



The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries I

Edited by Peter Hamilton

August 2004

The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries I

Third Edition, August 2004

Published by

The Upper Triad Association

P.O. Box 807

Clayton, North Carolina 27528

The Upper Triad Association is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit educational organization established in 1974 and devoted to the study and practice of various principles leading to personal and spiritual growth.

www.uppertriad.org

The Full List of Upper Triad Books:

December 2008

The Upper Triad Material 3rd Edition

Articles	3 volumes
Commentaries	15 volumes
Miscellany	2 volumes

The Upper Triad Material 4th Edition

- Introduction
- 1 Purpose
- 2 Consciousness
- 3 Truth and Reality
- 4 Karma
- 5 Knowledge
- 6 Religion
- 7 Manifestation

A Personal Journey 4th Edition

Through the Grace of God 1st Edition

Preface

The Upper Triad Association is a non-profit educational organization, formed in 1973 and formally organized in 1974 by a small group of Christian students dedicated to spiritual growth through the study and practice of various ethical, metaphysical, spiritual, and theosophical principles.

The Upper Triad Material is a collection of over 1,500 articles and commentaries, plus various prayers, mantras, meditation outlines, quotations, synthetic triangles, and keywords relating to various aspects of metaphysics, religion, philosophy, psychology, and theosophy.

Since 1974, the Upper Triad Material has been published and distributed incrementally through the sometimes monthly, sometimes bi-monthly Upper Triad Journal, and has been reprinted as needed in various forms, most recently in a series of topical issues that cover the entire range of material and through the Association's website.

The Upper Triad Material is written by members of the Upper Triad Association. There is generally no author attribution, as most of the material is evoked through prayer and meditation, and the writers have no need of recognition. The material is augmented by a number of articles written by and attributed to associate members, e.g., two series of articles by K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim and an article by Robert L. Moore.

The various articles are relatively easy to read. The various commentaries are relatively more technical and not as easy to read due to the style of writing and the numerous correlations suggested via parentheses. This style of writing is not contrived. Commentaries are simply written according to the flow of consciousness of the writer.

The commentaries are not intended for the casual reader, but for the more serious student who is willing to invest the time and attention to understand both the semantic context and meditative import. Neither articles nor commentaries are intended to be read in any intellectual sense. Many of the

commentaries are incidentally intended to discourage casual reading and to encourage a more deliberate-but-non-linear approach that allows and stimulates a more intuitive reading.

The Upper Triad Material is not prescriptive, but it is suggestive. It is what we understand, at the moment it is written. It is intended to stimulate constructive thinking and foster spiritual growth. Each thought may be accepted, deferred, or rejected, in whole or in part, according to the framework, perspective, values, and consciousness of the reader. The challenge is for the student to read the material meditatively and intuitively rather than intellectually. We believe that self-realization occurs not through any rational or intellectual process, but rather through grace and through the meditative quality of higher consciousness. In the final analysis, it is up to the reader to discern the truth, according to his or her own consciousness.

Third Edition

This third edition is organized functionally and chronologically, in three titles, namely Articles, Commentaries, and Miscellany. The articles are written without much regard for format or length. Commentaries are naturally constrained to one page as originally published. The miscellaneous material is fairly diverse, but complements the various articles and commentaries.

In this third edition, the material is presented with articles and commentaries numbered according to their original sequence, except in the case of some series, where there are intervening articles or commentaries that would disrupt the series, in which case the series of articles and commentaries are presented in their more natural order.

Notes

Commentary Nos. 64, 69, and 74 were written by a student from San Diego, California. To the best of the editor's recollection, the remainder of the material in Commentaries I was written by Upper Triad staff members.

More information on the Upper Triad Association and a complete index of the Upper Triad Material are provided in the Miscellany volume of this third edition and in the Introductory volume of the fourth edition.

Additional Caveat

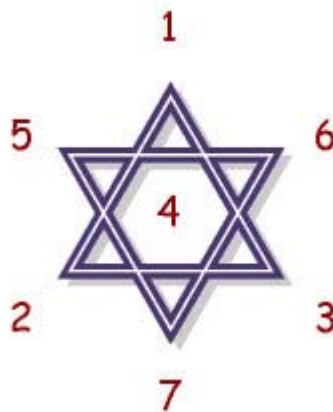
Peter Hamilton is the editor's pseudonym. For questions and comments on the Upper Triad Material, he may be contacted via the following email address.

peter@uppertriad.org

There is a place, deep within the heart, where we touch God, and where God touches us, where human hearts achieve communion, with God, and with one another, there being no difference, no space between us.

The challenge, for human beings, is to find our way to that place. There are signs along the way, left by those who have passed this way and found that place.

In that place, there is no having, no doing, there is only being. What we have, thus has no hold upon us. And what we do, likewise. As stewards we have things. As servants we do things. But in God we are simply being.



Contents I

C 1	The Nature of Truth	1
C 2	The Cultivation of Personality	2
C 3	The Night of Time	4
C 4	Stability	6
C 5	Retrospection	7
C 6	The Monad and its Reflections	9
C 7	Meditation	11
C 8	The Seven Planes	12
C 9	The Etheric Body and Healing	14
C 10	The Trinity	16
C 11	The Astral Plane	17
C 12	Applied Meditation	19
C 13	God	21
C 14	The Seven Rays	22
C 15	The Mental Plane	24
C 16	Glamour and Illusion	26
C 17	Reincarnation and Karma	27
C 18	The Spiritual Path	29
C 19	Harmlessness	31
C 20	The First Ray	32
C 21	Involution and Evolution	34
C 22	The Path of Probation	36
C 23	The Esoteric	37
C 24	The Second Ray	39
C 25	Cheerfulness	41
C 26	The Path of Discipleship	42
C 27	Astrology	44
C 28	The Third Ray	46
C 29	Matter and Energy	47
C 30	The Spiritual Hierarchy	49
C 31	Virtue	51
C 32	The Fourth Ray	52
C 33	Esoteric Astronomy	54
C 34	The Planetary Network	56
C 35	Science	57
C 36	The Fifth Ray	59

Contents 2

C 37	Grace	61
C 38	The Karmic Equation	62
C 39	Religion 1	64
C 40	The Sixth Ray	66
C 41	The Value of Silence	67
C 42	The Twelve Festivals	69
C 43	Cosmic Law and Order	71
C 44	The Seventh Ray	72
C 45	The Hidden Wisdom	74
C 46	The Ancient Mysteries	76
C 47	Criticism and Opinion	77
C 48	Opportunity and Limitation	79
C 49	The Symbolic Language	81
C 50	Crisis and Consciousness	82
C 51	Encouragement	84
C 52	Time and Space	86
C 53	Between Light and Dark	87
C 54	The Limitation of Language	89
C 55	Symbolism	91
C 56	The Atomic Sphere	92
C 57	Cosmogogenesis	94
C 58	Attitude and Perspective	96
C 59	Heredity and Environment	97
C 60	The Dharma of the Disciple	99
C 61	Detachment 1	101
C 62	Inclusiveness	102
C 63	The Bhagavad Gita	104
C 64	Spiritual Masters 1	106
C 65	Mathematical Symbolism	107
C 66	The Glamour of the Path	109
C 67	The Old Testament	111
C 68	Arjuna Vishada Yoga	112
C 69	Spiritual Masters 2	114
C 70	The Light Cone	116
C 71	The Deepening	117
C 72	Genesis 1	119

Contents 3

C 73	Samkhya Yoga	121
C 74	Spiritual Masters 3	122
C 75	Confidence	124
C 76	Philosophy	126
C 77	Genesis 2	127
C 78	Karma Yoga	129
C 79	The Planetary Scheme	131
C 80	Beauty	132
C 81	Happiness	134
C 82	Genesis 3	136
C 83	Jnana Karma Sanyasa Yoga	137
C 84	Meditation Triangles	139
C 85	Spiritual Inertia	141
C 86	Destiny and Free Will	142
C 87	Metaphysics I	144
C 88	Sanyasa Yoga	146
C 89	Group Meditation	147
C 90	The Seal of Solomon	149
C 91	Spiritual Poise	151
C 92	Logic	152
C 93	Dhyana Yoga	154
C 94	The Elevation of the Lower Self	156
C 95	Root Races	157
C 96	Keys to Understanding	159
C 97	Ethics	161
C 98	Jnana Vijnana Yoga	162
C 99	Physical Sublimation	164
C 100	Charity	166
	Index	169

The Nature of Truth

Truth is an indication of reality, via perception, interpretation, and the capacity for understanding. The source of truth (in its unlimited or absolute form) is reality (God) itself, which is found in the realms beyond the illusionary world of personality, beyond the form-worlds of the physical, emotional, and mental planes. As reality existent in the mind of God, truth is untouchable by ordinary consciousness. But truth can be touched in part on various levels short of the constancy of God. Truth perceived on the various levels of consciousness (and through the multifarious perspectives) is truth constrained or limited to that level or perspective. Generally, the higher (deeper) (broader) the degree of perception, the more pure (and greater) is the essence of truth perceived. At the source, truth is a unified and coherent (singular) energy; on human levels, truth is (through dispersion and limitation) fragmented and colored (distorted) by human consciousness.

A particular truth (fragment) can be perceived, interpreted, and understood in a myriad of ways, depending very much upon the quality of mind and the plane or level (and method) of consciousness within which the truth is recognized. The comprehension of truth depends on the spiritual maturity of the student, the degree to which experience has been assimilated and transformed into quality (wisdom). The understanding and interpretation of truth depends also on the type and quality of the soul and personality rays. The highest contact with truth is a direct realization (on soul levels), uncolored by mind or emotion.

But the spiritual student is expected to recognize truth with every experience in life as well as to achieve such recognition on the highest possible plane. Truth can be perceived (by degrees) in response to external observations (sense impressions) though such must be abstracted from the illusion of the lower reality and sense-world. The voice of the silence (the spiritual intuition and the realization (awareness) of the contemplative self) is the internal means of truth perception, through the higher self (soul).

Truth can be found in all things and on all levels and through all perspectives. The aspirant must cultivate the discernment of truth uncolored by reaction to

the personality means. There is no authority for truth. Truth belongs to no one and to no group, but to all. The various personalities and groups are merely instruments and (lower) mechanisms. No truth is exclusive or confined to a single channel. Truth must (properly) be perceived without attachment to the person or organization through which a truth is (superficially) reached.

The truth discerned (and interpreted) by others should be respected. Each person perceives truth in a unique way; such perception varies so much that comparisons and judgments can only be biased (and relative at best). What is truth to one person may mean very little to another. But the student of life can learn from the experience of other persons. The beliefs of others need not be accepted, but those beliefs can be considered and respected. The student should feel no need to impress his or her views upon another, for each must discern truth for himself. Beliefs may be shared, but with the realization that each can only know that truth which is right for himself, and not that which is right for someone else. One should not cling to or be attached to beliefs or opinions; for in spiritual growth, beliefs should become clarified in or replaced by higher truths. An open mind should be encouraged that the student may remain adaptable (but not passive). As the conscious mind is improved, spiritual truths are further recognized and assimilated.

† Commentary No. 2

The Cultivation of Personality

The personality is the mechanism through which the human soul expresses itself on the physical, emotional, and mental planes of consciousness, the form or instrument that the soul inhabits and utilizes during an incarnation or lifetime of experience and expression. Experience is the means by which the life within the form evolves. Evolution proceeds as the soul gathers knowledge and experience. Through assimilation, that knowledge and experience is transformed into wisdom. Wisdom then manifests as talent, virtue, conscience, and consciousness. Gradually the human life evolves from unconsciousness through self-consciousness to super-consciousness.

This evolution advances as the law of action and consequence (karma) provides the experiences and opportunities necessary for further growth, experiences

earned through physical, emotional, and mental activity. The greater the understanding of spiritual laws such as the law of karma, the easier it is for the spiritual student to consciously direct the personality actions in harmony with these laws and evolve more readily, smoothly, and usefully.

In order to make the best use of the opportunity for experience (incarnation), the personality must be properly cultivated. If the personality is finely tuned to the wisdom, intuition, and guidance of the soul, then the personality becomes a more perfect instrument for soul expression. The personality should not be suppressed or denied, but should be purified and uplifted to a greater usefulness. The personality should be used intelligently and be well taken care of. The instrument serves best when in full mental, emotional, and physical health. The fine-tuning or cultivation of the personality is a continuous process of purification, discipline, and upliftment. As the personality becomes purified it lends itself more and more to the spiritual discipline of the higher self. The instrument must be encouraged to cooperate with the soul, and will eventually become so aligned with the soul, that the soul energies will flow through the lower self (personality) unimpeded.

The purification process begins with right thought, right feeling, and right action. As thoughts and feelings and behavior are disciplined and intelligently directed, the entire personality is brought into a single integrated and purified vibration (quality). This process of integration and refinement is a prerequisite for alignment with the overshadowing soul. The virtues and the qualities of the spiritual life (as well as can be recognized) must be unfolded within the personality expression. This is not an instantaneous or rigid process. It is a gradual cultivation and upliftment performed wisely and naturally (albeit requiring significant effort and determination). Observation and self-analysis are keys to the cultivation; for limitations, vices, and weaknesses must be recognized in order for them to be transformed into freedoms, virtues, and spiritual strength. Compensation should be made for misplaced energies, and adjustments made to correct inappropriate action, as each human being is responsible for his own behavior as well as the circumstances. And through the recognition of right action, that behavior should be strengthened.

The fine-tuning process is a rather personal one, directed, inspired, and assisted (subjectively) by the God-self within. Each person lives in a different

perspective, learning from different experiences, though each (spiritual student) should strive to broaden his perspective within the Self and live the life in harmony with the spiritual laws as he understands them. With consistency, the aspirant develops a refined vehicle for experience and service according to earned talents, qualities, and opportunities.

† Commentary No. 3

The Night of Time

According to the demands of evolution, the soul periodically descends into the world of matter, reflecting itself into the lower, objective world. That incarnation of the soul into the physical, emotional, and mental realms is sometimes referred to as the night of time. During the night of time, the personality consciousness is normally quite limited or constrained to the relative illusion (darkness) of separated existence in time and space.

The soul as the unit of human evolution gradually evolves from emptiness (unconsciousness) to completion. It is only during the later stages of the path that the soul has unfolded sufficiently and the personality is sufficiently responsive to the soul, that soul-consciousness can be achieved. Normally there is no recollection of previous lifetimes (nor is such recollection necessarily an indication of soul-consciousness), but the conscience that is the storehouse of experience, and the virtues and talents that have been earned are usually present, at least unconsciously. For most, it would be a hindrance and a distraction to have conscious knowledge either of past lives or of the probable future. Besides, it is the essence of that previous experience that matters, and that essence exists in the soul as quality and character.

The spiritual student learns to live quietly and peacefully in the eternal present, without clinging to the past or basing happiness on what the future may bring. True happiness is a quality of the timeless self (soul), an expression of the God within, an attitude of mind. Only when the timeless life has been achieved can there be true freedom and happiness. The purpose of life is not to escape from the world, but to evolve beyond the limitations of the world while retaining the ability to live and work in the world with true freedom (wisdom).

The truly free soul works unhindered through a purified personality nature. Circumstances of time and situation should be taken in stride, without distraction. The student need not be discouraged by world conditions or the particular situations and circumstances to be faced. As the spiritual student progresses, the hold of the various illusions (time and space, duality) lessens and the student is gradually led out of the darkness into the light of greater existence, onward and upward toward higher consciousness and unity of life. The esoteric darkness (the limited awareness of the personality in the lower worlds) is overcome and the soul is then able to function more effectively in both worlds (objective and subjective). Having completed the evolution (relative perfection) in the physical, emotional, and mental planes, the soul then moves on into a higher spiral of evolution. But in order for the student of life to reach that state of relative perfection, the student must assimilate the experience and knowledge gained in the lower worlds and enter into the timeless (eternal) perspective (which is immortality).

The night of time for an individual may be measured in years, but the night of time for humanity is measured (in time) by millennia. The night of time for humanity becomes increasingly important as the spiritual student deepens and as the unity of humanity as one life is gradually realized. There is then increasing concern for humanity (and the greater incarnation). The soul is a unified onlooker who views the unfolding events and experience in time and space as an essential part of the timeless plan for the evolution of human consciousness. And it is as that soul that the individual truly contributes to the consciousness of humanity. As life and all events are seen in terms of consciousness (rather than in terms of individuals in time and space), then the night of time shall become a dawn of continued awakening for all of humanity.

