

CHAPTER 3

A High School Group Discussion

Written on a June day

This is the actual record of a weekly gathering to discuss *Shoho* (the True Law). The lecturer happened to be late that day. So the chief archangel Michael merged into a high school girl in whom the angel Luriel dwelt and who had spiritualistic capacities to speak for him with the author, who was the discussion leader, and the other students in attendance. I would like my readers to understand the seriousness of our study of *Shoho* (the True Law) and the importance of the contents of the law because of its harmony with universal truth.

When a heavenly spirit enters a human, his face somehow acquires a resemblance to that of the merged spirit and a strong aura is emitted from the head. Those close to the possessed person feel an unusual warmth and, along with perspiration, golden granules or flakes crystallize on the skin of those nearby and of the medium, or fall onto their clothes. This indicates that the spirit comes from a high dimension of the Heavenly World, such as an archangel or a dweller in the ninth dimension (Realm of the Sun). When the merging spirit is from a lesser dimension, such as the fourth dimension (limbo)²⁹ or from Hell, the golden granules do not appear and the body feels as though suddenly drenched with water. The difference is immediately distinguishable. When spirits from the Heavenly World are nearby, the

higher the dimension from which they come the greater is their warmth. In the case of the guiding and protective spirits, neither their presence nor warmth will be felt (except when they purposefully make the person aware), unless that person acquires spiritual powers to communicate with them.

Moderator: What sort of being is God? How does God differ from man? Let us discuss the relation of God to man. These are things of which all of us know nothing. We understand only what can actually be seen with our own eyes. We want to know what God is like and how He is related to man, do we not?

Michael: Let us talk of religious faith.

Moderator: I have one more thing to add, please. Most people think that God and man have entirely different existences, that God's existential dimensions are completely different, and that He suddenly appeared from somewhere to create man, and all the things of the universe. Such is the teaching of most religions. Let us seek an easily comprehensible explanation of the nature of the real God and His relationship to nature and the universe.

Michael: There must be complete harmony between religion and science. As we have so often said, many men have expounded various religions but none have succeeded in this. I want you to know that in your present physical existence, the religion you are seeking is a new one, fusing religion with science. What do you think is the answer to God's obscure existence? Let's hear from each of you.

Student A: God is a being who leads us in various ways to improve the world.

Michael: (Turning to another student) And you?

Student B: God is too vague for me to understand.

Michael: Perhaps.

Student C: I myself have never seen God so I can't believe in

Him. If He does exist, He must be as everyone has described Him through the ages.

Moderator: Exactly what do you mean by "as everyone has described Him?"

Student C: Like doing good . . . or representing virtue itself.

Student D: That's my idea, too. Also, God is a being shining with light.

Moderator: Being?

Student D: Well, He's not a person. All nature is God. I can't think of God as a personality.

Moderator: So you believe that God is not a personality, and that nature itself is God?

The almighty and universally worshipped God, who . . . "who" might be misleading . . . does good and leads man to be righteous and serve mankind is nature itself, unrelated to man and not symbolic of man on earth. Is that what you mean?

Student D: I wasn't talking of God being symbolic of man Man is. . . .

Moderator: Nature itself. Scientifically speaking, nature is the basis of man. Didn't man arise and evolve from nature?

Student D: That's why man is called the child of God. . . .

Moderator: Yes. That's the same as saying, nature equals God, isn't it?

Student D: Yes, that's what I mean.

Moderator: God may be abstract but at the same time, God seems to have substance.

Student D: Substance!

Moderator: Something like substance. But we can't talk of God as having personality or being an object of worship, can we? Whether we call it personality or godliness, what we call nature simply exists, does it not?

Student D: Yes.

Moderator: It's not something that does good or leads us to do good or that kind of object, is it?

Student D: No.

Moderator: Just that God exists. We now have two opinions about God, don't we?

Michael: That's right. For example, according to the Old Testament, God, being almighty, made the universe, and all things including mankind, so it is written. Don't you believe that to be most scientifically illogical? Can you honestly believe such a story as that God made the universe, the Earth and mankind? You can't believe it, can you? That's right. Mankind, the universe, furthermore, the Earth, namely, all existing things are things which evolved very gradually.

