and so completely that the very absurdity of a dogma has been taken rather as a proof of its credibility.

Knowledge of Life One, by Henry Laurency

Chapter 7, Education

7.4 The Neglected Knowledge of Life

1 School education still seems to consist in cramming perfectly unnecessary facts into the brains of the young. The memory genius still is the real school genius. The truly brilliant minds with latent understanding of life those who find it difficult to account for what it says in the book, difficult to rattle

off their lesson to be learnt by heart (which they have usually forgotten) have no prospects of competing with the “school talents”.

2 How often do we not meet, later in life, individuals who belong to the cultural stage as well as the humanist stage and who can tell about what difficulties they had at school, what a martyrdom their whole schooling was, that their teachers marked them as untalented, hopeless cases that would hardly be able to pass the exams!

3 What are these people, who are tens of thousands of incarnations ahead of their school fellows, to do with all the rubbish taught at schools, which is useless in life and which everybody hastens to forget as soon as he has passed his exams? What use did they have of learning what people formerly believed, how they formerly behaved, what mistaken views they now hold of most things in life?

4 Weed out the nonsense and teach the children what they will need to know when they go out into life! That is something quite different from the learning that every specialist teacher thinks vitally important. As it now is, they stand bewildered before the tasks that meet them when they are to find their bearings in civic life. They are studded like encyclopaedias with worthless facts and make mistake after mistake. That old saw, “we learn not for school, but for life”, is typical for these educators who never knew life. Else they would not have “crammed the kids” with such unnecessary.

5 At school we should learn knowledge of reality and knowledge of life. What that means teachers do not yet suspect, educated as they are by outdated scholastic and formalist methods. The entire educational system is in need of radical reform. But where is the man? A committee will never succeed.

6 Educators have every reason to ponder why knowledge does not lead to wisdom, why people have not even learnt to live together without friction. It is typical of disorientation that they have not seen the importance of these problems. Or do we not think that the problem of learning how to live is a basic one? It is not primarily a matter of cramming the kids with a load of facts that they neither understand nor are able to use. Besides, children find it much easier to grasp perspectives in life (as they are “old souls”) than educators who have drowned in their collections of disjointed facts.

7 What stage of development the child has reached and how we should help him to reach the next higher stage are two questions that the educators of the future will consider essential.

8 The intellect is not as important in life as educators have thought. This overestimation of mentality has entailed a corresponding underestimation of emotionality, which is incomparably more important. It is by mastering emotionality that the individual makes himself a saint and solves all the problems that make people unhappy, disappointed with life, discontented with most things, helpless in their loneliness and abandonment. If children were taught the very simple lessons to be learnt in these matters, then life would appear quite different to them, whereas they now often end up in pessimism, weariness of life (not to say dread of life), and misanthropy.

9 Life is a school at which most people fail. If they have an understanding of life they would instead do brilliantly. We are here in order to develop our various kinds of consciousness, so that they may solve our personal problems in life for us.

10 The wrong thing with most people’s attitude to others is that they do not try to enter into what their fellow men think and feel, their life view. The life view a man has is largely conditioned by his level of development and his destiny in life. Anyone who wants to help people with their life problems must be able to disregard his own view and enter into the view of the man he is going to help. He will not be able

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to help the man by forcing a view on him which he cannot understand and thus cannot use. That is why the fanatic is unfit to be a helper. He has an infallible recipe, the one and only saving remedy.

11 The wise man will take people as they are, will not try to remake them, not try to correct them, not demand from them anything that passes their comprehension. It is a basic error to judge other people from yourself. We are all different, since every individual has his own unique character, his own path of development, his own departments, his own horoscope, his own level of development, his own environment where he grew up, his own family, his own friends, his own experiences of life which in most respects are unique, and his own view of these experiences. The longer the individual goes on developing by working his experiences up, the more “individualized” will he become.

12 Understanding of other people’s individuality is the result of affection, sympathy, desire to understand in order to help, thus the result of studying people for some time. Judging by “the first impression”, by the usual clichés, is evidence of the prevalent grotesque ignorance of life.

13 The possibility of understanding lies in the fact that “the particular is found in the universal”. But then you must have assimilated this “universal”.

14 In life after life we make the same mistakes over and again, until the thousands of similar experiences have been gathered into a fund that is so vast that it can express itself as instinct. In each new life we can make any blunder whatever. If our fund of experience is vast enough, however, we do not make the same kind of blunder in the same life. The understanding of this fact formulated the otherwise baroque saying, “one and none is all one”.