Stability

The aspirant and the disciple are often tested through challenging circumstances and situations that (if the events are handled wisely) will result in greater stability, serenity, strength, and the capacity for effective service. The disciple can hardly afford to be disturbed in the emotional or mental bodies, for there is a great deal of work to be done that requires stability (clarity) of mind and emotion. The spiritual student should recognize the need for stability, that it might be properly incorporated into the daily life. The disciple must remain calm in the face of the most difficult circumstances, maintaining strength and spiritual purpose, not allowing any impairment of usefulness and effectiveness by being out-of-touch with the higher self. The disciple is then one who is dependable in the service of the hierarchy and of humanity.

Crises and points of tension are often the stepping-stones to greater spiritual strength and usefulness, for many weaknesses come to the surface that might otherwise remain unrecognized. And in the points of tension (in the spiritual sense) are to be found the spiritual energies with which the student can overcome and uplift those weaknesses or limitations. The crises that are faced by individuals and by groups are mostly tests and opportunities for spiritual growth through change. The value of each trial depends a great deal upon the frame of mind and the way in which the events of the life are approached.

The stability of the disciple implies the state of being firmly established upon the spiritual path and in rapport with the soul. The serious aspirant cannot afford to have a wildly fluctuating emotional (astral) body; such a state must be properly dealt with (brought under control) if the student is to attain discipleship. Instability feeds glamour and illusion, both potent enemies of the student upon the path. There are also psychic instabilities that are often the result of premature psychic development; that is, the development of certain faculties without requisite spiritual maturity. This often leads to serious instabilities, vulnerabilities, a lack of control, and a lack of understanding of the resulting phenomena. The serious spiritual student does not tamper, nor is he concerned with phenomena; he cultivates stability, serenity, strength, and the capacity to serve effectively.

Stability is also a valuable keyword in the life of humanity, for mankind also faces crises that must be dealt with wisely in order for the race to evolve in accordance with the divine plan. Humanity lives in an age of changes, changes that should bring freedom from the crystallizing forms and glammers that are limitations. But in changes there are also dangers, for man has a tendency to over-react, and there can be no real virtue in any extreme. Stability goes hand in hand with moderation. The aspirants and disciples of the world are expected to continue to play a significant and moderating role in the days to come. In spiritual strength and stability will the light of encouragement shine for those who become emotionally or intellectually unsettled by events, for those who are not yet secure in the sanctity of the higher self.

Man is today creating the crises of tomorrow, both in the individual sense, and in the life of humanity. So it is important for all to behave, feel, and think positively and constructively, for in action today is generated the vast sea of karmic energies that will subsequently visit humanity. May deeds and thoughts of love encourage this day (age) of changes to manifest constructively, that all may be free to grow together, as one humanity.

† Commentary No. 5

Retrospection

The simple (profound) spiritual discipline (exercise) of retrospection is attributed (exoterically) to Pythagoras. The object of the exercise is to live day by day the purgatory and first heaven experiences that normally occur upon the death of the physical body. By consciously living these events daily the student not only passes more rapidly into the second heaven, but the capacity to experience and to assimilate experience during the present life is expanded, thereby enhancing the usefulness and effectiveness of the incarnation.

Hell and purgatory are regions of consciousness in the astral plane where, upon death, the individual experiences a panorama of the past life with a feeling that purges the base desires and encourages the correction of the weaknesses and vices which hinder progress. This feeling is wisely adapted to that purpose.

The first heaven is a higher region of consciousness in the astral plane where, similarly, another panorama of the past life is experienced with the purpose of strengthening the good that was manifested and assimilating the virtues and talents that were developed. The talents and virtues and conscience are the qualities that are incorporated into the higher self (soul), to be available appropriately in the next incarnation. After the experiences of purgatory and the first heaven, the explicit memories of the incarnation are left behind and only the conscience (and quality) is taken forward.

The exercise of retrospection is usually performed daily in the evening just before passing into sleep. The events of the day are recalled and visualized in reverse order, beginning with the most recent experience and working backwards in time toward the morning's awakening. Each event is analyzed for the quality of behavior, words spoken, feelings, and thoughts, and especially for the quality of motives. Those events or motives that were unfortunate or improper should be noted, and repentance, reform, and correction enacted or planned wherever and however it may be appropriate. These are potent factors in the fulfillment of karma. Wherever the student has been wronged there should be forgiveness, and wherever injury has been caused there should be compensation made. Weaknesses should be uplifted into virtues, by implementing corrective action. Those events that were of a positive nature should also be noted, that qualities might be strengthened. Thus is the student judged (by himself) on all points, accepting both blame and praise wherever it is due, without punishment and without inflating the ego. The actions of other persons should not be judged; retrospection is a self-centered (but necessary) exercise.

The discipline of retrospection can also be extended in two directions. Over a period of time, the student can systematically review the events and experiences of the lifetime (in reverse order), beginning with the day before the exercise was implemented daily and ending with the earliest childhood memory. As much detail as possible should be recalled, as in fact, retrospection is also a training of the mind (through observation and discernment). When the student becomes quite proficient in this exercise, it can also be extended to a minute-by-minute self-evaluation, instead of (or in addition to) a daily routine. The student can then be continuously and consciously aware of his behavior, feelings, thoughts, and motives, while responding with evaluation and adjustment at that time.

Through this simple exercise, the energies of the soul are brought to bear upon the personality, as the concrete mind is trained and the abstract mind is exercised. Through observation, recognition, awareness, and adjustment, considerable progress can be made upon the spiritual path.

† Commentary No. 6

The Monad and Its Reflections

The monad is the highest aspect of the human being, one of three major levels. The other two levels are the soul and the personality. The monad is the divine spark of God whose presence cannot even be glimpsed until the student has attained lasting soul-consciousness. The monad is the father or Shiva aspect which expresses itself through the upper triad of atma-buddhi-manas. Atma is the spiritual will; buddhi is the spiritual intuition; and manas is the abstract or higher mind. The reflection (manifestation) of the monad on those three levels of consciousness is the soul or higher self. The monad is constantly en rapport with the godhead, while the soul is the descent (reflection) of the monad into matter (consciousness).

The soul is that immortal essence that chooses to incarnate under the law of karma, time and time again, through the various personality rays, for the purpose of gaining experience and thereby evolving. Due to the interrelatedness of all life, the evolution of the soul contributes also to the evolution of the greater life. The soul is that essence which transcends the earthly worlds of consciousness and is the totality of individual experience, talent, virtue, and conscience. The soul is the individuality, and it functions through several vehicles or bodies. Each vehicle is attuned to a different rate of vibration of matter. These vehicles are the reflection of the soul into matter (which is the second reflection of the monad) and comprise the lower triad. With the dense physical body, the lower triad becomes a quaternary. The three aspects of the lower self or personality are the concrete mind, the astral or emotional body, and the energy body (the etheric or vital body). These are the instruments for the expression of the three lower human principles: mental, emotional, and physical. The physical body is simply an outer covering for the etheric body.

The personality (lower self) is the three-fold vehicle for experience during a physical incarnation. It is the creation (reflection) in matter by the soul. Upon the death of the dense physical body, there is normally a withdrawal of consciousness from the physical onto successively higher levels. The personality vehicles (etheric, emotional, and mental) are successively discarded and disintegrated. The individuality (the soul) then stands free of those earthly limitations and rests. After the proper assimilation of the experience of the past life, and after due preparation, the soul seeks another birth for further experience and expression.

A new personality is built or created by the soul that incorporates improvements in the physical, emotional, and mental characteristics (as earned or developed). These improvements are based on the past experience and karma of the soul, and the resultant personality is (of course) subject to the karma that has been evoked for the individual and for the environment of the incarnation. But the form should be distinguished from the life within the form. The form is matter, and the life within the form is (a much higher) consciousness.

The personality is energized or organized matter with a rather primitive consciousness. The soul is the higher consciousness and individuality, while the monad is pure spirit. The monad and the soul are both sexless; it is only the personality that manifests as male or female. Each aspect (sex) contributes experiences to benefit the evolving soul. Often the soul will incarnate alternately male and female, or at least according to some pattern. The soul will normally incarnate a number of times in each sub-race of each of the great root-races, and through various national environments, each with its own special contribution of experience.

Meditation

There are many varieties and stages of meditation. Some forms of meditation involve the personality; others may involve both the personality and the soul. As an exercise, meditation may include prayer (invocation), visualization, concentration, and/or contemplation. As a spiritual exercise, meditation is a conscious act of participation in being. As a way of life, the meditative disposition is the manifestation of the soul through the conscious personality.

The (spiritual) meditation exercise is normally centered in either the heart (mystical, aspirational, or devotional) or in the head (mental). The higher form of meditation is balanced between the head and the heart and involves the intuitive realization of the soul or higher self. Meditation in the heart is preferable until the strong (stable) (mature) devotional nature has been developed. Such a nature is characterized by humility, love, and goodwill; and is accompanied by a serious and sincere spiritual purpose (motive).

Meditation is the means by which the personality is made receptive and responsive to the soul. As a result of proper meditation (and discipline), the abstract ideas and intuition of the higher self are brought into the lower mind (and brain). One of the objects of meditation is the integration of the lower self and the alignment of personality and soul, resulting in stability, serenity, spiritual strength, and service (spiritual purpose). Once the rapport of mind and soul has been established, meditation becomes a process of renewal (soul contact) and manifestation (of soul energies).

Meditation requires a measure of self-control of the physical, emotional, and mental natures, and should encourage such control. Meditation can be dangerous without spiritual motive, as the resulting stimulation requires adjustment and progress in the spiritual life. Meditation should be prompted by the need to find the Self and to become that Self. The approach to meditation should be well-grounded in common-sense. Meditation should be a comfortable, yet disciplined process, without extreme or excess. Having attained some alignment of soul and personality, the spiritual student utilizes daily meditation to strengthen the spiritual life. The object is to live in the

higher consciousness consistently and continually, while simultaneously working through the lower instrument (mind and body). The meditative life does not imply isolation or withdrawal from the outer life; it simply means living a life of wisdom (spiritual quality) without being absorbed in the lower world.

There are many formal and informal methods of meditation, both heart-centered and head-centered. Care should be taken to determine the method and application best suited for the individual. Meditation is both personal (individual) and impersonal (beyond the personal); there is no one method that is right for everyone. Meditation normally requires quiet and comfortable surroundings. A candle may be lighted during the meditation, as it has a stabilizing effect and symbolizes the willingness of the lower self to cooperate with the soul. The back should be aligned vertically, and the physical body, the emotions, and the mind (in turn) should be stilled. No meditation should be a passive experience; while maintaining control of the lower self, the mind can participate in the higher consciousness. The meditation period should not be too long or too short. A short daily meditation is far better than a longer occasional meditation. Consistency of time and place is definitely helpful. A daily rhythm of soul-contact is needed in order to be spiritually effective. The experienced (spiritual) meditator learns to carry forth the meditation energy (light of the soul) into the daily life.

† Commentary No. 8

The Seven Planes

The world of human existence encompasses seven major levels or planes of consciousness. The first (highest) plane is the source of human existence; the second is the plane of the (human) monad; and the lower five planes form the present domain of human evolution and range of human consciousness. Most of humanity express themselves only on the lowest three levels, and have awareness on only the lowest (physical) plane. Each of the seven planes has seven subdivisions (sub-planes). Each of the forty-nine sub-planes is formed of matter of a particular density and polarization. Each successively higher sub-plane is formed of finer or more subtle matter. Each plane is a world or dimension in itself, having a distinct polarization, yet interpenetrating the other

planes. There are no "higher" or "lower" realms, simply many coexistent dimensions. The terms "higher" and "lower" are used to refer to the relative quality (consciousness) of the matter.

The lowest world (the seventh or physical plane) has two major divisions. The lowest three sub-planes comprise the dense physical or chemical region that is characterized by the physical matter known to modern science. The upper four sub-planes comprise the etheric region. The matter of the four ethers is quite physical, but it is of a much finer nature. The etheric region is a world of physical plane forces and energies. Much of the phenomena in the physical world finds its force or intermediate cause in the etheric region. In fact, most of the physical life support processes are etheric functions.

The next higher plane (the sixth) is called the astral or emotional plane (the desire world). It is characterized as a sea of emotional energies; it also has seven subdivisions of matter. The lower sub-planes are of the coarse matter of the unpleasant (selfish) emotions. The higher sub-planes are of finer matter of the more mature emotions. This sea of emotional energies is interpreted through color by those who have astral vision. Each hue or tone indicates a quality of emotion. But the clairvoyant vision is quite colored by the individual's own emotional nature and perspective. The astral plane, like the etheric region of the physical plane, can be considered as an energy field. The astral world is governed to a high degree by magnetic attraction and repulsion; similar emotions are attractive and dissimilar feelings are repulsive.

The world beyond the astral is the mental or manasic plane (the fifth). It has two major divisions: the lower region is that of concrete thought and the higher region is that of abstract (formless) thought. The loftier thoughts find themselves in the higher sub-planes. The fourth world is the plane of buddhi or intuition. Above (beyond) the buddhic plane is the plane of atma (spiritual will) or nirvana (the third plane). The second plane is the home world of the human spirit, the monadic plane. And finally, the highest plane of the seven is the world of God, the relative source of all lesser manifestation.

The physical plane is characterized by time and space. In the astral world there is only a slight, rather vague correspondence to time and space. Beyond the astral, time and space have little significance, if any. The essence of each plane

is energy; spirit and matter are the two relative poles of energy. Spirit is the highest aspect of matter, and matter is the lowest aspect of spirit, by degrees. Matter is a momentary expression, while spirit is eternal. The highest worlds are created first, the lowest worlds last. The lowest planes are the first to disintegrate and pass into obscurity, while the highest planes are the last. The septenary manifestation of matter comes and goes with the breath of Brahma, but God, the absolute, persists.

† Commentary No. 9

The Etheric Body and Healing

The etheric (vital) (energy) body of man is a vehicle of consciousness that interpenetrates and sustains the dense physical body. The etheric body is often called the etheric double, for it is the same shape and slightly larger than its dense physical counterpart. The etheric body is like a sea of sparkling points, a web of dynamic energy. Each spark or point of light is a focus for vital, sustaining forces to flow into the dense physical body.

The etheric or energy body has four levels, corresponding to the four etheric sub-planes of the physical world. The forces of the etheric body on the first or reflecting ether provide a vital function in relation to memory, for the reflecting ether is a realm of impressions in the form of etheric energies. The second or light ether is the realm of sense perception. The forces along the negative pole of the light ether permit the functions of sight, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. The second ether forces of the etheric body also generate the blood heat by flowing along the positive pole. The forces of the etheric body in the third or life ether are the forces of propagation. The forces of the fourth or chemical ether provide for the growth and maintenance of the dense physical body. Without the etheric double there could be no growth, no motion, and no vitalization of the physical body; the cells of the physical body would simply die without replacement.

The work of the energy body is continuous; however, during the active waking state, the energy of the physical body is expended faster than the vital forces can keep up (usually). Thus the individual becomes tired and must sleep. During sleep, the vital forces of the etheric body can work unimpeded by

physical, emotional, and mental activity (which expends energy), and the physical body can be restored to its normal strength for a new day of experience. This action of the etheric body is very much related to the health of the physical body. The vital body is actually the body of causes as far as the dense physical is concerned, for the health of the etheric double determines (controls) the health of the dense physical. Karmic patterns appear in the etheric prior to manifestation in the dense physical instrument. Medical science will be greatly enhanced when treatment is performed on etheric levels (and on other levels of causes) rather than on dense physical levels (which are levels of effects), and especially when medical science has an appreciation for the law of karma.

Psychic or spiritual healing is generally performed on etheric or astral levels, for a dense physical healing requires etheric adjustment, and an etheric healing requires an astral adjustment. Similarly, an emotional healing requires an adjustment on the next higher level (which is mental). The causes of disease in a body, whether directly or indirectly karmic, will be found on the next higher level of consciousness. Thus, mental or emotional problems can cause a chain reaction of disease on lower levels. The effects may be displaced in time, but nevertheless remain related.

The spiritual student is gradually trained to look for and recognize the causes (on various levels), rather than to look only at the effects. Any form of disease can be traced back to some fundamental (general or specific) cause. The quality of thoughts and feelings usually has a rather direct effect upon health. Though the individual cannot interfere with karma, he can consciously adjust his mental, emotional, and physical behavior for the better, which should certainly improve his health and simultaneously enhance his ability to fulfill karma and to respond to dharma in a more enlightened manner.

