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II. The Laws of Chaos

T-23.II.1. The "laws" of chaos can be brought to light, though never understood. 2 Chaotic laws are hardly meaningful, and therefore out of reason's sphere. 3 Yet they appear to be an obstacle to reason and to truth. 4 Let us, then, look upon them calmly, that we may look beyond them, understanding what they are, not what they would maintain. 5 It is essential it be understood what they are for, because it is their purpose to make meaningless, and to attack the truth. 6 Here are the laws that rule the world you made. 7 And yet they govern nothing, and need not be broken; merely looked upon and gone beyond.

T-23.II.2. The *first* chaotic law is that the truth is different for everyone. 2 Like all these principles, this one maintains that each is separate and has a different set of thoughts that

set him off from others. 3 This principle evolves from the belief there is a hierarchy of illusions; some are more valuable and therefore true. 4 Each one establishes this for himself, and makes it true by his attack on what another values. 5 And this is justified because the values differ, and those who hold them seem to be unlike, and therefore enemies.

T-23.II.3. Think how this seems to interfere with the first principle of miracles. 2 For this establishes degrees of truth among illusions, making it seem that some of them are harder to overcome than others. 3 If it were realized that they are all the same and equally untrue, it would be easy, then, to understand that miracles apply to all of them. 4 Errors of any kind can be corrected *because* they are untrue. 5 When brought to truth instead of to each other, they merely disappear. 6 No part of nothing can be more resistant to the truth than can another.

T-23.II.4. The *second* law of chaos, dear indeed to every worshipper of sin, is that each one *must* sin, and therefore deserves attack and death. 2 This principle, closely related to the first, is the demand that errors call for punishment and not correction. 3 For the destruction of the one who makes the error places him beyond correction and beyond forgiveness. 4 What he has done is thus interpreted as an irrevocable sentence upon himself, which God Himself is powerless to overcome. 5 Sin cannot be remitted, being the belief the Son of God can make mistakes for which his own destruction becomes inevitable.

T-23.II.5. Think what this seems to do to the relationship between the Father and the Son. 2 Now it appears that They can never be One again. 3 For One must always be condemned, and by the Other. 4 Now are They different, and enemies. 5 And Their relationship is one of opposition, just as the separate aspects of the Son meet only to conflict but not to join. 6 One becomes weak, the other strong by his defeat. 7 And fear of God and of each other now appears as sensible, made real by what the Son of God has done both to himself and his Creator.

T-23.II.6. The arrogance on which the laws of chaos stand could not be more apparent than emerges here. 2 Here is a principle that would define what the Creator of reality must be; what He must think and what He must believe; and how He must respond, believing it. 3 It is not seen as even necessary that He be asked about the truth of what has been established for His belief. 4 His Son can tell Him this, and He has but the choice whether to take his word for it or be mistaken. 5 This leads directly to the *third* preposterous belief that seems to make chaos eternal. 6 For if God cannot be mistaken, He must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it.

T-23.II.7. See how the fear of God is reinforced by this third principle. 2 Now it becomes impossible to turn to Him for help in misery. 3 For now He has become the "enemy" Who caused it, to Whom appeal is useless. 4 Nor can salvation lie within the Son, whose every aspect seems to be at war with Him, and justified in its attack. 5 And now is conflict made inevitable, beyond the help of God. 6 For now salvation must remain impossible, because the Savior has become the enemy.

T-23.II.8. There can be no release and no escape. 2 Atonement thus becomes a myth, and

vengeance, not forgiveness, is the Will of God. 3 From where all this begins, there is no sight of help that can succeed. 4 Only destruction can be the outcome. 5 And God Himself seems to be siding with it, to overcome His Son. 6 Think not the ego will enable you to find escape from what it wants. 7 That is the function of this course, which does not value what the ego cherishes.

