

## **PARTING WITH ILLUSIONS**

excerpt from **PARTING WITH ILLUSIONS** by Vladimir Pozner  
AVON Books, 1990, page 311

Parting with illusions is a painful process, for those illusions are drugs to our thought processes. They change our perception of reality--sometimes only slightly, like marijuana and cocaine, sometimes profoundly, like heroin and LSD. We become addicted to illusions, for they give pleasure. But when reality forces its way in, we discover that we are no longer capable of dealing with it. Like crack (cocaine), illusions can kill.

Parting with illusions is painful because there is no medication, no rehabilitation center. You do it on your own, and you do it cold turkey. And because of the pain involved, some of us never do it. The pain is caused by doubting what seemed undeniable, by questioning what seemed sacred, by contemplating the possibility of being wrong.

Hard as it is for the individual, it is even harder for societies. And even more vital. A society based on illusions poses a terrible threat to all of its individual members, for it must in the end fall.

Sometimes, our daily existence so powerfully endorses our illusions that only the keenest minds are able to look down the road and around history's corner.

Imagine asking an Egyptian in the days of the Pharaohs to question slavery's eternal character. Slavery has already existed for some three and a half thousand years, thirty-five centuries. How could anyone doubt what seemed to be the natural order of life? Or you could ask someone who lived during the ten centuries of feudalism whether he doubted that the monarch was anointed by God himself. You would have been considered mad to even think such a thought.

Like nature, human society has its laws and its flaws.

The Middle Ages were in many ways far more oppressive and left humanity a far poorer heritage than slave-owning Athens. But without the Middle Ages, there could have been no Renaissance.

**(LQ COMMENT)** Question Authority. That does not mean to Rebel out of hand, for that is just as destructive as arbitrary and capricious Authority. Rather, Questioning Authority is a course correction for who you are, where you are going, and how you are going to get there. Where you are going depends on several things. Your childhood experience, feelings, thoughts and decisions are based on a small closed system--your family. As a grown person you now have the responsibility to Question how you come to be the person that you are--for your early childhood may miss out developing important parts of your real identity.

If life is not working out well as you live it then question the rules, values and decisions that you collected as a child. To make your life happy and productive you have to keep the good stuff and dump the junk.

**FOR THAT YOU HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO QUESTION AUTHORITY EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY**



**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING  
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**