The Trinity

Before each great day of manifestation, God exists as the undifferentiated or absolute universe. As the manifestation of the cosmos proceeds, God experiences on cosmic levels the first differentiation into the three persons or aspects of the trinity. The first aspect or person is called (variously) the first logos, the first ray, the father, or Shiva. The second aspect is called the second logos, the second ray, the son (the cosmic Christ), or Vishnu. The third aspect is called the third logos, the third ray, the holy ghost (the holy spirit), or Brahma.

From these three aspects proceed further differentiation until the universe has achieved manifestation in the broadest sense. The trinity constitutes the highest level of manifestation, and corresponds directly to the three major rays (streams of energy) of aspect. Everything on any differentiated level of manifestation or experience can be related through correspondence to one or another of the three rays of aspect.

The first ray is characterized as the will of God or the plan of God, on the highest level. This first aspect is pure spirit and does not descend into the lesser worlds. It is the father or power aspect that overshadows the manifested universe. The father (Shiva) aspect is the transcendent God that remains in the highest heaven world, just short of manifestation. The second ray is characterized as love-wisdom on the highest level. This second aspect is consciousness in all of its variations and is the product of the interaction of the father (spirit) and the mother (matter). Thus the son is born and consciousness evolves through manifestation, eventually to be absorbed into the realm of pure spirit. The cosmic Christ (the second ray) descends into the lesser worlds carrying with it all the sparks of divine life (consciousness) that constitute the spiritual essence of all lives. The second ray is the cosmic Christ (Vishnu) whose consciousness pervades all life throughout the worlds of manifestation, the God immanent in all of life and consciousness. The third ray is characterized as intelligent activity, as manifestation itself (matter or form in all worlds or levels). The third ray is the great breath of God that is God

immanent in matter. All things (spirit, consciousness, or form) are merely a part of God in manifestation.

Analogously many lesser lives within God also express themselves as trinities as the higher trinity is reflected into them (as above, so below). Man, for example, exists on three levels: the father aspect is the human monad. The Christ aspect is the human soul (the seat of human spiritual consciousness), the incarnation of the monad on causal levels. The third aspect is the human personality that is the incarnation of the soul into mental, emotional, and physical matter. As a person evolves, he purifies the personality-instrument, reaches up, and finally touches the soul and slowly becomes that soul, the Christ-aspect or God within. Later still, that soul finds union with the transcendent aspect, the monad on its own level.

As the lesser aspects of manifestation are gradually perfected, the fruits of experience are absorbed by the higher aspects. Experience (knowledge) is transmuted into love (wisdom). Thus the higher life, containing the myriad of lesser lives, evolves also. As the great day of manifestation approaches its conclusion, the myriad of differentiated lives and forms are gradually reabsorbed into the trinity on that level, and the three logoi are reabsorbed into the absolute or unmanifest, to await another great day of experience and evolution through manifestation.

† Commentary No. 11

The Astral Plane

The astral plane is the region of consciousness that exists between the physical plane and the mental plane. The astral (emotional) world is coexistent with the other planes through interpenetration. Atoms of astral matter are similar to physical atoms except that they are much finer in texture, vibrate at a different (higher) level (octave), and are polarized quite differently. The astral realm (the desire world) is a sea of fluctuating emotional energies (feelings). The lower sub-planes of the astral world are vibrations of rather coarse, unrefined, selfish, materialistic, or unpleasant emotions (relating closely to the physical world). The higher sub-planes are vibrations of the more pleasant emotions and of aspiration and devotion.

The astral world is also the world of dreams; for when a person sleeps the desire body (astral body) is utilized to reflect the sights and sounds of the astral plane, though in a rather illusionary manner. Astral vision differs markedly from the physical vision, and considerable training, discipline, and experience is required before any meaningful information can be brought back from the astral plane. Psychics with the astral vision (clairvoyance) or hearing (clairaudience) are usually untrained and their perceptions are normally quite colored (distorted) by their own personality thought-forms and feelings. The desire world is filled with glamour (illusion on astral levels) and therefore most astral impressions are quite misleading and extremely unreliable. Only where the emotions are purified and the thinking is refined (clear) (without any bias) can the individual be properly trained to function effectively and consciously on the astral plane. The serious spiritual student is hardly interested in astral phenomena, unless he has been properly trained to work constructively in the astral body. The serious student is not really interested in phenomena at all.

There are three kinds of entities which function (consciously or unconsciously) on the astral plane: human, non-human, and artificial. Each kind has a variety of types and levels. Humans may function on the astral plane during sleep or after death, or unconsciously (or consciously) with the generation of feelings, desires, and emotions. There are many non-human types who live and work on astral levels; some are rather unevolved (such as the astral elementals), and some are quite intelligent (such as the higher order of devas (angels) who do much constructive work). Artificial astral entities are created quite easily by human emotion and feeling, which vitalizes astral matter. As emotions are generated (good or bad) (consciously or otherwise), so are astral matter and entities of similar quality attracted.

Astral phenomena (forms and energies) are rather transparent and colorful (either dull or bright, depending on quality). Each emotion or feeling has a characteristic vibration that can be interpreted in terms of color. The translation of that color to physical brain consciousness, however, may be misleading. The colors within the aura (astral body) are indicative of the condition (and quality) of the emotional nature. The lower (higher) emotions and desires are represented by relatively coarse (refined) colors.

In contrast to the etheric (vital) body which is the same shape as the dense physical body (but a few inches larger), the astral body is an ovoid which completely envelops the lower bodies. The astral body (the aura) is the seat of the emotional and aspirational life; and in the relatively evolved humans, it is a rather well organized and stable vehicle, radiant with the higher emotion, a controlled instrument for experience and expression.

† Commentary No. 12

Applied Meditation

Meditation is the process in which the emotions and the mind are quieted and brought into the harmony of the true (higher) self. Meditation plays a major role in the search (by the waking-consciousness) for the Self and in the process of becoming that Self. When the student has become the higher consciousness, then meditation is the means by which that Self (beingness) is expressed. But then meditation can also be an applied process of specific focus and purpose. One such purpose is the creation (restoration) (maintenance) of peace and harmony in the lower life. With stability and harmony in the personality, it becomes much easier for the soul to maintain a measure of control and guidance of the mental and emotional character. Success in this endeavor depends on the willingness, purity, and availability of the personality. Meditation needs to be a daily experience so that the soul can more easily influence the lower life.

Meditation encourages the manifestation of the light and love of the higher self, through the personality and into the activities of the daily life. Though the alignment (union) of personality and soul is the generalized goal, there is much constructive work that may be performed during (and beyond) that process of cultivation and upliftment. Meditation can be applied to any reasonable purpose for which prayer might be used; in fact, prayer becomes more meaningful when followed by meditation. In prayer, the emotions and the mind are often barriers to enlightenment and fulfillment, and the understanding must wait until the lower self is quiet (and responsive). Meditation is generally (relatively) more free from the desires (distractions) of the personality life than is prayer. Prayer is often very personal (selfish), while meditation is more likely to be unselfish. Meditation is the interior experience of listening to God (the

voice of the silence), a process that cultivates the true spiritual intuition (the conscience) (wisdom) (understanding) (guidance) of the higher self.

Meditation may be applied to the search for self-understanding; it can be the means through which truth can be discerned. Whenever the unsettling and misleading emotions (and mind) are stilled, the understanding that is appropriate can be found. Meditation can also be applied to healing processes. Through invocation and visualization, healing energy can be made available. The object is to encourage healing (consistent with karma) without interference, and for the good of all.

Meditation can be applied directly to the self-purification process and toward the establishment of right human relations. Through self-analysis, the student can learn where and how to make adjustments in the personality life; and those adjustments can be made through meditation (mental and emotional control) (self-programming). Where human relationships need improvement (or healing), meditation can be used to adjust attitudes and feelings so that cooperation and mature relationships can be established. This work can be performed for individual relationships as well as for human relations in general.

One of the more potent meditation exercises is the visualization of a person or group (or humanity) as being enveloped in pure white light; this has considerable power to encourage healing and harmony. The planetary network of light and love can similarly be strengthened through visualization and invocation. Meditation should be qualified for constructive results, but without any expectancy of immediate or specific results, for such may undermine the usefulness of the effort (by compounding karma). The student should concern himself with listening to the guidance from within, doing whatever constructive work that is appropriate, and living in harmony with the divine plan.

God

Throughout the history (and pre-history) of humanity, man has perceived and defined his God according to his consciousness. In Lemurian days when most of mankind first achieved self-consciousness, man could perceive the superphysical realms, though without any conscious control. Man was aware of the host of great angelic beings who were the messengers of God and the teachers and guides of men. Man was aware of the angelic nature spirits and forces that are manifestations of God (as all things are). Quite naturally, early man developed a pantheistic appreciation of a God who lived through a host of beings, many of which were more highly evolved than man, and therefore (to him) were gods.

One of the early leaders of man was Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament religion. Jehovah was a great angelic being who served as the tribal or racial god or spirit of the Jewish people. Jehovah was originally a very visible and credible god (to his people). In later days, and especially toward the end of the Atlantean era, man began to lose the inner vision as humanity descended further into materialism, and as the realities of ancient days became legends and myths. As the inner vision began to be dimmed by the necessary pilgrimage into matter, man was forced to respect a God whom he could not see, as first-hand knowledge was replaced by faith.

As man evolves there is always a progressive revelation, exoterically and esoterically, according to his needs and capacity to understand. The New Testament teaching was, in part, designed to release man from his tribal and racial consciousness and to bring in an era of identification with humanity. The God of the New Testament religion is the planetary logos, the being who ensouls the planet and sustains and vitalizes all lives and forms within that domain. Even today, the transcendent God of religious students corresponds to the planetary logos. The God of the esoteric teachings is a still greater being, the solar logos which is the ensouling life of the solar system. This being is the greatest life for which the most advanced of humanity can glimpse any real understanding. There will always be greater lives that come before the ken of the evolving human adept (there is a cosmic logos and even an absolute being),

but even the most advanced of humanity have difficulty in even beginning to understand the manifestation of those greater lives.

Of course the term "God" means different things to different people, for God manifests on many levels and in many different ways, objectively and subjectively. There will always be a personal God, the immanent God within, the divine and noble essence or spirit within every human life. And there will always be an impersonal God, the transcendent God that is the cause behind manifestation. On the highest conceivable level, God is the totality of the objective and subjective universe. But neither God immanent nor God transcendent are in any way anthropomorphic. But man is still a reflection (image) of divinity in the sense of life force and potentiality.

The monotheistic and pantheistic doctrines are merely two perspectives on the one reality, just as the trinity is an essential unity with three aspects. God works through and is simultaneously countless greater and lesser beings. There is a unity of all life and yet there is also a multiplicity and a diversity of lives within that one life. Students of the ancient and ageless wisdom often used the physical sun as a life-giving symbol of that inherent unity of all life. The further a student proceeds along the spiral of evolution, the greater is the realization and appreciation of that oneness that is God. There remains one God, regardless of differentiation.

† Commentary No. 14

The Seven Rays

The first differentiation of the logos (God) in manifestation is the logoic triplicity which constitutes the three major rays (the three aspects of the trinity): the father (Shiva), the son (Vishnu), and the holy ghost (Brahma). These are the three rays of aspect. The second differentiation of the logos is the logoic septenate (the seven rays): three rays of aspect (on a lower level than the triplicity) and four rays of attribute. These are seven great streams of energy, each with a characteristic vibration, life, quality, and purpose. The seven are equal in importance and each contributes a (different) basic vibration and experience to the greater life. On the first level of manifestation the life of the logos flows through three streams or rays (lives) of energy; on the second level of

manifestation the logoc life flows through seven rays of energy. Together they constitute all of manifestation.

The solar logos manifests through the seven rays, through seven planes or worlds of consciousness, through seven sacred planets (and five non-sacred planets), and through seven great cycles or days of manifestation (with seven lesser cycles within each greater cycle). Each plane, planet, and cycle is a manifestation of the corresponding ray (numerologically) and its reflection.

The fifth (sixth) (seventh) ray is the reflection into matter of the third (second) (first) ray (respectively). Each kingdom in nature (elemental, mineral, plant, animal, human, angelic, etc.), each lifewave, each department of manifestation or civilization, is especially qualified by one or another of the seven rays. Thus each of the rays has a domain of qualification through correspondence.

Since the spiral of evolution proceeds in a complex, cyclic manner, so do the rays governing or qualifying a cycle or sub-cycle change accordingly. Each unit is qualified by its individual rays, group rays, and cyclic rays. As a unit of life evolves, the dominating or primary ray will be succeeded by another. Man has within himself a blend of all the seven rays, but one or two will be more dominant than the others. The unevolved man is qualified by the ray of his physical body. The average person is qualified by the ray of the emotional body. The evolving man is qualified by his mental or personality ray (which begins to dominate as the personality becomes integrated). A soul on a particular ray will incarnate time and time again on each of the seven personality rays, that each may contribute to the experience of the soul. The spiritual student is becoming qualified by the soul ray which uses the personality ray as an instrument. The spiritual student eventually recognizes his soul ray (which gives the deeper motives and inner characteristics) and his personality ray (the ray of the outer or lower self).

The names and qualities of the various rays are but general indications of their nature. The qualities overlap, and each of the rays should be studied meditatively, with an appreciation for the relationships between the rays as well as for each ray in the broadest sense. An understanding of the rays is a qualitative one, and the complexities involved are often profound. The rays (3-4-5-6-7) are considered to be sub-rays of the third aspect of the trinity. The even

rays (2-4-6) form a special path or relationship, as do the odd rays (1-3-5-7). The first ray is the ray of power (will). The second ray is called the ray of love-wisdom. The third ray is the ray of active intelligence. The fourth ray is called the ray of harmony through conflict. The fifth ray is the ray of concrete knowledge. The sixth ray is called the ray of devotion, and the seventh ray is called the ray of ceremonial order.

† Commentary No. 15

The Mental Plane

The mental or manasic plane is that plane or region of consciousness that exists between the astral (emotional) and the buddhic (intuitional) planes, while simultaneously coexisting and interpenetrating the other six planes. The mental plane is divided into seven grades or sub-planes of mental substance (matter), and into two regions of thought. The lower mental world is the region of concrete thought where the highest aspect of the human personality functions. The lower or concrete mind is the mortal mind that uses the physical brain as its instrument. The higher mental world is the region of abstract thought where the lowest aspect of the human soul functions. The higher or abstract mind is the (relatively) immortal mind. Manas (the mental principle) is actually the link or bridge between the personality and the soul, the principle through which the personality is integrated and aligned with the soul.

The lower mind is used to calm and discipline (control) the emotional nature. The higher mind is used to bring the lower mind under the control of the soul. The lower mind is used to synthesize and integrate the personality into a single vibration, that the personality might be used more effectively. The higher mind is used to bridge the gap between buddhi (intuition) and the lower self. For this reason, the utilization of abstract and subjective studies and meditations encourages the building of the vital bridge between a soul and its personality. Though mental development is a prerequisite for intuitional development, the mind (the head) should be properly balanced with the heart. As these two aspects (head and heart) develop, the student should be guided by spiritual motive and common sense rather than rationalization. True reasoning is buddhi-manas, the abstract mind enlightened by the intuition.

The emotional, mental, and intuitional development of the spiritual student should proceed at a natural pace (based upon experience, conscience, and humanitarian work). Where there is a forced development or development without proper (unselfish) motive, there are usually resultant dangers and problems (such as over-stimulation, loss of self-control, and an exaggerated sense of ego). The lower mind is a delicate instrument that can be used constructively or destructively. The higher, abstract mind is free from the selfish, critical, and separative thought vibrations that the concrete mind is capable of.

The lower mind must be properly cultivated, for conscious and unconscious thoughts can have quite potent effects on relationships and experiences. As the mind is properly disciplined and balanced, the student can progress more reasonably. Man is slowly becoming polarized on the mental plane and must be encouraged to be careful in the creation of thought-forms. The effect of a person's thinking will generally appear in the emotional and physical life. Good, sound, positive thinking encourages health; while bad, negative, selfish thinking encourages disease on mental, emotional, and physical levels.

Man is becoming a creator. His creative thoughts are archetypes which precede and condition physical manifestation. The mental plane is the realm of consciousness that includes thought-forms that have been consciously or unconsciously created. Much of man's misery comes from careless thinking. The evolving spiritual student is cautioned to think consciously, guard against careless and critical thoughts, and use the mind constructively. While ordinary man thinks (and thereby activates mental energies), the evolved man (the adept) functions consciously on the mental plane (which is an altogether higher level of experience than merely thinking). Such an adept is as aware on the mental plane as the ordinary man is aware on the physical plane.

