

Book III — On Society

I

- 1:1 Human social institutions, like all other things, are of the Whole, and they cannot be perfect while the Self-realization of the Whole remains incomplete. As men and all other things made by men they can only serve the One Purpose imperfectly.
- 1:2 While men lack consciousness, their society reflects their blindness and their groping; its service fails; it even may become an instrument of retrogression, contravening the Creator's Purpose.
- 1:3 But when men are awakened, then their society should reflect their consciousness and their true reason; it should become an instrument of progress; it should manifest in its structure and in its institutions the Urge toward the One Purpose.
- 1:4 How, then, should men who have been awakened constitute their society so that it may best serve the Creator's Purpose? How should they govern their community, which is the Cosmotheist Community? What should be the forms and functions of their institutions?
- 1:5 We know that men who are members of the Community must keep their stock pure, increase their number, and make every place where they dwell secure for these purposes (On Living Things, 6:2-3); they must strive for knowledge, consciousness, discipline, and service (The Path, 4:3); they must judge themselves by their qualities and order themselves accordingly (On Living Things, 2:3-4, 6:4); and they must elevate the value of their stock from generation to generation (On Living Things, 6: 5).
- 1:6 These four concerns of men - survival, right striving, order, and progress - are the proper determinants of human social institutions. Accordingly, society has four proper functions: defense of the Community and of the stock in which it is based; guidance of the striving of the Community's members; organization of the Community for the maintenance of order and the effective pursuit of its Purpose; and elevation of the value of the Community's stock.

II

- 2:1 The Community defends itself and the stock in which it is based by providing collective means for countering the many dangers with which the individual man alone cannot contend.
- 2:2 The Community must protect the purity and healthfulness of the air men breathe and the water they drink. It must concern itself with the quality of the food they eat. It must beware of every threat to the physical health and fitness of men, and it must have the means to prevent any man from poisoning the common air, water, or land, whether from greed, malice, negligence, or ignorance.
- 2:3 The Community also must have the means to promote those factors in the lives of men which lead to sounder, stronger, and more beautiful bodies; to build health is to defend against illness.
- 2:4 Vigilance against famine and disease, the conservation of common resources upon which the survival or welfare of the Community and its stock depends, and armed protection of the Community against those who would harm it are necessary elements of society's defensive function.
- 2:5 Likewise are those elements concerned with defense against the corruption of men's spirits necessary, for survival depends not on the physical aspects of men's lives alone: Just as the defense of the physical health and welfare of the Community is a proper social function, so is the defense of its spiritual health and welfare.
- 2:6 Thus, it is proper that the Community use all needed means to exclude the purveyors of doctrines which would have men act against the Creator's Purpose, and that it oppose diligently all influences which corrupt men's spirits and turn them from the Path of Life.
- 2:7 If a man teaches others that the mixing of stocks is permissible or that all men are of equal value or that human life has no purpose, then the Community shall make him an outlaw and drive him out.
- 2:8 And, whether a man teaches falsehood or not, if his behavior or his manner of life is such as to lead others astray or to weaken the order of the Community, then he may not remain in the Community. For it is a proper function of society to safeguard the Community against indiscipline as much as against falsehood.

III

- 3:1 The Community guides its members in their striving for knowledge, consciousness, discipline, and service by providing a social framework and social institutions within which each striver learns and grows and is shaped into an effective agent of the Creator's Purpose. These support and direct him; they give him both necessity and means.
- 3:2 Men's knowledge comes not from their individual endeavors alone, but from the collective striving of the race over the endless course of generations. The Community must preserve the knowledge gained in each generation and make it the basis for further gain in the next generation; it must impart to the members of the Community knowledge gained by past generations; and it must facilitate the gain of new knowledge to be bequeathed to future generations.
- 3:3 The Community must provide a framework, which encourages and rewards scholarship, and it must provide the institutions - the libraries, the schools, and the laboratories - within which scholars can seek knowledge effectively.
- 3:4 The Community must concern its self with the imparting of knowledge outside of its schools as well as inside. The Community's customs and practices, its celebrations and festivals, its songs and rituals, all the work and the play of its members should impart knowledge of identity, of mission, and of means.
- 3:5 Above all else, the Community must give direction to the gain of knowledge; for it is not mere knowledge itself for which the members of the Community strive: it is knowledge which leads to understanding, knowledge which complements consciousness, knowledge which abets service of the One Purpose. The Community must ensure that the efforts of its knowledge-seekers are purposeful and coordinated; that every member remains aware of the Community's direction and of its goal in his quest for knowledge, so that what he gains will be the gain of the Community.
- 3:6 Those entrusted by the Community to supervise the guidance of its members, however, must ever be mindful that the path to knowledge takes many unexpected turns. The course of wisdom, therefore, is to avoid narrowness and to be ever ready to accept new ways to the goal, if they were better ways.
- 3:7 Consciousness and discipline, like knowledge, are better acquired with guidance than without, and the Community also must provide this guidance through its institutions.
- 3:8 Many of the same institutions which guide the members of the Community in their striving for knowledge also will guide the awakening of their consciousness and the building of their control over themselves. Schools must impart