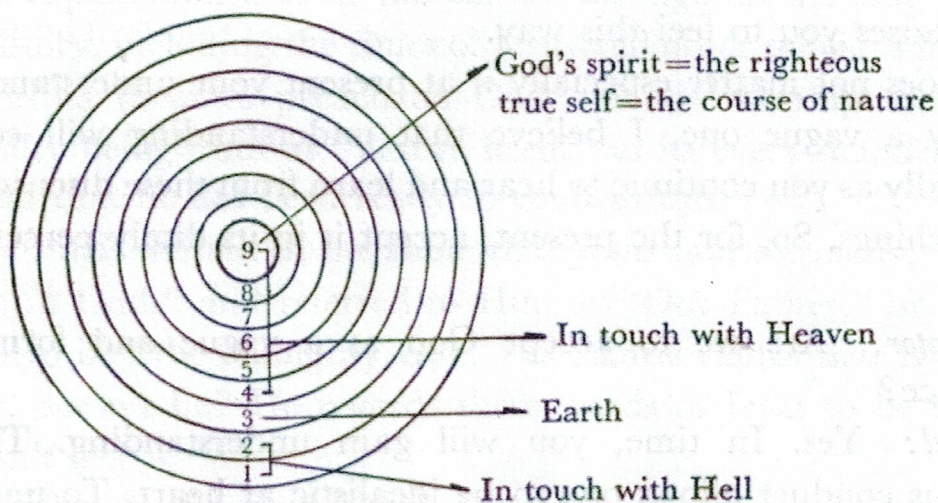
For example, let us consider the evolution of man. The earth was at first a formless hot sphere which had just been born. It gradually cooled and finally organisms that could be called living things appeared. Then there developed some time later, from the invertebrates the vertebrates, then the reptiles and the mammals. Then from the anthropoids among the mammals there evolved man—is this not the teaching of science? This is true as given.

Therefore, from one viewpoint, God is the power which enabled these forms of life to appear in the universe. So the word "God," although vague and indefinable in this manner, can be grasped in this sense. It is unnecessary, however, to define God exactly in this way.

You have spoken of worshiping God as a symbol of man's potential for good. As an object for worship as a symbol, the being closest to representing the power of natural forces in the universe is the one called El Lantie. We also have the concept called "God's teachings," haven't we? "God's teachings" consist entirely of explanations of "goodness." Then you may ask who

seeks goodness. The answer will be that all mankind living on earth does, isn't that right? Man, however, has mostly acted out of a sense of self-preservation, letting his own desires rule his actions. This is why the Earth has become so polluted. Therefore, the "spirit of goodness" or the "goodness of heart" is really "the sense of love of nature."

Nature has various meanings. For instance, there is the nature of trees, grasses, mountains, oceans. Also, there is the "naturalness in men's hearts." What do we mean by this "naturalness in man's heart?" As I mentioned before, man's spirit is divided into nine levels. God's spirit is in the middle.



The Nine Levels of Man's Spirit

I will explain later but to "act natural" or as nature intended means to act according to one's virtue or inner conscience. Let's assume that one's conduct is bad. To give an example, one acts solely for one's own benefit, without thinking of others, and as a result, someone is hurt. Such action is evil. That is, good or virtuous conduct is nothing more than acting in accordance

with the natural order of things. Is the connection between this naturalness of heart and the righteous self difficult to understand?

Student D: Yes.

Michael: Basically, only virtue dwells in man's heart. Such as, when one is good, one feels good. And if one continues to be good, doing good things, one can be continuously satisfied or content. The continuation of such a feeling of satisfaction or content is a natural one; that is, an ideal state of being.

Moderator: Why aren't men who commit evil deeds, happy or content?

Michael: Because their virtuous self or conscience disapproves. For instance, let's assume that you shirked work to go someplace. You would feel bad, wouldn't you? It is your conscience that causes you to feel this way.