Glamour and Illusion

The subject of glamour and illusion is a rather vital one for mankind as well as for the spiritual student, for both glamour and illusion must be conquered and overcome by humanity before man can attain enlightenment and liberation. The physical, emotional, and mental worlds of human experience and evolution are the realms of glamour and illusion that cloud human vision and impair the realization of truth. The evolving man must gradually and successively discern greater truths from the glammers and illusions of the lower life. Glamour implies illusion on astral or emotional levels, while illusion is essentially mental in nature. Glamour is illusion intensified by desire.

Each glamour (illusion) has its counterpart on the mental (astral) plane. Since truth is relative, so are the various illusions that must be faced in the lower worlds. The spiritual path is one of piercing the lower glammers and illusions and putting into practice the higher and greater truths as they are realized. The overcoming of glamour (and illusion) implies bringing the enlightenment of the soul into the lower life, resulting in greater awareness. Then matters can be seen in a broader perspective. The sense of values should be modified by the light of the soul, as the student begins to recognize broad and general causes instead of focusing on limited lower world effects or events.

Both glamour and illusion are individual and group problems. The spiritual student must deal with the glammers that affect him (that can be recognized) and mankind must deal (slowly) with the mass of glamour and illusion in the lower worlds. Glamour and illusion can be considered to be the (almost) inevitable result of limitation of consciousness and language, misunderstanding and misinterpretation (of life and the world in which humanity lives). Therefore the problem of glamour and illusion is quite formidable. There are many glammers and illusions that must inevitably be faced and overcome, including the glammers (and illusions) of materialism, power, destiny, ambition, self-importance, separation from God, good and evil (and all of the pairs of opposites), etc. There are also a number of special glammers that the spiritual student must face, including the glamour of the spiritual path itself, the illusion of the guru or teacher, and the glammers of superiority, authority, and idealism.

Three attitudes are said to be breeders of glamour: criticism, separateness, and pride.

Mental and emotional reactions and responses to the environment are based on a limited and distorted perception that is further impaired by kama-manas (desire-mind) and ego. Some of the glammers are environmentally conditioned; some are inherited; and some are self-induced. Wherever the student sees only part of the truth (which is practically all of the time), he must necessarily draw wrong (incomplete) conclusions. In broadening perspectives and in being able to expand or modify values and conclusions (through the open and illumined mind), the student encourages the dissipation of glamour (through illumination) and the dispelling of illusion (through intuition).

Since glamour and illusion are primarily based on the sense of duality, the process of release is called unity. As lives are broadened and as the spiritual student thinks more and more in terms of humanity (and greater lives), a greater contribution is made to the release of mankind from the world (mass) glamour and illusion. On one level, the Bhagavad Gita is a treatise that describes the combat of the individual (and the world) disciple (Arjuna) with glamour. As mankind enters the struggle and begins to grow spiritually, there is a transmutation of glamour, illusion, and ignorance into love and wisdom.

† Commentary No. 17

Reincarnation and Karma

The laws of reincarnation and karma are two of the most fundamental laws concerning human life. Both are subsidiary laws to the law of evolution. The law of reincarnation implies that an evolving human life (soul) must be reborn on this earth time and time again until that soul has reached relative perfection as far as human evolution is concerned (in the physical, emotional, and mental worlds). Reincarnation supports evolution, and not retrogression or transmigration. A human soul cannot inhabit a subhuman body; that would be contrary to the laws of evolution, which require continual (though gradual) progress, onward and upward along the spiral circuit.

An individual human soul is created (appropriated by the monad) at the moment of individualization (the attainment of self-consciousness). From that moment on until the soul transcends the lower worlds, it seeks (under law) to experience and to evolve through a long succession of lives in this world. The soul is the individuality that incarnates. The soul creates a new personality (based on experience and karma) for each life, and that personality is subject to the law of karma (consequence).

The law of karma provides the basic urge toward evolution and enlightenment. It is the law of cause and effect, the great teacher which wisely yields the experiences and opportunities needed (and earned) because of causal energies. In each lifetime, every action, behavior, feeling, thought, and motive sets karmic forces (causes) into motion. Through ignorance much karma is created in the early lives. Karma teaches man to live in harmony with spiritual law, and through the results (effects) received, the needed lessons are learned (consciously or otherwise). The more closely the student lives in harmony with cosmic law, the greater will be the progress toward the higher consciousness. As a man evolves he begins to consciously set forces into motion that will bring the talents and opportunities that are needed. Each seed (cause or action) bears an appropriate fruit (result or effect). Thoughts and feelings result in tendencies and capacities. Experience becomes wisdom and conscience. Injuries (physical, emotional, or mental) inflicted upon others (or self) and rebellion against law (conscious or unconscious) result in physical, emotional, and mental diseases and limitations. Man is responsible for all that he is, all that he has, and all that he does, on all levels.

The reincarnating soul brings with it the accumulation of karma, though normally only a portion of that karma is to be fulfilled in any one lifetime. Perfect justice (in the broadest sense) rules over all of humanity. The physical body, the emotional nature, and the mental capacity of the incarnating soul are only as good as karma determines. Likewise the friendships, experiences, and opportunities are also earned. The law of karma cannot be interfered with. However, changes in behavior and thinking will lead to changes in the results. Karma is the sum of all forces generated that are as yet unfulfilled. Through free will a person can add new positive causes which will modify the final outcome (which is a function of time). Man creates karma through free will; destiny is simply the consequence.

The results of actions in the present life may appear partially or fully within the present lifetime, or they may appear later. Karma is neither good nor bad; karma is not retribution or punishment; karma is the divine force that teaches, and it leads the evolving life into knowledge, wisdom, and relative perfection. Through the working out of karma, sins are forgiven. By living in harmony with law, limitation is overcome and self-mastery is achieved.

† Commentary No. 18

The Spiritual Path

The spiritual path is the path of conscious evolution. Though the bulk of humanity evolve gradually toward soul-consciousness, some souls choose to accomplish in relatively few lifetimes (incarnations) what would normally take many lives. The decision to tread the spiritual path is made by the soul, which then seeks to enlist the cooperation of the mind (and the entire personality). The soul must reestablish that cooperation and realization in each lifetime.

At first, the path is a most difficult undertaking. Each soul has an accumulation of karma to be fulfilled. The earlier lives generate much more karma than can reasonably be worked out in just a few lives. Normally karma is fulfilled through a relatively slow process. Those who are on the path invoke the rapid working out of karma and minimize the production of nonessential karma. The spiritual student must overcome the limitations of living in the outer world, learn the required lessons for graduation, and become free and qualified to serve mankind in a much more potent capacity. For the disciple, new karma is fulfilled almost instantly, for the (spiritual) path is rather narrow (and a slight deviation evokes an almost instantaneous response). The soul that is not committed to the path is free to wander to some extent.

Though there is but one path, there exist countless differentiations within that one path. The path of enlightenment is different for every individual. There are certain general requirements (in consciousness and experience) before the student can attain liberation, however, and each lesser path within the one path yields a measure of development or experience in a particular field. A soul

majors in the path that is the soul ray, and minors in each of the other six paths (rays). Some paths are mystical (devotional) and some paths are more occult. Liberation implies considerable balance between head and heart. The one path is also divided into three major stages or paths that each soul on the path must pass through. The first stage is called the probationary path, the path of purification, aspiration, and preparation (where the student is concerned primarily with physical, emotional, and mental discipline and purification). This stage once required a teacher for direction, but today there is a wealth of information available and the student is generally on his own. The probationary path may require a number of lifetimes for its completion, but when the student is sufficiently prepared, he can then pass on to the second stage (discipleship).

In the second stage, the student is primarily occupied with serving humanity according to whatever talents and opportunities have been earned. The disciple must be stable, strong, unselfish, and self-reliant. The student must depend upon the true teacher, the Christ-self or God within (the soul). The disciple is one who has aligned the personality and the soul, and who proceeds to do the work (service) that is before him. In the third stage, the disciple becomes an adept, a master of wisdom.

There are numerous (optional) schools and organizations (secret and otherwise) to help the evolving student. Each school is but a stepping-stone on the lower stages of the path. No school can provide assistance on the later stages without soul alignment. In the lower stages, affiliations are not necessary, for the needed teachings are always available to the seeker. From probation to mastery, the spiritual path requires considerable determination and sacrifice. But the rewards are also considerable: the joy of giving, the joy of consciously serving God (and therefore humanity and all of life), and the joy of living in accordance with cosmic law.

Harmlessness

One of the qualities or virtues to be cultivated by the spiritual student is (dynamic) harmlessness. Harmlessness is an attitude (state of mind) which discourages the student from inflicting any injury (physical, emotional, or mental) upon any life-form. Motives and circumstances should be carefully considered and evaluated before any interference in any life is contemplated. Actually, every action could well be evaluated, and action taken only where there is proper motive, need, kindness, and the intention of harmlessness.

The roles of the various kingdoms in nature can be considered in terms of karma and the need for harmlessness. The plant kingdom has certain responsibilities to perform, including that of providing food and oxygen for the animal and human kingdoms. The animal kingdom also has certain responsibilities, but providing humanity with flesh foods is not one of them. All of the kingdoms in nature are highly interrelated, and even humanity has certain responsibilities to the various kingdoms. These responsibilities and relationships are both karmic and evolutionary, and in themselves are sufficient cause for the conscientious application of harmlessness.

Harmlessness may arise from purely intellectual and rational causes, but it is the genuine harmlessness that is the expression of love that the student should cultivate. Harmlessness needs to be a way of life, an automatic process, a natural response to the circumstances to be faced in the external world. Through the discipline and practice of harmlessness, this virtue can easily be made a part of the daily life. There need be no worry or distraction involved, simply a healthy, positive, loving, and automatic (comfortable) expression in the outer life of the love-nature of the soul. The expression of harmlessness does not imply a passive way of life; it does suggest a positive attitude and an awareness of the goodness within every life-form. Harmlessness includes looking at the good qualities in other persons, and not dwelling on the bad. If the good is looked for, it will be found, for everyone is an expression of a soul whose nature is love (goodness). The student should recognize the soul or God within every human life as the same God that exists within himself, regardless of whether or not the outer person is aligned with the inner soul. Looking for the

good as an expression of harmlessness should overshadow all thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Positive harmlessness implies strength and discipline, not weakness or inability. It takes strength to remain silent where words might not be helpful and constructive. It takes strength to avoid gossip (in thought and speech); it takes strength to eliminate all criticism. Harmlessness is the opposite of selfishness. Harmlessness leads to greater awareness and understanding, and to the capacity for love on much higher levels than the physical and emotional. Harmlessness leads to usefulness, for the selfish person cannot be effectively utilized for constructive (spiritual) work. Harmlessness minimizes limitation. It is also a breeder of virtues, for harmlessness leads to kindness and other heart-centered qualities.

Harmlessness leads to an increased inner awareness that assists in the adjustment of inner teachings to the outward manifestations of life. Though harmlessness is quite a simple virtue, the effects are rather potent and far-reaching. By living the spiritual life in the external world, the positive growth of humanity is encouraged (as harmlessness is considered an integral part of the spiritual life). And when mankind has learned the meaning of harmlessness, then truly can the world disciple emerge as an obvious reality.

† Commentary No. 20

The First Ray

The first ray is called the ray of power and will. On the highest level the first ray is the first aspect of the trinity which is the father (Shiva) (first logos) (first cause) (will of God) (plan of God). On the level of the triplicity, the first ray is the precursor of manifestation and consciousness, and the final synthetic ray that will absorb the fruits of manifestation and the resulting consciousness. On the level of the septenate, the first ray is the ray of power governing (manifesting as) the first systemic plane of consciousness (God-consciousness) and reflecting itself into the physical world and the mineral kingdom. On human levels it is the ray of leadership, government, action, and adventure. It is also the ray of destruction (for the destruction of form, setting the imprisoned

life or essence free). It is also the ray that governs the beginning and ending of cycles of activity.

The first ray is not presently in exoteric manifestation, and therefore there are very few (if any) first ray souls in incarnation; thus, first ray personalities and those on other rays who are able to work effectively with first ray energies are relied upon for leadership. This power ray is a difficult personality ray to tame, for the will and power suggests a strength that discourages alignment with the soul. But where such an alignment has been effected, there results considerable strength (of alignment) and the will and power qualities can be wisely used for constructive work. The first ray type is characterized as the independent, self-reliant leader who strives to excel in whatever field of endeavor is chosen. This ray is a ray of planning and of using whatever means are available to achieve the desired end. Without love and wisdom the first ray type may be forceful, arrogant, demanding, and destructive. With love and wisdom, the first ray type demonstrates mature leadership, as the personal will is aligned with the greater will.

Self-reliance is one of the many lessons to be learned either on the first ray or through the application of first ray energy. The spiritual student must learn to rely on the God within as the only authority. Self-reliance coupled with the alignment of the desire aspect to the will aspect of the soul results in a most potent and useful application of energy. When a soul upon any of the seven rays has mastered the lessons of the first ray energy, then that particular wisdom and talent is available as needed in succeeding incarnations (even on other rays).

The first ray is also the ray of racial development. Each root-race has an appointed (esoteric) official, a great adept (called a manu), who is responsible for guiding the development of racial forms and characteristics, and at the end of a root-race, for absorbing (within his aura) the positive characteristics and qualities developed. The absorbed (synthesized) qualities are then available for use in later root-races and by humanity as a whole. Presently there are two manus, one for the fourth root-race (the Atlantean) and one for the fifth root-race (the Aryan).

The first ray aspect in man is the human monad. It is the monad that is the creation (differentiation) in the image or likeness of God. The monad is the real

spirit of a person (soul), of the same essence as the father, as a spark from a flame or fire. The first ray in the external world is leadership, government, statesmanship, and politics. As humanity evolves (and simultaneously as first ray souls evolve), so will the various governments evolve. And so will politics (a degeneration) be transmuted into statesmanship, and human government be transmuted into divine government.

† Commentary No. 21

Involution and Evolution

In the great cyclic panorama of manifestation, the law of evolution demonstrates as impelling evolutionary force on all levels of existence. The subhuman, human, and superhuman lives are all impelled onward along the spiral path of evolution. Each lifewave of a planet is created, in turn, to begin the descent into matter for further experience and expression. Creation and evolution are mutually consistent, for each lifewave is created (differentiated) within God (and by God) as a vast number of monads (sparks from the central flame). Each monad is created in the image of God (which is spirit). The forms that a monad might appropriate (through the intermediary of the soul) are normally quite different in appearance than the forms of the creator.

The created lives are at first quite unconscious. Consciousness and all of the characteristics and qualities of the Godhead are latent within the monad. The process of evolution is to cultivate and develop the latent powers within the monad (and its reflection) through experience, and to add to those qualities (and thus contribute further to the evolution of the greater life). The first half of the cycle of evolution is called involution (unconscious evolution). Involution is the period of the descent into matter until the life becomes indwelling and self-conscious. During this period, involutory forces (and greater lives) work on the various lesser lives and forms from without (externally). Following the point of self-consciousness comes the second half of the cycle, the path of ascent (evolution) or liberation (from matter).

During the involutory period, the work of evolution is done entirely as a group. Each lifewave incarnates together (as a group) (soul). Each group soul incarnates through a multitude of forms that are a part of the lifewave (and

kingdom) in nature. Presently there are a number of lifewaves and kingdoms within the planetary aura. There are several involutory kingdoms (elemental, mineral, plant, and animal) and several evolutionary kingdoms (human and superhuman lifewaves). The involutory kingdoms are the subhuman kingdoms. In the subhuman realm there are no individual souls, only the overshadowing group souls. As a lifewave approaches the human kingdom, the group soul is differentiated into individual souls (in appearance) which are simultaneously appropriated by the various monads. This process is called individualization.

Each lifewave inhabits each kingdom in turn; the lifewave which is now human has passed through each of the subhuman kingdoms, but at such an earlier period that the forms and characteristics of the present subhuman kingdoms are vastly different in appearance than they were. Since the process of evolution is continuous and cyclic rather than discrete, the kingdoms and lifewaves sometimes overlap (some monads choose to develop more rapidly or more slowly than the average). It is also possible for two different lifewaves to inhabit the same kingdom (but with different forms). In fact, each kingdom (and each lifewave) may span several levels or planes of consciousness.