T-23.II.9. The ego values only what it takes. 2 This leads to the *fourth* law of chaos, which, if the others are accepted, must be true. 3 This seeming law is the belief you have what you have taken. 4 By this, another's loss becomes your gain, and thus it fails to recognize that you can never take away save from yourself. 5 Yet all the other laws must lead to this. 6 For enemies do not give willingly to one another, nor would they seek to share the things they value. 7 And what your enemies would keep from you must be worth having, because they keep it hidden from your sight.

T-23.II.10. All of the mechanisms of madness are seen emerging here: the "enemy" made strong by keeping hidden the valuable inheritance that should be yours; your justified position and attack for what has been withheld; and the inevitable loss the enemy must suffer to save yourself. 2 Thus do the guilty ones protest their "innocence." 3 Were they not forced into this foul attack by the unscrupulous behavior of the enemy, they would respond with only kindness. 4 But in a savage world the kind cannot survive, so they must take or else be taken from.

T-23.II.11. And now there is a vague unanswered question, not yet "explained." 2 What is this precious thing, this priceless pearl, this hidden secret treasure, to be wrested in righteous wrath from this most treacherous and cunning enemy? 3 It must be what you want but never found. 4 And now you "understand" the reason why you found it not. 5 For it was taken from you by this enemy, and hidden where you would not think to look. 6 He hid it in his body, making it the cover for his guilt, the hiding place for what belongs to you. 7 Now must his body be destroyed and sacrificed, that you may have that which belongs to you. 8 His treachery demands his death, that you may live. 9 And you attack only in self-defense.

T-23.II.12. But what is it you want that needs his death? 2 Can you be sure your murderous attack is justified unless you know what it is for? 3 And here a *final* principle of chaos comes to the "rescue." 4 It holds there is a substitute for love. 5 This is the magic that will cure all of your pain; the missing factor in your madness that makes it "sane." 6 This is the reason why you must attack. 7 Here is what makes your vengeance justified. 8 Behold, unveiled, the ego's secret gift, torn from your brother's body, hidden there in malice and in hatred for the one to whom the gift belongs. 9 He would deprive you of the secret ingredient that would give meaning to your life. 10 The substitute for love, born of your enmity to your brother, must be salvation. 11 It has no substitute, and there is only one. 12 And all your relationships have but the purpose of seizing it and making it your own.

T-23.II.13. Never is your possession made complete. 2 And never will your brother cease his attack on you for what you stole. 3 Nor will God end His vengeance upon both, for in His madness He must have this substitute for love, and kill you both. 4 You who believe you walk in sanity with feet on solid ground, and through a world where meaning can be

found, consider this: These *are* the laws on which your "sanity" appears to rest. 5 These *are* the principles which make the ground beneath your feet seem solid. 6 And it *is* here you look for meaning. 7 These are the laws you made for your salvation. 8 They hold in place the substitute for Heaven which you prefer. 9 This is their purpose; they were made for this. 10 There is no point in asking what they mean. 11 That is apparent. 12 The means of madness must be insane. 13 Are you as certain that you realize the goal is madness?

T-23.II.14. No one wants madness, nor does anyone cling to his madness if he sees that this is what it is. 2 What protects madness is the belief that it is true. 3 It is the function of insanity to take the place of truth. 4 It must be seen as truth to be believed. 5 And if it is the truth, then must its opposite, which was the truth before, be madness now. 6 Such a reversal, completely turned around, with madness sanity, illusions true, attack a kindness, hatred love, and murder benediction, is the goal the laws of chaos serve. 7 These are the means by which the laws of God appear to be reversed. 8 Here do the laws of sin appear to hold love captive, and let sin go free.

T-23.II.15. These do not seem to be the goals of chaos, for by the great reversal they appear to be the laws of order. 2 How could it not be so? 3 Chaos is lawlessness, and has no laws. 4 To be believed, its seeming laws must be perceived as real. 5 Their goal of madness must be seen as sanity. 6 And fear, with ashen lips and sightless eyes, blinded and terrible to look upon, is lifted to the throne of love, its dying conqueror, its substitute, the savior from salvation. 7 How lovely do the laws of fear make death appear. 8 Give thanks unto the hero on love's throne, who saved the Son of God for fear and death!