It does not matter especially if at present your understanding is only a vague one. I believe that understanding will come gradually as you continue to hear and learn from these discussions or teachings. So, for the present, accept it in its dimly perceived form.

Moderator: Are we to accept God as a vague and formless presence?

Michael: Yes. In time, you will gain understanding. Thus, virtuous conduct allows one to be idealistic at heart. To understand idealism, let us consider nature—the nature of trees and grasses. For example, when they flourish green and luxuriant, unscorched or undamaged by the rays of the sun, and bear fruit in their season, then we have a state which may be called ideal. This is nothing more than nature in its normal form. The condition of ordinary idealism is an integral part of nature's form and virtue or goodness.

The animals, which are a part of nature, and perhaps even botanical life, each has its natural adversaries, so that their

numbers are held in natural balance, neither flourishing nor diminishing to excess. This process of "natural selection" maintains this harmony, and keeps the balance at an ideal number. The virtuous spirit of man also, the harmony between one man and another, is weighed in terms of the mean or moderation. The spirit of nature is harmony. Goodness also is harmony, and thus, can be likened to nature. Is this understood by everyone?

Moderator: Going back to what we call "God" El Lantie does not proclaim himself to be God—you told us that we would come to understand this naturally. He has not taught us that He is God nor that man should consider or worship Him as a manifestation of "God." In other words, I understood through your explanation that he has existed throughout the long course of history, including the times of Jesus and other religious leaders, exhorting them to preach on God, not to "worship as a personality being" but as "nature itself," in its every manifestation—and that he has been ready to confirm this.

Yet, it is written in the Bible that Jesus said distinctly, "Have faith in God," and referred to Him as "Our Father," or meant Him to be "the Almighty God." El Lantie thinks that is a mistake, doesn't he? He regards these words of Jesus to be wrong, doesn't he?

Michael: In Jesus' time, El Lantie appeared as Jehovah. But the lot of common men in those times was miserable and life without hope of salvation would have been unbearable.

Moderator: Those times were extremely unscientific. Men knew little or nothing of science.

Michael: That's right. It was just because people knew so little of the sciences that it was essential for them to believe in an "Almighty God" and He was everything to them.

Moderator: Did Christ say that to that effect only at that time?

Michael: That's right. Jesus taught, "Have faith in God," but

what this was meant to convey was, "Be true to your own pure heart."

Moderator: Jesus also said, "The Kingdom of God is within you," didn't he?

Michael: Yes.

Moderator: It was difficult to understand where Jesus said, "Have faith in God," meaning a personality being in Heaven, and also "the Kingdom of God is within you."

Michael: I agree with you.

Moderator: Ah! Now, it's clear! Do you all understand? During the time of Jesus, the level of culture was primitive and man's understanding was likewise limited. He had not yet discovered the knowledge which comprises the sciences. Man was not prepared to understand the tenets of science or the developments after the coming of man.

Instead of teaching man to believe that nature was the mother force giving birth to all things, or exhorting man to place his faith in his own soul and harmonizing his being with the natural order of things, Jesus taught men to believe in "Almighty" God, whom he represented, with manifestations of great miracles, and to obey His will.

Jesus sought to teach the men of his time of El Lantie, in such a way that they might know he existed. If they followed his teachings and lived with trust, there would be a better world free of suffering. Thus the God of the time of Jesus Christ differs from the God as has been explained to us here. In truth, God is the will of nature and we should all know this truth.

Michael: In the same way, the life of Jesus was not long enough to spread his teachings properly. He lacked sufficient time to make his teachings understood. This was prophesied even during his lifetime. It is written in the Bible that, "While hearing, they do not hear nor do they understand."

Student C: This may be unrelated but, are the Greek legends of the gods true?

Michael: In a sense they are true. You are referring to Zeus and Apollo, I presume. Zeus is a reincarnation of El Lantie. Apollo was that of myself, Michael. (Reincarnation here is meant as the one who was in-dwelt, while alive, by El Lantie or Michael, not spirits reborn into the world in carnal form.)