The totality of evolution includes the evolution of forms and the evolution of lives (consciousness) (as forms support the experience and expression of all lives). As old forms (bodies) wear out (individually or collectively) they are replaced with new and improved forms, based upon the experience (and karma) of the indwelling or overshadowing life. Each kingdom and each lifewave (on every level of consciousness) contributes its experiences to the evolution of a still greater life. Thus does evolution proceed under law in a spiral (cyclic) progression. All lives evolve, from the subatomic lives to the great cosmic lives, progressing and expanding, onward and upward along the spiral circuit.

The Path of Probation

The probationary path is the first stage or phase of the spiritual path. It is a path of purification and preparation; it is the building of a foundation with which to support the intermediate and advanced work of discipleship.

Purification of physical, emotional, and mental faculties is a prerequisite for understanding, awareness, integration, and alignment. Bodies of low vibration cannot be spiritually integrated; a body of low (coarse) vibration cannot respond to the spiritual energies (guidance and enlightenment) which are of higher (fine) vibration. The three instruments (the physical body, the emotions, and the mind) must be purified and integrated into a single coherent and spiritually responsive mechanism before the personality can be properly aligned with the soul.

Physical purification suggests pure food (in moderate amounts): the incorporation of a sensible, nutritional, and balanced diet, and the gradual phasing out of animal (flesh) foods. Internal and external cleanliness is also required for the physical body, as well as sufficient exercise, sufficient (restful) sleep, fresh air, and a reasonable (moderate) amount of sunshine. This discipline should incorporate a reasonable, common-sense approach to purification. The physical concerns should then pass below the threshold of waking-consciousness, that the spiritual student can concentrate on higher work.

Emotional (astral) purification involves the calming and balancing of the astral (desire) body. The aura (and the astral body) must be purified and uplifted in vibration (quality) until it is a clear, calm, quiet, unruffled, stable, and controlled instrument for the highest emotions. A wildly fluctuating or passive aura that responds to the glammers, desires, and coarse emotions must be tamed and brought into harmony with the spiritual self if the student is to demonstrate the unselfish and impersonal love of the God within. Meditation is a strong aid to emotional and mental discipline (and bringing the emotions under the firm control of the mind). The power of observation coupled with the exercise of retrospection leads to the discernment of weaknesses and limitations, and to the appropriate methods of purification and discipline.

Mental purification especially calls for meditation, retrospection, and the study of the self. Mental refinement implies clear, unbiased thinking on all matters and the elimination of critical, negative, and unpleasant thinking. Through observation, study, concentration, meditation, and visualization, the mind is trained and prepared for abstract thinking and enlightenment. This purification should not be a drastic discipline, but it should be a gradual and progressive reorientation to successively higher levels. Through mental purification the mind can be trained as a useful instrument of the soul, free from habits and personality-centered limitations and distractions.

As the process of purification proceeds, the probationer (probationary student) (aspirant) begins to integrate the personality and align the personality with the overshadowing (indwelling) soul, depending always upon the true teacher, the God within, for encouragement. Throughout the paths of probation and discipleship there is an accelerated working off of karma, resulting in greater strength, freedom, and preparation (in the form of virtues, qualities, talents, and abilities). Though the path is often difficult (challenging), there should be courage, confidence, perseverance, and a measure of happiness in spite of whatever circumstances (opportunities) may come. With the increased freedom from karma and limitation comes the opportunity to the spiritual student to place himself in service to a greater cause than his own.

† Commentary No. 23

The Esoteric

In the classical sense, the esoteric teachings are those which simply cannot be revealed to the human mind, those which can be neither spoken nor written. Those teachings are esoteric because humanity has not yet evolved sufficient intelligence, awareness, understanding, experience, and responsibility; and because human language and mental capability (and maturity) are not sufficiently developed. The esoteric, arcane, or secret teachings are only available on causal (soul) levels and cannot be brought down into the concrete mind without serious misunderstanding or misrepresentation. The higher teachings bring greater and greater responsibilities, including power that would be misused if the recipient were not properly prepared.

As man evolves, the esoteric teachings are gradually revealed (and thereby become exoteric), first to individuals who have prepared themselves, and then gradually there is a dissemination of the teachings to the masses, as humanity evolves. This occurs as a person (spiritual student) (and humanity) develops the capacity to understand and the responsibility to use the higher knowledge properly (selflessly and wisely). This is true in all branches of knowledge: philosophy, religion, and science. Always there is a wide range (diversity) of capacity among humanity. The knowledge and enlightenment that a man can comprehend is always available to him (through karma, one way or another). As a person is prepared, he will be magnetically drawn into the highest teachings that he can responsibly and wisely accept, the teachings that have been earned as a consequence of his life and activity.

In contrast to the classical definition, the word "esoteric" is widely used to mean "metaphysical" or that which is (supposedly) above and beyond the orthodox teachings (and readily available). In this sense, the esoteric teachings are (by degrees) that which was once truly esoteric (though the quality of translation and understanding varies). The truly esoteric teachings remain beyond the ken of mortal minds. The highest teachings come in the form of symbols and are simultaneously quite simple and exceedingly intricate. The abstract energy exists first, and then the abstract thought. The abstract is gradually constrained to the concrete thinking and finally is clumsily revealed through language. In such teachings the student is encouraged to value first the energy behind the thought (symbol), then the thought behind the words. The orthodox metaphysical teachings do not fall into the esoteric category, since they are distorted by the personalities through which they are revealed.

Great care must be taken in translating from the abstract to the concrete, for emotional and intellectual approaches most often result in misunderstanding and the misrepresentation of truth, often in a glamorous and personality-centered atmosphere. The devotional, meditative, impersonal, and intuitive atmosphere is the safest in which to discern and disseminate truth. The serious student accepts a truth only when the inner authority recognizes the truth. The spiritual student should concentrate on living the spiritual life, through the study of the highest teachings available, through meditation and the alignment

of personality and soul, through purification and preparation, and through the unselfish application of the life in the service of God and humanity.

The esoteric teachings point constantly to an understanding of God (life) and living properly in the lower worlds, to the understanding of the spiritual self and relationships, and to the evolution of consciousness. May humanity prepare itself for the responsibilities which come with the esoteric teachings as they are gradually transformed into the exoteric domain.

† Commentary No. 24

The Second Ray

The second ray is called the ray of love-wisdom. On the primary level (that of the divine triplicity), the second ray functions as the second aspect of the trinity, the son (Vishnu) (second logos) (the cosmic Christ) (the love and wisdom of God). The son (consciousness) is the result or product of the interaction of spirit (the father) and matter (the mother). It is the immediate object of manifestation. The second ray is (as consciousness) the purpose or objective of evolution, experience, and the work of manifestation (as experience and expression contribute to the evolution of consciousness). In the solar sphere the second ray is the ray of God (the solar logos) and, therefore, everything within the solar ring-pass-not is qualified by this ray.

On the secondary level of manifestation (the septenate) (the seven rays), the second ray manifests as the monadic plane and reflects itself into matter as the astral plane and the plant kingdom. On human levels it is the ray of teaching and healing, the ray of love and wisdom, the ray of union, and the ray of compassion, cooperation, and consciousness. The second ray is also the ray of magnetism, attraction, cohesion, mysticism, discipleship, and brotherhood. Upon the second ray, humanity learns to transmute desire into love, knowledge into wisdom, and personality into soul. The second ray is a ray of duality and the resolution of the various pairs of opposites. Being the ray of consciousness, the second ray is the field of activity and influence of the bodhisattva, the world teacher (the Christ). The bodhisattva is the leader of the spiritual hierarchy of the planet, and is responsible for guiding the development and expansion of consciousness.

The second ray aspect in man is the human soul (the upper triad) (atma-buddhi-manas). It is the soul that is God immanent, the Christ within. The soul is the (relatively) immortal essence which reincarnates for expression and experience. It is the soul that is the basis for brotherhood and unity (group consciousness). Within man, evolution is primarily the evolution of the soul (as consciousness), the assimilation (by the soul) and application of experience and quality. As a person evolves, the lessons and experiences of each of the seven rays are incorporated into the causal-self (the soul). The second ray influence is more important during the later stages of human evolution, when man is learning to function on successively higher levels of consciousness, transforming the personal into the ever-expanding impersonal.

The lower aspects of the ray of love-wisdom are personal love (desire, and selfish, possessive, exclusive love) and knowledge. The higher aspects of the ray of love-wisdom are impersonal love (unselfish and all-inclusive) and consciousness (wisdom). The lower aspects are emotional and intellectual; the higher aspects are intuitive. The lower aspects are somewhat separative; the higher aspects are more inclusive. God is love; love is wisdom; wisdom is consciousness; consciousness is unity; and unity is God.

The second ray is a ray of sensitivity leading to intuition. It is the opening of the lower self (the personality) to the higher self (the soul), and therefore to a loving understanding of humanity and of God. Wisdom and intuition are the results of the assimilation of the spiritual teachings. Love is the result of understanding (aspiration). The teachings must become so much a part of the consciousness that the emotional and intellectual response is superseded by the faculty of buddhi (the spiritual intuition). Many are the lessons in consciousness to be learned (earned) by the spiritual student with a second ray soul or personality.

Cheerfulness

One of the simplest of virtues, cheerfulness is a quality that significantly enhances the development and the effectiveness of the spiritual student. The attitude of cheerfulness results in a greater flow of spiritual energy from the inner self (and therefore from higher sources) to the outer self and the external objective world. The spiritual student who has properly cultivated a quiet but cheerful disposition interacts much more positively and creatively (constructively) with his environment.

This stream of energy (the precursor of cheerfulness) first irradiates the individual within himself. The inner irradiation encourages spiritual growth, self-healing, understanding, stability, serenity, strength, and the alignment of the personality and soul. Cheerfulness therefore enhances the channel through which the soul begins to dominate the personality, allowing the birth of the Christ within. Cheerfulness raises the vibration of the personality, brings it closer to the inner self, and protects the outer self from the damaging or discouraging external vibrations that might otherwise impair the inner harmony. It also strengthens the process of purification.

Having achieved the inner radiation, the stream of energy from within then seeks to radiate outwardly into the immediate environment and the external world. It is in this process that the work of discipleship is fulfilled. The student who radiates this energy from within will consciously and/or unconsciously send forth healing energies and the energies of love and light, almost continuously. Cheerfulness tends to remove the resistance of the critical and separative mind, both in the individual himself and in those whom he meets. The energy of goodwill goes a long way toward improving right human relations and restoring (and maintaining) harmony in the daily life. This energy (cheerfulness and its companion, goodwill) is a great energy of encouragement for all concerned.

There are however, several stumbling blocks in the cultivation of the healthy, positive cheerfulness that is a virtue. Two of the stumbling blocks are the extremes of excitement and seriousness. Excitement (extreme enthusiasm) is not a virtue because it leads to a loss of self-control; seriousness (in the extreme)

is not a virtue either, because it inhibits the inner irradiation and definitely impairs the outward flow of energy. The spiritual student can take life seriously, provided he has a healthy, complementary attitude of goodwill and cheerfulness. He must not take life (or himself) too seriously, if he is to be useful and effective in the spiritual work. The spiritual student can be somewhat enthusiastic in his work, provided he can overcome (or eliminate) disappointment and maintain the inner and outer harmony.

The key to cheerfulness is simply allowing the energies from the spiritual self to make their presence felt by removing the resistance of the personality toward the soul. When one is irradiated from within, the energy must be allowed to flow into the outer world. No good can result if these energies are imprisoned or hindered. A smile, a warm greeting, cheerful words and attitudes are all examples of the simple demonstration of love that mark the life of the well-rounded spiritual student. The slightest and most trivial of deeds may often have the most potent and far-reaching effects. Cheerfulness is a sharing of the happiness that should exist in the hearts of all who have found their source, the God within the form. With the resulting self-confidence there comes a peaceful happiness and quiet joy to be shared. May the God within each human form shine with cheerfulness and goodwill.

† Commentary No. 26

The Path of Discipleship

Discipleship is the second stage upon the spiritual path. The path of discipleship begins when the probationary student has sufficiently purified and prepared himself for service and when he is reasonably free from karmic limitations. Where probation is a path of preparation (primarily self-centered), discipleship is a path of conscious activity (fulfillment). The disciple is pledged to serve humanity, to cooperate with the plan of the planetary hierarchy as he perceives it and as best he can, and to continue to develop the powers of the soul (following the guidance of the higher self) through study, meditation, and various service activities.

The disciple continues to build upon the foundation created as a result of the probationary work, but the primary activity is service to humanity according to

the needs of the world around him, his particular talents and capacities, and the opportunities that he has earned. The disciple must know himself fairly well, including his strengths, weaknesses, and capacities. The disciple must be relatively free from the glamour and illusion of the outer world. He must be strong in character, for many are the tasks and responsibilities. Harmlessness, cheerfulness, humility, perseverance, and impersonality are only a few of the many virtues that must be present to some extent. The disciple must have an integrated and cooperative personality, aligned and responsive to the direction and the encouragement of the soul and its esoteric group. The disciple must have a pleasant, loving, and stable disposition.

The student upon the path of discipleship must be dependable and self-reliant yet ever aware of the inclusiveness of the world of souls and the purposes of objective and subjective manifestation. The disciple is a focal point of spiritual energy, transmitting and sharing the light, the love, and the power of the fifth kingdom (the kingdom of heaven) (the world of souls). The disciple is also an observer, an onlooker in the world of humanity, an agent and instrument of the world of God. The disciple must fulfill his responsibilities in both worlds, without interfering in the lives of others. The disciple is always available (without question or hesitation) (by commitment); there are no rests or vacations subjectively, yet the worker will rest (release unnecessary tension) objectively (in moderation) in order to maintain his health and capabilities.

The disciple is ever willing to give of himself and his resources without any thought of compensation. Thus the worker will find his resources and energies always replenished and equal to any and every worthy task that is set before him. Where mistakes are made, the disciple will learn from the effects, limitations, and experiences produced and make the necessary and appropriate adjustments within his life. There can be no discouragement and there can be no failure, for the only true failure is failure to learn the lessons of the mistake. So mistakes are recognized, the lessons are learned, and the worker pushes onward, never allowing failure to impair his continuing work.

The disciple differs markedly from the aspirant or probationary student, not only in terms of preparation and service, but also in terms of consciousness. Proper motives, understanding, a certain commitment (dedication) (obligation), and a certain level of consciousness are required for the path of discipleship.

The way of the disciple (regardless of soul ray) is the way of love and wisdom, of goodwill in action. The way of the disciple is to obey the inner impulses of the soul, to do the work that is before him to do, and to live a life that is an example to others.

† Commentary No. 27

Astrology

Astrology is one of the most ancient of arts and sciences, and one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented. Though quite ancient, astrology is still in its infancy as far as humanity is concerned.

The basic concepts of exoteric astrology are somewhat clear. Throughout the heavens there are centers of energy of many kinds. Some centers are radiators; some are transformers; and others are absorbers of energy. The planets are actually focusing points for extra-planetary energies. Energy passing through such focal points is normally reduced in intensity and modified somewhat by the planetary aura. Exoteric astrology is partially aware of some of the zodiacal influences and some of the planetary effects and cycles, but is largely unaware of esoteric effects, non-physical planets, and non-ecliptic sources.

The effects of astrological energies depend greatly upon the maturity of the soul and the accumulated karma. At the moment of birth, the first breath conditions the etheric body and aura with the influences of that chosen moment. These influences have a large conditioning effect for rather unevolved souls, and a much lesser effect for more advanced souls. The precise moment of birth and the actual location are rather important factors if one is to perform any meaningful calculations. The computations of exoteric astrology are somewhat clear, though there are perturbations of which orthodox astrologers are quite unaware. An exoteric chart, with progressions, is sometimes helpful, but only for souls who are not already upon the spiritual path, and is only meaningful as far as personality is concerned. The esoteric calculations are considerably more abstract and require some measure of enlightenment for any meaningful interpretation. Astrological calculations may be reasonably clear, but interpretations are mostly inaccurate, especially for the more evolved souls.