T-23.II.16. And yet, how can it be that laws like these can be believed? 2 There is a strange device that makes it possible. 3 Nor is it unfamiliar; we have seen how it appears to function many times before. 4 In truth it does not function, yet in dreams, where only shadows play the major roles, it seems most powerful. 5 No law of chaos could compel belief but for the emphasis on form and disregard of content. 6 No one who thinks that one of these laws is true sees what it says. 7 Some forms it takes seem to have meaning, and that is all.

T-23.II.17. How can some forms of murder not mean death? 2 Can an attack in any form be love? 3 What form of condemnation is a blessing? 4 Who makes his savior powerless and finds salvation? 5 Let not the form of the attack on him deceive you. 6 You cannot seek to harm him and be saved. 7 Who can find safety from attack by turning on himself? 8 How can it matter what the form this madness takes? 9 It is a judgment that defeats itself, condemning what it says it wants to save. 10 Be not deceived when madness takes a form you think is lovely. 11 What is intent on your destruction is not your friend.

T-23.II.18. You would maintain, and think it true, that you do not believe these senseless laws, nor act upon them. 2 And when you look at what they say, they cannot be believed. 3 Brother, you *do* believe them. 4 For how else could you perceive the form they take, with content such as this? 5 Can any form of this be tenable? 6 Yet you believe them *for* the form they take, and do not recognize the content. 7 It never changes. 8 Can you paint rosy lips upon a skeleton, dress it in loveliness, pet it and pamper it, and make it live? 9

And can you be content with an illusion that you are living?

T-23.II.19. There is no life outside of Heaven. 2 Where God created life, there life must be. 3 In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion. 4 At best it seems like life; at worst, like death. 5 Yet both are judgments on what is not life, equal in their inaccuracy and lack of meaning. 6 Life not in Heaven is impossible, and what is not in Heaven is not anywhere. 7 Outside of Heaven, only the conflict of illusion stands; senseless, impossible and beyond all reason, and yet perceived as an eternal barrier to Heaven. 8 Illusions are but forms. 9 Their content is never true.

T-23.II.20. The laws of chaos govern all illusions. 2 Their forms conflict, making it seem quite possible to value some above the others. 3 Yet each one rests as surely on the belief the laws of chaos are the laws of order as do the others. 4 Each one upholds these laws completely, offering a certain witness that these laws are true. 5 The seeming gentler forms of the attack are no less certain in their witnessing, or their results. 6 Certain it is illusions will bring fear because of the beliefs that they imply, not for their form. 7 And lack of faith in love, in any form, attests to chaos as reality.

T-23.II.21. From the belief in sin, the faith in chaos must follow. 2 It is because it follows that it seems to be a logical conclusion; a valid step in ordered thought. 3 The steps to chaos do follow neatly from their starting point. 4 Each is a different form in the progression of truth's reversal, leading still deeper into terror and away from truth. 5 Think not one step is smaller than another, nor that return from one is easier. 6 The whole descent from Heaven lies in each one. 7 And where your thinking starts, there must it end.

T-23.II.22. Brother, take not one step in the descent to hell. 2 For having taken one, you will not recognize the rest for what they are. 3 And they *will* follow. 4 Attack in any form has placed your foot upon the twisted stairway that leads from Heaven. 5 Yet any instant it is possible to have all this undone. 6 How can you know whether you chose the stairs to Heaven or the way to hell? 7 Quite easily. 8 How do you feel? 9 Is peace in your awareness? 10 Are you certain which way you go? 11 And are you sure the goal of Heaven can be reached? 12 If not, you walk alone. 13 Ask, then, your Friend to join with you, and give you certainty of where you go./p>

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