Naturally, there was none of the frivolity and sensual excess which appear in the Greek myths, as we have received them. In that age, as now, we persevered to explain *Shoho*—the True Law to mankind. People of later ages, created their own myths so the gods were depicted as frivolous and profligate, a conception which still remains today.

Moderator: Is the same true of the legends of the gods in Japan?

Michael: Yes. Amaterasu Ōmikami³⁰ (Goddess of Heavenly Light) is the central figure among Japan's traditional deities. Her story was derived from various sources in legend and allegory which expounded *Shoho*, just as they are taught today. The beings of the Celestial World come in turn, one after the other, to the terrestrial world to teach. Our mission has been to teach the True Law—*Shoho* because of the need for all people living on earth to create their own utopia.

Do you all know what utopia is?

Moderator: An ideal land, is it not?

Michael: Utopia is not a place but an ideal. It is nothing more than living in harmony with nature, following the heart's innate impulse toward good. All who live thus will live in contentment and joy. There will be no pollution or destruction of nature and all humans shall join hands to live together in harmony. There will be no more hatred of one race for the other. All men shall be equal, living with love and tolerance for each other. This is the utopia of which I speak. It is to realize this utopia on earth

even more, and their origins may even have been multiple.

Michael: That's true. Are there any other questions?

Student C: If gods exist, are there also demons?

Michael: Certainly, they exist. They are known as Satans, too. Do you know what demons are? They are, simply, spirits with only evil in their hearts. Their nature is opposite to that of the spirits of the celestial world. They can only think of themselves and of tempting others. That fearsome place called Hell exists only because of them. At present, except for both the Eternal Inferno³² and the *Tengu Kai*³³ (part of Hell), Hell does not exist in Japan. This is due to the efforts of the person, born as the one to be indwelt by Sariel, so that the demon and other evil spirits of Hell were redeemed to dwell in the celestial world.

Moderator: So the Demon called Lucifer indeed no longer exists?

Michael: No. (To the students) Do you all know that a Satan named Lucifer did exist through history for a few thousand years? His name appears in print.

Moderator: (Also to the students) In the Bible. His image also appears in paintings.

Michael: This Lucifer was a person who was dwelt in by an archangel dear to me who was called Luciel in the celestial world. He was of a most kind and pure nature. So was Lucifer under the guidance of Luciel, but he was later stained by various evils of the world and descended to Hell. He has, however, ascended to Heaven, while Luciel has been reinstated as an angel.

Student C: Who causes the fall to Hell?

Michael: One causes one's own fall. A person of evil spirit can not go to Heaven. There is the saying, "Birds of a feather flock together," but if one's spirit is impure, he can not ascend to heaven but can only fall to Hell.

Lecturer: Yes. Like an elevator.

Michael: Wave motions. . . .

Lecturer: Think of an elevator suspended by a spring. The elevator will stop at a place determined by its weight. Those heavily burdened with evil hearts will fall to the lower regions. Those with light hearts will go to higher levels. This is a law of nature.

Michael: Also, there are wave motions. Assume that I call out. That one word creates a wave motion. It is a sound heard riding on that wave motion. But there is also the wave motion of the soul. For instance, we mentioned the nine levels of man's spirit. Let us say that there is a certain man, whose spirit belongs to (i.e., is on the same mental level of) the *Rei-kai*—the fifth dimension (the realm of movie stars and the like) and who is a comparatively self-centered person. A soul belonging to the fifth dimension of the spirit world would be destined to go directly to that realm (*Rei-kai*) in Heaven when the person dies. But if the person had an evil soul, his words and thoughts would travel on evil wave motions connected with Hell, and he would become possessed by its hellish spirits, floating spirits and earth-bound spirits, and descend to Hell after death.

In the same way, if a man's soul belongs to the realm of the Bodhisattva (saints) or *Nyorai* (Tathagata), the wave motions will reach high levels. The spirits dwelling here and the people on earth with spirit power may communicate. Even those without spirit power can receive the protection of their guiding and protective spirits. Depending on the state of the mind, one's wave motions can go to almost any place.