The exoteric astrology deals with the unaligned personality; the esoteric astrology concerns the soul and therefore concerns the esoteric group. The unevolved are governed largely by instinct and emotion, and therefore by the impelling energies of the heavens. The evolving man, having accumulated karma, is sometimes influenced by these external energies; certainly much of his personality is conditioned, until the alignment of that personality with the soul. Prior to birth, a soul will choose (within certain limits) a portion of its karma to be fulfilled in the coming life, and the time and circumstances of the birth (including the parents). The influences thus chosen for birth will have an effect throughout the lifetime, though modified by progression and development. The evolving soul will plan certain key events in order to fulfill karma and to develop or experience in a particular direction. There still exists considerable free will (for the evolving man) in determining the path between those points and the reactions to those influences.

The unevolved have very little free will, while the evolving man has an increasingly greater free will. The soul that commits itself to the spiritual path passes out of the exoteric domain and into the esoteric domain. For such souls, the exoteric astrological interpretations are even more confusing (invalid). The soul on the path of liberation is more and more the master of its own destiny, choosing the responses to the available energies, and more and more aligning the will (and therefore the destiny) to the good of the group. The astrological influences that are responded to are those which have been earned, whether they bring limitation or opportunity. The esoteric student rises into that esoteric domain where astrology is that of human and planetary destiny (purpose) and the relationships of souls to the greater groups.

The Third Ray

The third ray is called the ray of active intelligence. On the primary level, the third ray is the third aspect of the trinity, the holy spirit (holy ghost) (Brahma) (the third logos) (the manifestation of God). On that level the third ray is intelligence inherent in matter; it is the entire objective universe. On the secondary level of manifestation, the third ray demonstrates as the plane of divine mind (atma) and reflects itself into matter as the mental plane and the principle of manas (mind). It is the ray of the planetary logos, and therefore, all within the planetary aura is qualified by this ray. The third ray is closely connected with the animal kingdom, for it is the ray of evolution (adaptability) and activity.

The third ray (on its major level) is (in a certain sense) a synthetic ray for the (minor) four rays of attribute (the fourth ray, the fifth ray, the sixth ray, and the seventh ray) which may be considered as sub-rays of the third ray. As manifestation proceeds, it is the third ray of creativity that is differentiated into a multiplicity and diversity of levels and dimensions. And as manifestation draws to a close, each ray will synthesize its domain, and the third ray will synthesize the minor four rays. During this process, each of the three major rays will also synthesize (perform abstraction upon) its reflection: the first ray upon the seventh ray, the second ray upon the sixth ray, and the third ray upon the fifth ray.

Within the planetary hierarchy, the third department (corresponding to the third ray) includes all but the first two of the seven rays. This department is headed by the mahachohan, the lord of civilization. The third ray aspect in man is the human personality that is created and utilized by the soul itself (by the reflection of energy) (in a subjective fashion). It is the personality aspect through which each soul experiences and expresses itself (subjectively) in the lower three worlds of consciousness (physical, emotional, and mental). It is through the instrument of personality that lives of objectivity (illusion) are effected. It is this third aspect that must be trained to be useful and cooperative and aligned with the self (soul).

In the human world, the third ray is the ray of economics, money, justice, philosophy, and scholarly pursuits. It is a ray of comprehension and understanding, of intellect and creative ideation, of active intelligence. It is through the third ray (and through the rays of attribute) that man learns to create. Through thinking and feeling, man is a creator, sending out energies (consciously or otherwise) that will bear fruit for either constructive or destructive purposes. The evolving man usually creates carelessly and selfishly. The advanced of humanity create consciously, carefully, and constructively. Where the second ray of love and wisdom is also present (to some extent) (in maturity), there is a creativity for the benefit of others. Where the first ray of power and will (purpose) is also present (in some maturity), there is a conscious and potent cooperation with the plan of God.

It is largely through the third ray that economic and judicial problems will be solved. Solutions are hindered greatly by man's immaturity and by the selfishness of the nations; but as humanity matures, economic interdependence and the sharing of resources will become the rule rather than the exception. Another of the major contributions of the third ray is the energy of goodwill. Many are the lessons of the third ray. As the spiritual student grows in maturity he submerges his own interests and willingly cooperates in creative work for the good of humanity and for the good of even greater groups.

† Commentary No. 29

Matter and Energy

Energy is the essence or real character of the universe; energy is life itself. All that is, is energy. Everything in the objective and subjective universe is alive with energy. From the subatomic and nuclear particles (resonant energies) to the great cosmic entities, all is energy. Matter is simply crystallized energy, energy or life that is constrained and limited to the expression of form. Matter is objective substance, energy in the form of building blocks, whether it is physical, emotional, or even mental matter. Matter is negative (passive) energy, that is moved or manipulated or transformed by positive (active) energy. Energy cannot be created or destroyed, but it can be modified or transformed from one form or domain to another.

From the objective perspective, the densest (physical) matter (and its associated forces and energies) is reality, and the superphysical is the realm of illusion. From the higher (subjective) perspective, the inverse is true: matter is illusion, and the world of forces and energies (the subjective realm) is the only reality. Spirit and matter are the two extremes of energy and constitute a duality (paradox) (pair-of-opposites). Spirit is liberated matter and matter is crystallized spirit. Thus is energy the common reality.

Energy is vitality, the capacity to perform work. Force is applied, directed, or focused energy. The task of the spiritual student is to work effectively and constructively with the various energies that are made available. The esoteric student bridges the gap (illusion) between subjective and objective realities. The esoteric student lives and works consciously with forces and energies. Work is the transfer of energy from one form or aspect to another. The esoteric student works in the world of causes, responding to the available energies, and mentally transforming and directing them with purpose and wisdom into the objective world in order to produce the needed effects. Behind every effect there is a cause (energy). For every energy sent out, there are appropriate energies evoked, to accomplish the work of evolution.

The human being (like every positive life-form in manifestation) is a receiver, absorber, transformer, and transmitter of energy. From one perspective, the work of human evolution is to perfect this complex energy-mechanism through the cultivation of consciousness, where consciousness is the aspect that provides the motivation, purification, and control of the mechanism (the human personality and soul). The unenlightened and separative consciousness (of the ordinary man) is imperfect and careless; the enlightened cooperative consciousness (of the evolving esoteric student) is efficient and deliberately constructive. Energy is neither good nor evil, for energy is divine essence; but the uses of energy, the motives and purposes of the directing agent, determine the appropriateness or rightness.

As the human being evolves he begins to respond to the higher forces (applied energies) of the soul and begins to unconsciously (and eventually consciously) cooperate with the higher forces. The effect of energy depends on the nature and quality of the receiving apparatus (the soul, the mind, the astral body, etc.), and

the coherence, purpose, and intensity of the force (which depends on the nature and quality of the transmitting agent and of the medium, atmosphere, or aura through which the energy must travel). Where there is little understanding and a lack of maturity, there are the dangers of uncontrollable and wrongly applied forces. With spiritual and esoteric maturity comes the understanding, wisdom, and ability to constructively and potently apply the various forms of physical and superphysical energy.

† Commentary No. 30

The Spiritual Hierarchy

The spiritual hierarchy of the planet is the esoteric government that guides the evolution of humanity. This group is known by many names: the great white lodge, the planetary hierarchy, the occult hierarchy, the elder brotherhood, etc. This esoteric hierarchy is the second ray planetary center, working with and for the first ray center (which is called Shamballa) and the third ray center (which is humanity). Shamballa represents the personality of the planetary logos (Sanat Kumara) and the power aspect (the plan, the purpose, and the will of the planetary logos). The hierarchy is the love-wisdom aspect, dealing with the evolution of consciousness through manifestation.

The hierarchy has three major departments with seven subordinate departments, corresponding to the three major rays and the seven rays respectively. The first department is led by the manu of the Aryan root-race, who is responsible for guiding the development of racial forms and characteristics, and their eventual combination and synthesis. The second department is led by the bodhisattva, the world teacher, who is responsible for guiding the development and expansion of consciousness. The bodhisattva is the leader of the hierarchy and is known as the Christ (Matriya). The third department is led by the mahachohan, the lord of civilization, who oversees the work of the third ray and the four rays of attribute. The seven minor departments work primarily with the energy of their own (corresponding) ray.

The members of the hierarchy are the masters (adepts), human souls who have achieved relative perfection and have fulfilled their individual earthly karma (and are no longer required to incarnate). They are the pioneers of the human

lifewave, and are far in advance of ordinary man. These particular graduates of the human school of experience who work within the hierarchy are those who have chosen to remain here (within the planetary aura) for some duration of time, to lead humanity further along the path of evolution. Throughout the course of evolution, each lifewave is assisted, in turn, by the preceding lifewave. Those who lead, turn to offer a helping hand to those who follow. Thus, the hierarchy is one link in an endless chain of cooperative effort.

As the inner government of the planet, the hierarchy works primarily with consciousness, guiding and encouraging the aspirants and disciples of the world who, consciously or unconsciously, are their workers in the objective world. There is not any interference in the lives or wills of men, for man must create his own destiny. The hierarchy is bound by certain rules and principles according to karma and the intentions of the planetary logos. Thus the hierarchy is primarily a force of encouragement, and governs only in a loose sense (of indirect government).

The members of the hierarchy very rarely work openly among men (if at all), though the hierarchy may be externalized when humanity has been sufficiently prepared. The workers in the hierarchy work with souls rather than personalities. It is the task of the aspirants and disciples of the world to find and maintain a rapport of mind (personality) and soul, and through that soul contact, to respond to the plan and purpose of the hierarchy, that the spiritual student might more effectively serve the hierarchy and humanity. The means for establishing this soul contact is meditation. Through meditation and the paths of aspiration (probation) and discipleship, the spiritual student prepares himself for the life of service. Through selfless service and group (planetary) meditation, the disciple becomes the (impersonal) instrument and extension of the spiritual hierarchy of the planet.

Virtue

In every sphere of evolutionary development there are three distinct stages. The first stage is life, the quality of beingness. The second stage is intelligence, a quality built upon the foundation of life, a quality that is the result of experience. The third stage is virtue, a quality that is built upon the prerequisites of life and intelligence. Virtue is a quality that is the result of consciousness. Virtue is a principle of right relationships.

Since the soul is the consciousness aspect of the human life, it is the soul that is the center of virtue. It is through the soul that the human mind becomes aware of the needed qualities for continued progress along the path of enlightenment. It is through soul contact that the spiritual student begins to demonstrate or express virtue in the daily life. It is through experience and soul contact that the student's values are changed and improved.

Virtue is rightness (appropriateness) in action, feeling, and thought. Virtue is a spiritual strength that demonstrates as moral and ethical excellence. To the student of theology, virtue is living according to the laws and doctrines of his religion. To the rationalist, virtue is reason. To the hedonist, virtue is pleasure. To the scientist, virtue is living in harmony with natural law (nature). To the spiritual student, virtue is wisdom in relationships. Virtue is morality, character, and goodness in wise expression; but true virtue is also a natural unconscious disposition that is the result of developed consciousness. Virtue is the living of the life of wisdom, the practice of truth. Virtue may be manifested through various qualities and actions, depending on the appropriateness (merit) of the situation.

The qualities to be considered by the spiritual student are many and varied. According to the environment and purpose of the student, some qualities may find a greater appropriateness, emphasis, and application than others. Some of the more obvious qualities are love, truthfulness, cheerfulness, ease, happiness, timeliness, honesty, compassion, awareness, selflessness, stability, serenity, strength, moderation, goodwill, reasonableness, practicality, common sense, consistency, adaptability, perception, harmony, aspiration, devotion, reliability,

accuracy, availability, understanding, confidence, self-reliance, freedom, appreciation, intuition, conscience, humanitarianism, kindness, silence, cooperation, unity, humility (magnanimity), unimportance, illumination, wisdom, dharma, responsibility, thoughtfulness, progress, harmlessness, friendliness, impersonality, detachment, balance, self-realization, purity, self-discipline, determination, endurance, sacrifice, helpfulness, usefulness, interdependence (realization of oneness), cleanliness, calmness, clarity, courage, brotherhood, inclusiveness, and carefulness. Many are the meaningful qualities and conditions to be pondered upon and clarified.

As a student and his values grow, the living of the life of rightness is more and more guided by the inner self. Lower values, realizations, and truths are replaced by or transformed into higher values, realizations, and truths. Limitations and weaknesses are transmuted into freedoms and strengths, adding to and enhancing the capacities and qualities, and leading to the expression of virtue. Through ever increasing and expanding consciousness, virtue becomes an active part of the individuality that is the soul expressing itself through objective manifestation. Life is the energy of the soul; intelligence is the organization of the soul; and virtue is the cooperative existence of the soul. As man the microcosm becomes man the macrocosm, the cycle of life, intelligence, and virtue is repeated on a new and greater (higher) level.

† Commentary No. 32

The Fourth Ray

The fourth ray is called the ray of harmony through conflict. The fourth ray is a ray of attribute and forms a portion of the third aspect of the trinity. This ray demonstrates as the plane of intuition (buddhi) and qualifies all cycles of number four (of seven). Since the human lifewave presently inhabits the fourth kingdom of nature, the fourth ray is especially potent with respect to humanity. The planetary life (on Earth) is presently experiencing the fourth globe of the fourth round of the fourth chain; thus the fourth ray plays a significant role in planetary affairs as well.

The fourth ray is the mystical ray of balance, between the inwardly directed rays (the first three rays) and the outwardly directed rays (the last three rays), and between each major ray and its reflection. The fourth ray is also a ray of balance and struggle between the objective and subjective worlds, and between all of the various pairs of opposites (such as: male and female, good and evil, positive and negative, soul and personality, reality and illusion). This ray is a major factor in the life of the spiritual student whose task it is to balance the pairs of opposites and tread the middle path.

In the objective world, the fourth ray is the ray of beauty, culture, and art. It is a ray of imagination, perception, dramatization, and expression. The fourth ray of duality is a ray of conflict, struggle, and instability leading to harmony, peace, balance, and stability. It is often a painful ray with many lessons for the human personality; it is a ray of crisis, tension, and challenge. With fourth ray energy the spiritual student gradually learns to control the emotional life and bring it into harmony with the dominant mind. Then the student learns to bring the head (mind) and the heart (buddhi) (and the higher emotions) into balance. The fourth ray energy leads the student from the selfish personal life into the unselfish, relatively impersonal life; from passion, extravagance, self-deception, and alternation of moods, to self-control, serenity, purity, and balance; from duality and separation from God to unity and oneness with God.

The fourth ray principle in man is the spiritual intuition, the buddhic principle, the voice of the soul, the enlightenment and encouragement of the Christ-self. When the personality has been integrated, it must then be aligned properly with the soul so that the lower self may be guided and directed by the higher self through the intuition. The spiritual intuition is not the emotional or astral sensitivity, though it is often confused with that lower psychic sense. The spiritual intuition is a much higher sense, as the higher self or soul functions through the mind that has integrated the personality. The possibility exists for both emotional and intellectual self-deception, until the mind has been properly absorbed by the soul.

All of the struggles, tests, and conflicts of men and nations, internal and external, are opportunities for enlightenment, growth, and increasing perfection through the fourth ray energy. With increasing maturity, men and nations begin to withdraw from the external conflicts and learn to live in harmony with

the outer world, replacing conflict with cooperation and peace. Conflict then becomes harmless, as it becomes the struggle between reality and illusion. The lessons of the adversary (conflict) are many and potent. Pain and suffering due to imperfection must inevitably lead to peace and happiness in the harmony and beauty of relative perfection. May the glammers and illusions of the objective world be transformed into the balanced light (enlightenment) and love (wisdom) and power (purpose) of the greater life.

† Commentary No. 33

Esoteric Astronomy

Exoteric astronomy is the physical, chemical, and mathematical science of the various (physical) celestial bodies and of their magnitudes, motions, constitution, and associated phenomena. Contemporary (orthodox) astronomy recognizes many greater and lesser bodies: meteors, asteroids, planets, moons, stars, clusters, galaxies, etc. The exoteric science of astronomy deals only with the dense physical (solid, liquid, and gaseous) forms and their (various) objective energies. The esoteric side of astronomy deals mostly with life and the higher (non-physical) forms and energies.

Esoteric astronomy is the science of the various celestial lives and their properties and influences in terms of qualified energy cycles. Astronomy need not be confused with astrology. Astrology deals with the effects of extra-planetary energies as they qualify or influence life and consciousness. Astronomy deals with the nature and purpose of the sources of these energies and with their transmission and transformation before they are qualified by the planetary atmosphere. Thus astronomy and astrology are complementary and supplementary. It is from the esoteric astronomy that the theosophical teachings concerning cosmology and cosmogenesis are found, teachings of the cyclic manifestation of the universe and the planetary, solar, and cosmic lives, and through which the synthesis of greater life is realized.