consciousness along with knowledge, and they must impart both in a manner, which trains the awakening learners in self-mastery.

- 3:9 Festivals and rituals, likewise, must raise consciousness, and they must demand self-discipline of the celebrants: in practice for song and recitation; in demonstration of grace, skill, and strength. The Community must glory in the self-mastery of its members and in their achievements, valuing these things so highly that all will strive mightily for them.
- 3:10 Service, above all else, requires guidance, so that the service of each member of the Community complements and reinforces that of every other member. The Community itself is an instrument of service; the performance of service is its reason for existence, and its every institution must manifest that reason.
- 3:11 The Community, therefore, must have order and structure: each member has his place in the Community, each place serves its purpose, and the purpose of every place is comprehended by the One Purpose. Each member of the Community serves according to his qualities: one in his way, and another in his - and it is good that there be many ways. But each way is guided; each member accepts the guidance of the Community in the performance of his service.

IV

- 4:1 The Community is not merely the sum of its members, its institutions, and its material assets; it is an organization, and its ability to perform its service depends upon the effective coordination of its components.
- 4:2 Without order, by which is meant the placing of members in accordance with their qualities, the Community is incoherent, and it cannot progress.
- 4:3 Without structure, by which is meant the body of rules defining the relationships between its members and governing its institutions, the Community has no strength, and it will fail.
- 4:4 The qualities of men and women grow from within; but the growth of these qualities is ruled both from within and from without. The Community rules the growth from without, and it judges the qualities according to its standards.
- 4:5 Some qualities are manifest even in an infant. These include beauty, strength, vigor, and fidelity to the physical norms of the stock. Other qualities - intelligence and disposition - show themselves in the growing child; and some become visible only in full maturity, when the mind and character of the man or woman have developed for many years and been proved in attainments and in service.

- 4:6 The Community must judge all of these qualities, throughout the life of each member, and it must act on its judgment in such a way that the order in the Community best serves the Creator's Purpose. It must judge the infant, and decide whether or not his future lies in the Community; it must judge the child, and train him according to his ability; and it must judge the adult, so that he is fitted to his task and to his station.
- 4:7 In every society men are ranked, in high station or low: some by the criterion of wealth, some by age, some by the favor of the mob, some by the qualities of their friends or associates, some by their mental or physical skills. But the Community stands apart from other societies: its members attain their stations, and they ascend from one station to the next, according only to their value in the Community's performance of its service.
- 4:8 In every aspect of the Community's service, those who are ranked high guide those who are ranked beneath them, and the latter return respect for guidance. Authority to guide is granted by the Community to those whose qualities, manifested in their prior attainments and service, provide assurance that the authority will serve well the Community's purpose, and it is granted in a measure corresponding to the assurance provided. With each grant of authority, a corresponding degree of responsibility is imposed.
- 4:9 And these are the four essential institutions of the Community: the family, the academy, the corps of guardians, and the hierarchy.
- 4:10 The family is the institution by which the Community regenerates itself. For the Community the name of the institution has a special meaning. Others may call a man and a woman living together who are beyond the childbearing age a "family," or they may use the name to designate an extended group, including grandparents and other related persons. But by "family" we mean a man and a woman united by the Community specifically for the purpose of engendering and nurturing children, and the children so engendered until they attain adulthood.
- 4:11 Over each family so defined the Community exerts its authority: it judges the children of each family; it limits their number when that serves the Community's purpose; and it sets the pattern for nurturing them.
- 4:12 The Community does these things in order to ensure that the value of its stock will increase from generation to generation, and it charges each man and each woman who are united in a family to keep this purpose ever in mind and to govern themselves accordingly.