Student T: Just a while ago, you said that Hell had disappeared. What if a man with evil heart died? Would he now go to Heaven, instead of to Hell?

Michael: All such spirits are raised to limbo and put to work

performing severe austerities. To reestablish Hell would only mean repeating old mistakes. It is hoped that Hell need never exist again in Japan. Yet, the spirits of the dead are now increasing in number. These are wandering, lost in this world of the living. Being evil spirits, they are easily drawn toward the wave motions of bad-hearted people and possess them. In order to lessen the number of such vagrant spirits, as well as to destroy the hells of all other nations, a special time will soon be allotted to raise all the hellish spirits of the dead to limbo in Heaven by El Lantie, with the help of Shinji Takahashi and the person in whom Sariel dwells.

Student S: Can't we save such spirits?

Michael: If you were to attempt their redemption, they would possess you. These spirits have forgotten the warmth of human kindness, and are engrossed only in their own salvation. People like you whose auras are very bright are especially easily possessed. But because you have a virtuous heart, they cannot cleave to you for long and will leave in time. You must leave the redemption of such vagrant floating spirits to the beings of the celestial world. If you rashly attempt to redeem them, you will only endanger yourself. You are still unable to differentiate between good and evil spirits. You must abandon this idea. There are angels of light called Benevolent Deities of the various heavens in the East who can perform this work.

Student T: What should one do if one finds oneself possessed by an evil spirit?

Michael: First cleanse your soul. If your conduct has been bad, reflect on this and repent. Then call out to the afore-mentioned deities or the archangels for help. They will remove the evil spirit from you.

Student S: Please teach us the meaning of an angel of light.

Michael: Angels of light are beings of the Realm of the

Bodhisattvas or the Realm of the Tathagatas. Although called angels, they differ from the winged angels who dwell in the realm above that of the Tathagatas. This expression, the angel of light, which means a messenger of heaven, was specially used by Shinji Takahashi. These spirits from the higher dimensions of the Bodhisattvas and the Tathagatas come down to earth and exhort people to preach on *Shoho*. You need not be concerned particularly about the word "angel."

Student C: All people have a greedy aspect and a spiritual aspect—that is, a good side and a bad side.

Michael: Yes?

Student C: Is it wrong to believe that such is man's character?

Moderator: You evidently feel that man's way of life is greed incarnate. There are many aspects to greed.

Student C: Greed. . . . That's right.

Moderator: There is human greed, which is present in all men.

Student C: Well . . . uh . . . to love someone, that is. . . .

Moderator: That is also related to greed.

Student C: Could that be greed?

Michael: Greed can not be a part of the virtuous heart. As I earlier explained to you, it is not part of the ideal, natural order of things. For instance, if you were to really live according to the divine will of God, you would no longer desire to become rich and live a life of ease and luxury, nor would you yearn for luxurious clothes. If you actually live through this experience, you will understand. Adornment of the body and such desires are nothing but devices for self-preservation. That is, it's the attitude that as long as oneself is fine, the well-being of others is of no account.

So it is a mistake to say that to be greedy is only human. Greed comes from the thinking of only selfish people. People are not born greedy. They become so out of jealousy when they

see others around them living a more affluent life. Such people may not themselves be poor; they are probably of the average middle class and envious of the so-called elite or upper class. When a man is envious, even though he may not be particularly needy, it indicates his greediness, does it not?

Although he has enough for himself, he craves things finer than those he already has. It is not natural to seek what is beyond one's capacity to obtain. There are those who turn to theft when lacking money to obtain desired luxuries. Such greed is not part of "goodness."

Man is not born into the world with material possessions. It is a mistake to say it is only human to flagrantly lead a life based on satisfying one's desires. This is no more than an animalistic way of living. This is obvious, is it not? Man is given the power of reason and the ability to understand goodness or virtue. If he lives by good use of these faculties, such selfish desires and cravings will vanish.