Each of the active planets within the local system (whether physical, astral, or mental) is the body of manifestation of a planetary logos, a great intelligence (life) which is the soul of the planet, incarnating and expressing itself through the planet as the human soul incarnates through its personality. All of the

various kingdoms and lifewaves within the planet are contained within (and are therefore a part of) the aura (energy field or consciousness) of the planetary logos. Some planets are sacred planets; a sacred planet is a manifestation of one of the seven rays within the solar system, a major (relatively permanent) incarnation of a planetary logos. Other planets are inferior or non-sacred; a non-sacred planet is a minor (temporary) incarnation of a planetary logos. The planet Earth is presently considered a non-sacred planet. Some planets are synthesizing planets and will play major roles toward the end of the solar manifestation. Some planets are primarily radiators of energy; some are primarily absorbers; and some are primarily transformers. All planets modify to a certain extent the energy that passes through them.

The seven sacred planets of the local system are major (psychic) centers of energy within the body of manifestation of the solar logos. The star which is the physical sun veils the inner spiritual sun (son) that is the true objective essence of the solar logos. The solar logos (which lives through the solar system) is a cosmic center (cosmic atomic sphere) within a far greater being, the cosmic logos. From the microscopic atom to the macroscopic atom, there exists a succession of greater and greater beings, with each lesser life living within (and forming a part of) a greater life. Even space itself is a living entity. At the most obscure limit of human perception is absolute being, of which all of the manifested universe is but a symbolic derivation.

All of manifestation is held together by the ordered purpose of cosmic intelligence. Manifestation proceeds in a complex but ordered succession and superposition of progressive cycles and incarnations of cosmic, solar, and planetary lives and their (internal) lifewaves and kingdoms. The esoteric astronomy is a science of unity, for it shows (by degrees) how all things within the universe fit together to form a supercosmic unity.

The Planetary Network

There exists within the aura of the planet, a vast network of lines of force through which the various spiritual energies and stimulations flow. Part of the network exists as the etheric web or the energy body of the planet. Another part of the network exists in mental matter rather than etheric matter. The network itself provides a medium (mechanism) for the distribution of spiritual energies to all parts (aspects) of the world.

As the heart center of the planet, the planetary hierarchy functions in part as a transformer of extra-planetary energies and as a source of intra-planetary spiritual energy. The hierarchy works closely with the planetary logos in guiding, qualifying, and transmitting these higher energies into the network for distribution. The type and intensity of the energy are qualified by purpose and by the solar and cosmic energies available (that are appropriate). The hierarchical energies flow through the network and are made available to human souls and esoteric groups who then retransmit the energies on more concrete levels, making the energies available to all who can respond to them, and utilizing the energies for constructive purposes.

The prayer life and the meditation life of the religious and spiritual students of all levels enhances and strengthens to a certain extent the planetary network. Prayer and meditation (of the right order) not only strengthen the network but strengthen the relationship of the individual to the network. The greater the (constructive) response of the human soul and mind to the inflowing energies, the greater the effectiveness of the soul. The mind that is aligned with the soul responds to the higher stimulation with constructive service. Thus is the student who meditates effectively and sincerely a critical link in the chain of energy distribution.

The meditation life of a group (both exoteric and esoteric) will have an even greater effect on the network and the effectiveness of the group. A group that has achieved a unity and purity of spiritual purpose will receive and distribute considerable amounts of spiritual energy on human levels, whether it is done consciously or unconsciously. Group meditation work is difficult, for it requires

the overcoming of limitations that would impair the group unity. The disciples of the world are learning to function more and more effectively in this group work that transcends the illusion of differences between people, religions, and philosophies. Group work does not require physical proximity since the network provides for the necessary linking. The contribution of individual efforts to the various groups and the (one) group of esoteric groups is considerable. Individual meditations can be qualified for group service whenever the spiritual student gives of himself to the greater needs and spiritual purposes of humanity.

The emotional and mental lives of aspirants and disciples also have an effect on the network and on the relationship of the student to the network. The coarse (lower) emotional and mental vibrations are destructive, and the pure (higher) vibrations are constructive. Glamours and illusions tend to dissociate the student from the energies of enlightenment while the greater truths bring the student into closer alignment. During these times of crises and change, opportunities exist for personal and group purification and growth. As human minds seek to cooperate with higher forces (in service to humanity), ever greater will be the encouragement, guidance, and enlightenment available to those minds through the planetary network, and through the efforts of the hierarchy and the aspirants and disciples of the world.

† Commentary No. 35

Science

Science is that branch of knowledge that deals with a body of facts or truths gained by systematic study and objective investigation. Of the four major perspectives (philosophy, religion, science, and art), orthodox science is the most objective and tends to be the most materialistic. The state of science today is a real consequence of the descent of the human lifewave into the occult blindness of matter (materialism). Orthodox science tends to treat the objective world as the only reality; and yet (by degrees) this science will come to know again the realities of the higher realms and fully respect again the contributions of art, religion, and philosophy.

The ancient science (from which the present arcane science is derived) is in many ways superior to the present orthodox science. The enlightened ancients

knew a great deal more about the universe and reality, and had far greater control over the forces of nature, but they wisely veiled their knowledge from the unprepared and the unequipped masses. The arrogance of modern (orthodox) science is considerable, yet the scientific knowledge and understanding of the esoteric masters far exceed that of modern science. The ancient science was a divine science, and as orthodox science becomes more and more attuned with God, so shall it rediscover many of the ancient truths for the benefit of humanity, and so shall its own contribution be extended along more useful lines. It is the actual purpose of science to learn of God (and the universe) through the study of objective manifestation (exoteric science) and subjective manifestation (in the case of esoteric science). It is the real or intended purpose of science to serve humanity through the training of the mind and through the application of power and technology for constructive work. It is not the purpose of science to prolong illusion (dependence on science and technology), nor is the purpose of science to keep man immersed in materialism.

Progress implies cyclic (spiral) growth. In the past, man has passed through many cycles in which the emphasis has alternated between science, religion, philosophy, and art. This has been necessary in order to prevent a preoccupation with crystallizing forms in any of the perspectives. Now (on a higher turn of the spiral) man must learn to synthesize science, religion, philosophy, and art; for each is only a perspective on truth, and in the greater reality, the four perspectives can be blended to form a unity.

Science can shed light on religion and philosophy, while religion and philosophy can shed light on science. There is danger in each of the four extremes and in failing to realize that each has a contribution to make to the greater whole. The greater truths come when the mind can perceive the togetherness and the relevance of all things, without being impaired by the many illusions of the four perspectives. There are many scientific facts yet to be realized or rediscovered; and there are many so-called facts yet to be recognized as illusions of objectivity. As humanity grows and matures, the emphasis in science will be more and more constructive, for the good of mankind (and other lives), and less and less corrupted by materialism.

The greatest value of science is in the scientific method and in the training of the mind. Through the discipline and organization of the mind, the human

personality becomes a more perfect instrument for the soul. With the illumined mind (guided by spiritual intuition) will come the true brotherhood of man and the cooperative effort needed for humanity to march onward and upward. The scientific contribution, merged with the contributions of religion, philosophy, and art, will evoke further light upon the path of evolution.

† Commentary No. 36

The Fifth Ray

The fifth ray is called the ray of concrete knowledge. The fifth ray is a ray of attribute and forms a portion of the third aspect of the trinity. This ray demonstrates as the mental plane (the gaseous sub-plane of the cosmic physical plane) and the principle of mind (manas). It is also the reflection of the third ray of active intelligence and divine mind. The abstract region of the mental plane is qualified by the third ray, while the concrete region is qualified by the fifth ray. The principle of manas is simultaneously the highest attribute of the personality (the lower mind) and the lowest attribute of the soul (the higher mind).

While the fourth root-race (the Atlantean) sought emotional stability, the fifth root-race (the present Aryan race) seeks mental development and stability. Mental development is the keynote of the Aryan race, and this fifth ray of concrete knowledge is the means through which man accomplishes that activity. The ray of concrete knowledge is the ray of science, exoteric education, research, and objectivity. Through the fifth ray man learns about the objective world, and through the soul ray man gradually masters this worldly experience and frees himself from the limitations of objectivity. The fifth ray domain is often the realm of the educated, evolving, thinking human being (regardless of ray); but for the spiritual student, the fifth ray domain (as a preoccupation) is superseded by the soul energy which can then utilize the fifth ray and the personality as instruments of expression and guided, enlightened experience.

The fifth ray is an occult (intellectual) (head-centered) ray, and without a complementary mystical (devotional) (heart-centered) ray, it may be so intellectual or rational that the result is an unenlightening and illusionary

rationalization of events, experiences, and observation. Perfection implies balance between the head and heart. The mind must be developed and the mind must integrate and purify the personality; but the mind must not grow too strong or independent, for if human perfection is to be achieved, the developed mind must willingly submit itself to the higher energies of the soul. The soul must be allowed to purify and discipline the mind. Then the mind becomes a powerful but controlled and constructive instrument, rather than the ordinary, undisciplined, illusionary, and separative mind. The independent and separative mind is somewhat destructive. A fundamental weakness of the lower mind is its tendency toward criticism (and all criticism is essentially destructive).

The fifth ray (as the ray of science, knowledge, and education) plays a major role in the objective evolution of humanity and a preparatory role in the subjective evolution of mankind. The fifth ray in exoteric education finds its complement in the second ray of esoteric education (the transmutation of knowledge into love-wisdom). The fifth ray as concrete knowledge finds itself the reflection into matter of the third ray of abstract knowledge and comprehension. The fifth ray as an occult ray finds encouragement in its supplementary rays: the first ray of power (will) (purpose), the third ray of activity, and the seventh ray of organization.

The fifth ray in the human domain is primarily the ray of the lower concrete (rational) mind, which is the focus of attention in the outer, objective world. The fifth ray is the ray of observation, analysis, and evaluation, and as such contributes considerably to individual and group evolution. The fifth ray dominates the process of discrimination (discernment) (judgment), and remains the primary ray of focus for the waking-consciousness in most of humanity, and the principal instrument of the soul in the lower world.

Grace

In the sense of unmerited or personal divine assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification, there is no grace. God transcendent is impersonal, having a polarization of consciousness threshold far above even the souls of men. God immanent, though personal (actually super-personal), works totally with the consequences implied in the merited energies of karma. All divine activities are guided by a spiritual motive that concerns the welfare of a greater cause than that of man. Special favors, privileges, or reprieves outside of merit and purpose simply do not exist.

However, the grace of God does exist as ordered purpose through cosmic law; and in this greater sense, grace is very real. Grace is actually an inherent property of all manifested lives. The purpose of God is evolution on cosmic levels. And therefore, the affairs of men are subject to the encouragement and conditions of cosmic law, so that man will contribute his efforts toward that greater purpose. Karma is the primary agent of this law as it concerns individual and group lives. The grace of God is very much interrelated with the law of karma. The grace of God is also very much inherent in the concept of greater and lesser needs.

In the stricter sense, the existence of need is impossible due to the divine virtue that manifests as grace. Cosmic law (grace) dictates that every need be fulfilled. Therefore, a need cannot exist, by definition; for cosmic law anticipates (impersonally and automatically) every possible need and achieves fulfillment in a continuous fashion (while necessarily functioning outside of the realm of time and space). However, needs do not necessarily equate to specific hopes or desires or wishes (that the individual might think to be his needs). Every (hypothetical) need is meaningful and necessary to the ordered purpose of manifestation, no matter upon what level of consciousness, microscopic, human, or macrocosmic. If anything is a need, it is fulfilled. Specific desires may or may not be fulfilled, according to the intensities of feeling, the consciousness involved, and whether or not such desires have their place, purpose, lesson, or function in a greater scheme.

The sanctification or unmerited removal or forgiveness of sins is also quite impossible. The concept of the forgiveness of sins is a blind, and a misunderstanding of the concept of karmic fulfillment through experience and progressive consciousness. Sins (ignorance and error) generate karmic energies which encourage (and eventually force) progress through enlightenment (higher consciousness). Sins are forgiven only in the sense that ultimately, cosmic law is fulfilled, and through divine grace (karma), man achieves perfection. It is for man to learn to continually radiate an energy of love and understanding for the experience and expression of every other human being; to learn to forgive (in the human sense) the sins or weaknesses of others; and to realize that through divine grace (and karma) there exists absolute justice (which automatically eliminates any need or justification for retribution).

The subject of divine grace leads to the subject of thanksgiving. For though a human being may be a trivial and microscopic form of life within the universe, the human being is wholly dependent upon the greater life that (impersonally) provides every necessary sustenance. Through divine grace and through the simple existence of a far greater life, the human being is granted life (and consciousness) and the nobility of God within the form. Thus, thanksgiving is always an appropriate state of mind, especially for beginning and ending each day, and as a qualification for every meditation period.

† Commentary No. 38

The Karmic Equation

The karmic equation is an abstract representation of the karma (causes and consequences) of an individual or group. It may be used as a focal point of tension for the study of karma. Since karma is such an exceedingly complex energy (even for the evolved individual), the equation must necessarily be symbolic and abstract, with an indeterminate series of many-dimensional terms. The reason for this is quite simple; karma is a superposition of inputs (causes) and outputs (effects or consequences) and their interactions, over a diverse continuity and fabric of time, space, and consciousness.

The inputs to the karmic equation are the vast sea of causes (physical, emotional, and mental behaviors and motives) which spans past moments and lifetimes. All of the past actions have been entered as causes, and new causes are added continuously as the individual lives, thinks, feels, and otherwise experiences. The relationships of an individual to other persons are often major (potent) inputs. The output of the equation is the continuous (weighted) sum total of external forces and influences on the individual or the group. A further complexity is introduced by the superposition of individual, family, group, racial, national, and planetary karma. Much of the karmic equation concerns the relationships (superpositions and transformations) between causes and effects. Since the effects are continuously responsive to the causes and relationships, the effects constitute a feedback mechanism (the response of the individual creates new causes which in turn modify somewhat the new effects). Each equation is continuously changing, though the changes may be quite small when compared to the output or yield. In general, a large number of causes are superimposed (and distributed in time) and transformed to produce timely and appropriate effects.

The study of karma is the study of experience and evolution, for the purpose of karma is always to encourage evolution by providing the various lessons, experiences, and opportunities needed (earned). Karma can only be fulfilled as the lessons are learned, consciously or otherwise. No real external interference is possible. Under certain conditions, karma can be changed in time and space; and with accelerated learning and the creation of new causes, the karmic effects can be modified. But karma cannot be circumvented, lessened, or modified without ultimate fulfillment. The lessons must be learned, one way or another, or the individual will suffer incompleteness.

All karma is earned (anticipated). Talents, qualities, experiences, and opportunities are all earned, just as pain, suffering, and the various forms of limitation are earned, whether from carelessness, ignorance, unconscious action, or deliberate action. No karma is arbitrary. Karma is infinite wisdom, for the effects are conditioned not only from the (literal) causes but also from the state of consciousness, the motives, and the circumstances at the time the cause is created as well as at the time the effects are produced. All conditions are taken into account automatically, for the greater good.

The conscious study of causes, effects, and their relationships (both in a practical sense and in an abstract sense) tends to enhance and expand the capacity of the student for understanding. Efforts to find relationships (through meditation) and the partial understanding that results lead to progress (light and love). With understanding comes greater abilities and insight, and progress along the path is made more rapidly, more easily, and more constructively. Karma in the individual sense is eventually fulfilled, enabling the student to deal with group (human, planetary, and solar) karmic forces.

† Commentary No. 39

Religion 1

The nature of religion is progressive revelation, primarily for the masses. Throughout history and pre-history there have been revelations or new exoteric religious teachings for the multitudes. As man has evolved, so have the outer teachings of each revelation been consistent with man's consciousness and his capacity for understanding. Man does not create a (true) religion. A religion is evoked by (given to) man according to his needs, and man then objectifies and interprets (or misinterprets) the teachings. The older religions (and even a few of the newer ones) were often custom-fitted to particular races or cultures, leading the people onward and upward one step at a time.

Such is the work of religion, to lead and to guide the larger groups of people (in terms of consciousness) and to slowly prepare them for the spiritual path. The deepest esoteric teachings of all religions are essentially the same. Only the outer teachings of the various religions differ, and then only according to the needs (and responsiveness) of the people. Even so, there are many common elements in the outer teachings. By degrees, the inner teachings reflect a measure (and perspective) of the ancient and timeless wisdom that constitutes the foundation and basis for all of the lesser and greater mysteries, and with those inner teachings can the spiritual students of the world find some guidance and encouragement.