15 It is by making mistakes that we learn. That is also the “method” used by the planetary hierarchy. It puts the individual (and the more often the higher his level) into situations where he is forced to use his emotional and mental powers to the utmost. If he succeeds in these tests, he will be put to new ones. If he fails, then it just shows what is lacking in his equipment. The satanic feature of prevalent theology is that it labels all these more or less unavoidable mistakes unpardonable, deserving eternal punishment. That such things still can be accepted indicates the level of mankind’s mental development.

16 It is important that instead of theological fictions and moralist twaddle people are taught what love and hatred means. An analysis of what lies in the two basic urges, attraction and repulsion, would clarify what should be fostered and counteracted.

Knowledge of Life 3, by Henry Laurency

Chapter 6, Occult Sects

6.19 Speculations of Occultists

11 It is a monstrous fact that people accept lies infinitely more readily than truths. It is the matter of two entirely different kinds of vibrations. Vibrations that accord with reality are part of a “higher octave” and are nothing but harmony as well. At the present stage of mankind’s development, people have no sense of this higher and harmonious.

12 Where new esoteric facts are concerned, the esoterician constantly asks himself: how will this be misunderstood and what new fantasies will it give rise to? For experience has taught him that it must be expected that it will be in some way distorted, misinterpreted, and put into wrong contexts. The esoterician and the occultist do not speak the same language.

13 The esoterician accepts no data on the superphysical but facts from the planetary hierarchy, and in our times, none but those given out by the secretary of the planetary hierarchy, 45-self D. K.

6.22 Illusions of Occultists

7 If we want to develop quickly, if we want to rapidly acquire qualities and abilities, then let us live to serve mankind, evolution, and unity, realize in life universal brotherhood, the love of every living creature, meeting everyone on his level and stop forcing wisdom on those who are unable to understand! By becoming simple, natural, unassuming people and not imagining we are particular or important people we demonstrate that we are not the under the spell of illusions. Self-realization is a process that goes on in the unconscious when you do as best you can without any eager expectation of seeing results. We have many incarnations left to discipleship, and only when we are there shall we know what we should eat and renounce. Until then, we are wise in following the general rules of health that universal human experience has seen to be rational. Cultivating admiration, affection, and sympathy, developing the power of judgment is more important than becoming a vegetarian.

Knowledge of Life 5, by Henry Laurency

Chapter 6, EFFICIENT PHILOSOPHY, or WHAT IS POSITIVE? WHAT IS NEGATIVE?

(also called “Introduction to Esoteric Philosophy”)

6.1 Introduction

1 During the latter part of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th, a number of American philosophers and writers shaped a philosophy of efficiency, an uncommonly unitary system of thought distinguished by optimism, purpose, enthusiasm, joy of life, and the will to win.

2 Even though the authors but incidentally hinted at their sources of inspiration, yet these are clearly traceable to yoga philosophy, ancient and modern theosophy. It is obvious to the esoterician that the doctrine of reincarnation and karma forms the basis of their view of life, although it is hardly ever mentioned. The attitude to life would not have been of such immense, revolutionary importance for these teachers of wisdom, if they had intended it for just one incarnation.

3 This philosophy of life is a popular philosophy in the best sense of that word. It is intended for all, their various levels of development disregarded.

6.9 The Positive and the Negative Attitude to Life

1 A characteristic of the American philosophy of life is its emancipated, sensible conception of right. Abandoning traditional, often incomprehensible, irrational moralisms and taboos as being hostile to life, they have started from an overall view of existence which is entirely defined by its practicality in life. The terms “good” and “evil”, which are misleading on account of abuse, vague, confusing through arbitrary legislation, misleading due to customs and manners, have been replaced; the new terms being the “positive” and “negative” attitude to life.

2 The positive attitude tells us what is sensible and leads to happiness, what is in accordance with the laws of life, what is of advantage to mankind and its development and thus purposeful; the negative attitude, what is irrational or hostile to life. The positive attitude tells us what should be thought, felt, said, or done by anyone who wishes to reach higher stages of development; the negative attitude, what should be avoided by those who wish to lead sensible lives.

3 This philosophy of life does not need to prove that its attitude is rational. That can be ascertained by everybody immediately.