You mentioned love, did you not? There are two forms of love. One is agape and the other is eros. The love of eros is, for example, like the love between man and woman, with the emotions of love and hatred in its wake. Let's say that there is a certain couple, who love each other, which is good. But should one's feeling change, that of the other will turn into hate. Such love which can change to hatred is called eros. The love of eros is an insecure one, constantly accompanied by the fear that the partner's love may change. In such love, there is no peace of soul.

If one is to love, that of agape is better than the love of eros. Agape is God's love. To explain, using the same example of the two lovers, even if one person's feeling were to change, the partner would be satisfied as long as the other is happy—such is agape, God's love. It is the ideal form of love.

Moderator: (To Student C) It is not a self-seeking love but love which gives.

Michael: That is exactly right.

Moderator: It's love like God's, which does not seek, but only gives.

Michael: Yes. Love which seeks nothing but gives to others and feels good if all others are blessed. This is agape, the love of God. Do you understand this?

Moderator: In short, that spiritual love is finer.

Michael: Yes. Carnal love serves only to preserve the race. If one knows true love. . . . Unfortunately, you have yet to encounter this true form of love.

Moderator: Another point in question comes to mind—animals exist only to preserve their species and do not know agape, do they?

Michael: That's true.

Moderator: Why is it that unselfish love is expected only of humans? If we say men should live in harmony according to the natural course of things, the "preservation of the species" should be accepted as a mode of human life, should it not?

Michael: Yes, we should accept it but the ideal way is for the perpetuation of the species to be premised on agape, not eros. If earthly love were based on agape, such things as divorce, infanticide and child abandonment would no longer occur.

Moderator: Isn't this expected of us because we are human?

Michael: Yes.

Moderator: Because we can reason.

Michael: True.

Moderator: Since animals cannot reason, aren't their acts regarded as natural behavior, even if they seem to be doing the same things as humans?

Michael: That's true. Humans alone are granted the power

of reason. You should use well your faculty for reasoning and not be carried away by your passions. If you become swayed by passion or greed, linked with the urge toward self-preservation, you will become emotionally involved, inevitably causing your downfall.

Moderator: One thing more. It is my own interpretation but. . . .

Michael: Yes?

Moderator: When men live on the level of animals, they often do things more cruel than animals.

Michael: Yes, that's true.

Moderator: Self-centered things!

Michael: That is because men are capable of thinking them up.

Moderator: Therefore, agape is precious.

Michael: It becomes all the more necessary.

Moderator: It makes a spiritual way of life necessary.

Michael: That's right.

Student D: Uh . . . what is most human, and at the same time, most inhuman. . . .

Moderator: In the sense that the mind is noble, it is human. . . .

Michael: That's right.

Moderator: An attribute possessed by that animalistic being called man.

Student D: Man!

Moderator: It is not enough to be what the world understands man to be.

Student D: Not what the world thinks

Michael: Yes. That is the ideal way to live. Living that way, there is no mental strain, or suffering or anything else. Faith and agape lead to trust of one's fellow man and such cruelties as were mentioned earlier will not occur. Is this understandable?

Moderator: Yes. Evil thoughts will rebound. If one causes others to suffer, he himself will be made to suffer likewise.

Michael: That is true.

Moderator: Wounds are reciprocative, are they not? Preferable to a world of violence is one in which people lead peaceful lives, with consideration for each other. God teaches us this.

Michael: That's right.

Moderator: I made a mistake, using the word "God." I meant a heavenly being teaches us this.

Student D: Speaking of God, can God be considered to be all things since God exists in our hearts and spreads spiritually? Not because God created everything. How shall I say it . . . that around us. . . .

Moderator: No. Didn't we talk about this before? What we call God is our own goodness of heart or one's own urge toward good.

Michael: Therefore, God is not in your heart; rather you yourself possess the spirit of God in the depth of your soul. In due time, as you strip away its veils, one by one, you will come to discover this.

Moderator: Now, let us have Mr. Yonemoto (the lecturer) speak for us. The spiritual phenomenon will be ended now. Let us give thanks to the archangel Michael for talking with us for such a long time.

Michael: You're welcome. I am blessed that I could have this meaningful time.