- 4:13 The Community honors each man who is a father and each woman who is a mother, and the family in which the two are united, in a measure corresponding to the value of the children they engender; and this value is measured both by the qualities inherent in the children at their birth and by the development and strengthening of their qualities through proper nurture.
- 4:14 The academy is the institution by which the Community educates its members, throughout their lives.
- 4:15 In the academy the children of the Community receive a uniform grounding in language, history, music, and the other elements of their cultural heritage; they are made conscious of the spiritual basis of their existence and of the Cosmotheist Truth; and they begin the lifelong process of building will and character through discipline.
- 4:16 In the academy the youth of the Community receive the training necessary to prepare them for their work in the Community, in accord with their qualities.
- 4:17 And in the academy those adult members of the Community who serve it as scholars carry on their work.
- 4:18 The corps of guardians is the institution by which the Community defends itself against its enemies, both within and without: against those who would harm any of the things upon which the life of the Community depends, both its physical life and its spiritual life.
- 4:19 The men of the Community who are chosen to become guardians shall be trained and proven. They shall come only from among those ordained to a life of service to the One Purpose, and they shall be only of the best of those: of the most disciplined, the most conscious, and the most capable. They shall be the strong right arm of the Community, a sworn brotherhood of sentinels ever vigilant against the enemies of the Community.
- 4:20 The hierarchy is the institution by which the Community orders itself, rules itself, and holds itself to its proper course along the Path of Life.
- 4:21 The hierarchy is a community of priests within the Community; in structure it is a series of steps leading upward. When a man enters the first step, he is ordained to a life of service to the One Purpose.
- 4:22 Thereafter he may be the father of a family, or a scholar in the academy, or a guardian, or a worker in another field of service to the Community, but he remains also a hierarch. As he advances in knowledge, in consciousness, in

discipline, and in service, he is judged by those above him; and, according to their judgment, he may progress upward, from step to step, throughout his life.

- 4:23 The hierarchy guides and judges. It shapes structures and makes or changes rules, when those things are needed; otherwise it preserves what it has made. It looks to the future, foresees the needs of the Community, and strives to fulfill those needs. Above all else, it keeps the Community moving ever upward: toward new knowledge, higher levels of consciousness, greater strength and discipline, more effective service of the Creator's Purpose.
- 4:24 The Community may have other institutions which serve its needs, but it must have these four: the family, by which it breeds and builds itself; the academy, by which it trains itself and grows in knowledge; the corps of guardians, by which it defends itself; and the hierarchy, by which it governs and guides itself.

V

- 5:1 The Community progresses by traveling upward along the Path of Life from generation to generation: it elevates itself in both its physical and its spiritual aspects.
- 5:2 It strives toward higher man by pruning and selecting the stock in which it is based. It orders its men and women according to their qualities, and, in the family, it combines and propagates those qualities that best serve its purpose. It ensures that the children born in each generation manifest those qualities more strongly than those of the preceding generation.
- 5:3 The Community also elevates itself by awakening more fully in each member the immanent consciousness of the Whole and by building in him the discipline needed to render more effective service; through the family and the academy it does these things, and it strives always to do them better.
- 5:4 And the Community elevates itself by refining and strengthening all of its institutions, by striving always to make them more nearly perfect: to make the family an institution able to engender children of higher quality and to nurture and train them more suitably in their earliest years; to make the academy a more effective institution for raising these children to conscious, disciplined, and knowledgeable adulthood; to make the corps of guardians a stronger and more vigilant institution for safeguarding the physical and spiritual welfare of the Community; and to make the hierarchy wiser, truer, and more effective in its guidance of the Community, with each passing year.

5:5 Thus, the structure of the Community, the form of its institutions and the rules, which govern them, evolve, just as does the stock in which the Community is based. But they do not evolve blindly; they are guided with an ever-growing self-consciousness, with an ever-surer sense of direction along the Path of Life, with an ever brighter and clearer vision of the Godhood, which is the destiny of the stock whose members follow the Path.