Wherever there is consciousness significantly below that of the masses (or consciousness unresponsive to religious teaching), there are man-made religions

(superstitions) and greatly misunderstood older teachings. Even with the consciousness of the majority, there are many man-made elements to the orthodox religions (and considerable but inevitable misunderstanding). But wherever there is consciousness significantly higher than that of the masses, there is a higher (progressive) revelation from the soul. Wherever there is a higher consciousness (in some degree), there is an availability of certain of the esoteric teachings. As a man is capable of understanding, so shall he receive.

Religions are normally founded by certain individuals who achieve (either partially or completely) union with the soul (and the greater wisdom) and are used as instruments of revelation, often by earlier design. Among the many historical revelations are those of Abraham, Akhenaten, Confucius, Gautama (Buddha), Hermes, Jesus (Christ), Krishna, Lao-tse, Melchizedek, Mohammed, Moses, Orpheus, Padmasambhava, Plato, Pythagoras, Quetzalcoatl, and Zoroaster. Although the personalities are relatively unimportant, the teachings that pass through them are important. Among the major (orthodox) scriptures are the Old and New Testaments, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Qabalah, and the Tao Te Ching. Each of the religions (revelations) (teachings) has many lessons to teach regardless of the consciousness of the student. Most of the real scriptures are very symbolic, with several layers of meaning. However, some have been manipulated to a certain extent through ignorance and selfish design, and therefore require even greater intuition (realization) for the discernment of their essence.

The organized religions of the world offer even the most advanced students opportunities to serve humanity (though such students must be careful not to become absorbed by a religion or its atmosphere). Through religion should be imparted the encouragement of the ethical, moral, social, legal, and spiritual welfare of humanity. Through religion humanity is exposed to the orthodox and objective manifestation of truth. But in the final analysis, there can be no religion higher than truth itself.

The Sixth Ray

The sixth ray is considered to be the ray of devotion and idealism. The sixth ray is a ray of attribute and forms one of the dimensions of manifestation of the third aspect of the trinity. This ray demonstrates as the astral plane (the plane of desire and emotion), is linked to the buddhic plane (the plane of the spiritual intuition), and is the reflection of the second ray of love-wisdom. In one sense, it is the second ray reflected (or objectified) into matter, with the inherent limitations of the world of matter.

The sixth ray is a ray of personal love, desire, idealism, devotion, aspiration, and religion. Through the sixth ray the unregulated and distorted (personal) emotions (stormy waters) are uplifted into the quiet, purified, and clarified (disciplined) emotions (the calm sea) of aspiration and impersonal devotion (to God rather than to personalities or individuals). That struggle itself is qualified by the fourth ray of balance (contrast), through its mystical relationship with the second ray and the sixth ray.

The sixth ray is the primary ray of glamour, and is therefore the ray of liberation from glamour (through transmutation). The sixth ray is a very mystical ray, in which the heart (love) that is centered on the astral plane is transformed into the heart that is centered on the intuitional plane. It is a most difficult ray to conquer, having many weaknesses and many stumbling blocks compounded by glamour; yet within the ray are the energies of overcoming that provide for liberation from the darkness of personal glammers and distractions. The sensitivity of the sixth ray is primarily astral (emotional), and is therefore subject to the vast intensity and diversity of glamour that make astral psychism rather undependable and misleading. The relationship of the emotional (astral) (desire) body to glamour and other astral phenomena makes the sixth ray experience a major challenge to the spiritual student. Relief occurs only when the mind has dominated and purified the emotions. Being the ray of religion and a ray of attribute (objectivity), the sixth ray is the means through which religious teachings are revealed. It is clearly a ray of idealism, that is the objectification of (divine) ideas, but an idealism that is necessarily clouded by personal energies. Nevertheless, through religion and through the various

ideals (limitations of ideas) man is given guidelines for seeking and (relative) goals to seek.

The probationary path is governed primarily by the sixth ray. The probationary path is the path in which the life of the aspirant undergoes the transformations that are prerequisites for discipleship and subsequent service. The domain of service, from the highly selfish (personal) to the highly unselfish (impersonal), is the domain of the sixth ray. The lessons of reverence, self-sacrifice, and service are all within the domain of sixth ray energy. After completing the sixth ray experience, the spiritual student can then make decisions based upon higher (impersonal) values and for the good of all concerned, rather than based upon that which is appealing (the lower, personal values). Personalities become less and less distracting and values are uplifted through soul contact, as the student masters the sixth ray dilemma.

The sixth ray has for quite some time been the world ray, the ray that especially colors or conditions the planet for a period of time (world cycle). This ray is now passing out of manifestation and is being replaced (as the world ray) by the seventh ray. As this process occurs, the merits of the sixth ray order are abstracted to form a foundation for the new order, and the limitations of the old order are dispersed, through crisis (transition).

† Commentary No. 41

The Value of Silence

The value of silence includes the value of meditation (interior silence), the value of quiet surroundings (exterior silence), the value of disciplined thinking, and the value of disciplined speech. The voice of the silence is required for true enlightenment and for the guidance of the soul. Meditation and the inner silence are essential daily functions in the life of the aspirant or disciple (and for the spiritual students of all degrees).

The student needs frequent surroundings of peace and quiet if he is to properly collect his thoughts, avoid absorption in mundane affairs, and consciously learn from his daily experiences. Loud music, coarse music, and unpleasant atmospheres are quite detrimental to the process of awareness and alignment.

Most of what is considered classical music can be of some benefit, provided that it is not too loud. Pure exterior silence or the silent (soft) sounds of nature are always conducive to interior alignment and awareness. Sounds which excite the emotional body should be avoided if at all possible.

Disciplined thinking implies wisdom in thought, through harmless, non-critical, constructive, unselfish thinking. The power of human thought to affect the thinker's atmosphere (aura) as well as that of others is considerable. Much damage can be done through careless thinking. Even greater can be the damage done through careless speaking. In most of the ancient mystery schools, the neophyte was forbidden to speak during the first two or three years of training. After such an experience, the neophyte would certainly speak only when and where words would be helpful. Careless or undisciplined words can be quite painful and can carry consequences far beyond the immediate time and place. Speaking is a release of energy. The energy of the aspirant or disciple is to be conserved, not wasted; it is to be used (released) wisely and constructively for the optimum good. It takes strength and forbearance to leave unkind or worthless thoughts un-thought.

Such wisdom in thinking and in speaking is quite possible, and can be approached by anyone who treads the path. The serious disciple is marked by his inner calm and serenity and self-control, in spite of the pressures and noise of the world around him. Disciplined thinking and speaking can become a very natural and comfortable disposition, which will eventually fall below the threshold of the waking-consciousness (and therefore be spontaneous and automatic). The experience of silence encourages soul contact and consequently enhances awareness. Living a spiritual life in the objective world is difficult enough even with the guidance and intuitive wisdom of the soul. The lower world is filled with darkness (glamour, illusion, and the less subtle (coarse) vibrations). The encounter with silence helps the individual to see through the glammers and illusions of this world and helps the student to live a more worthwhile life of experience and expression.

The need for periods of inner and outer silence does not imply any real (sustained) withdrawal from the objective world. It is not the purpose of the aspirant to escape or to totally withdraw from this world (though sustained periods of withdrawal are sometimes called for). The student must learn to live

and work in the lower worlds without becoming absorbed by the glammers and illusions, and without losing touch with the inner self (soul). The disciplines of silence offer a path to soul contact and subsequent spiritual renewal. The inner life of the disciple can be maintained without interfering with objective responsibilities. Though living in both worlds is difficult, the rewards are well worth the continuous effort expended.

† Commentary No. 42

The Twelve Festivals

Daily personal meditation performed seriously and consistently leads ultimately to soul contact and to group meditation work. The twelve group meditation periods of greatest significance are the twelve planetary festivals. Each of the twelve events is a planetary meditation involving great numbers of spiritual students of all religions, races, and nationalities. The festivals are held monthly (twelve per year) at the point of the full moon. Each festival lasts for several days: just before, during, and after the actual full moon. Each full moon period implies the approach of the spiritual hierarchy to humanity and to the spiritual students within humanity, wherever they may be. These are special (particular) approaches, in addition to the continuous flow of energy received from the hierarchy.

Each festival is a planet-wide meditation at the time when the greatest flow of spiritual energy is available. Though the moon itself is not an influence, the period of the full moon is a period of unimpeded alignment between the planet and the source of energy (which is the sun) (the primary instrument of Logoic power). The lunar cycle is a major energy cycle of spiritual significance to humanity. The period from the new moon to the full moon is a period of intensification, absorption of energy, and accretion (growth). During the first half of the lunar cycle (from the new moon), meditation is somewhat easier, especially where there is awareness and observation of the lunar cycle. The second half of the lunar cycle (the period from the full moon to the new moon) is a period of assimilation and distribution of energy.

The time of the full moon is a time for meditation when special, unique spiritual energies are available. The solar sign of the full moon determines the esoteric

quality of the energies available. The maturity of the human soul and personality determines the quality of response. The full moon periods are times of stimulation and opportunity for mature spiritual students who approach God and the hierarchy with unselfish motives, for the good of humanity rather than for the good of the individual. The inflowing energies are channeled into the minds and hearts of men, strengthening the link between humanity and the kingdom of God. Many esoteric and exoteric groups meet in group formation for meditation in conjunction with the twelve hierarchical festivals.

The first three festivals of the solar year (which begins at the spring equinox) are the three major festivals. The full moon of Aries is the Easter festival, the festival of the Christ, the expression of the love aspect of the second ray. It is the great western and Christian festival, acknowledged by the esoteric students of all faiths. The full moon of Taurus is the Wesak festival, the festival of the Buddha, the expression of the wisdom aspect of the second ray. It is the great eastern festival, also acknowledged by esoteric students of all faiths (as are each of the twelve festivals). The full moon of Gemini is the festival of goodwill, the festival of humanity (World Invocation Day). These three festivals are the three major spiritual events of the year, and are expressions of the three divine aspects (the three major rays) to be established within humanity.

The remaining nine festivals are minor or lesser festivals, and are expressions of the four divine attributes (the four minor rays) to be established within humanity. Each of the twelve festivals is a high point in the higher life of the aspirant or disciple and of the planet. The observance and cooperation with the lunar cycle (the ebb and flow of potent spiritual energies) further contributes to the spiritual progress of humanity.

Cosmic Law and Order

One of the keynotes of cosmic manifestation is ordered purpose. Cosmic law is the result of purpose on a macrocosmic scale. The scheme of evolution is a vast, complicated, yet ordered mechanism of which human observations are but a small fraction of the larger reality. The various cosmic, solar, and planetary laws (and their ancillary laws) determine the course and quality of evolution. As humanity learns and understands more of these natural laws, so shall humanity be better able to cooperate with the laws of life (evolution) and contribute further to the ordered purpose of the logos.

Cosmic law may be categorized in many ways, through a number of perspectives, both in an objective sense and in a subjective sense. Some elements of cosmic law are consciously imposed by the greater logos; other elements are unconsciously imposed, being inherent qualities of the prevailing life or manifestation (presence) of cosmic life. That which is consciously manifested also generates ancillary laws. That which is consciously made manifest is analogous to the conscious human thought that qualifies or conditions the aura. That which is inherently manifested is analogous to the will or purpose of the indwelling human life which conditions the behavior of atoms or cells within the various elements of the human personality.

Certain elements of cosmic law are relatively uncompromising and inflexible (such as the observable laws of physics and chemistry). Other elements have various degrees of flexibility (as in the case of the law of karma which is especially qualified by wisdom and purpose). The laws of evolution (and the law of karma) encourage the evolving life to progress in a general direction according to a generalized purpose. If the evolving life goes contrary to the natural laws of evolution, then that life is guided and prodded back onto the desired (appropriate) (intended) path. The further the distance from the proper course, the greater will be the restoring force. The further along the path one goes, the less is one permitted to deviate from that which is best for the greater life. And yet, the further along the path one goes, the greater is the freedom, capacity, and opportunity for the individuality (soul), simply because the soul is then wiser and more potent.

The order and scope of the multidimensional universe is tremendous. From the highest conceivable macrocosmic absolute being to the lowest conceivable microscopic and intra-nuclear life, there is order and purpose. The objective universe is very highly organized at the present point in the cycle of manifestation. The exoteric (objective) universe begins and ends with chaos (unorganized primordial formlessness), but the esoteric universe maintains its ordered purpose throughout the various cosmic days and nights. The qualities developed during manifestation are abstracted in approximately the same way that the human soul abstracts the experience of each incarnation (according to evolutionary law). The cyclic manifestations of the various Logoi and the cyclic manifestations of the human atomic sphere are interrelated. A study of cosmic law and order is also a study of man's relationship to the macrocosm.

If the student is to evolve consciously, he must deepen himself in the relative understanding of the laws of the universe (and evolution) which affect him (and humanity) and to which he is related. A great deal of encouragement comes with the deeper understanding of life. Cosmic law fulfills. Cosmic law and order bring to man a purpose which transcends the mundane life and personality, carrying every human life (soul) (monad) onward and upward toward relative perfection and release from personality-centered existence.

† Commentary No. 44

The Seventh Ray

The seventh ray is called the ray of ceremonial order. The seventh ray is one of the four minor rays of attribute, and demonstrates as the physical plane of consciousness, the lowest plane of objective manifestation. The seventh ray is the reflection into matter of the first ray of power, and is linked also to the third ray and the fifth ray (the odd-numbered rays are the occult rays). As the ray of objectivity for the ray of power, the seventh ray is power inherent in physical matter (crystallized energy).

Where the third ray is a ray of law and justice, the seventh ray is a ray of law and order. Where the first ray is a ray of government and leadership, the

seventh ray is a ray of bureaucracy and politics. Where the fifth ray is a ray of analytical order, the seventh ray is a ray of ceremonial order. Where the fourth ray is a ray of art (life), the seventh ray is a ray of art (form). Where the sixth ray is a ray of religion, the seventh ray is a ray of ritual. The seventh ray is also a ray of rhythm, magic, and organization. The seventh ray type includes the priest, the ceremonialist or ritualist, the occult magician, the politician, the producer, and the businessman. As a ray of extreme (physical) objectivity, the seventh ray is somewhat absorbed (distorted) by materialism. The lessons of the seventh ray eventually lead to a liberation from the lower life based upon material things and phenomena, from the lower chaos (the unorganized) to ordered objectivity, and from ordered objectivity to the higher chaos (synthesized order or abstraction).

One of the problems of the seventh ray is that through ceremony, ritual, pageantry, and bureaucracy, the individual or the group can easily lose sight of purpose, meaning (significance) and reality. Another problem is that of magic based on material powers and guided by emotional or concrete mental force rather than the force of the soul. As a ray of magic, the ray of ceremonial order is a ray of phenomena (psychism and spiritualism) that must be uplifted into a ray of mature spirituality and reverence. Magic based on selfish motives and ignorance (black magic) must be transmuted and transformed into magic based on unselfish motives and wisdom (white magic). The sensitivities of the seventh ray lend themselves to elementals and the lower psychic forces. These talents must ultimately be ordered to a higher purpose, that the forces of nature be used constructively and harmlessly. Through the ray of ceremonial order will come the etheric (higher physical) vision and a greater exoteric realization of the realm of natural (physical) forces.

As the incoming world ray, the seventh ray is bringing first a display of its inherent weaknesses. Gradually will come the strengths to obliterate that which might be called unfortunate. The incoming ray brings a time of changes, a time of destroying (releasing) the old forms which imprison and hold back the desired progress. The incoming ray brings a time of new realizations. That which is old and no longer of value (having served its purpose) must be discarded. That which is old yet continues to serve and be of value must be kept and properly assimilated.

Through the incoming seventh ray, a growing (maturing) humanity will replace crime and lawlessness by peace, law, and order. The coming of law and order needs to be tempered by reasonableness; otherwise there is likely to be a reduction of personal freedom. Man is well known for his oscillation between the extremes. Moderation is a difficult accomplishment at any level. May an expansive, constructive stability and reasonableness temper the reactions of human personalities to these new energies.

† Commentary No. 45

The Hidden Wisdom

For those who seek truth and enlightenment, there are two interdependent sources for the keys to wisdom. These keys are concealed from those who are unprepared and are revealed by degrees only to those who have prepared themselves with the prerequisite experience and consciousness. The primary source is within the human being. Hidden within man himself are the keys to the mysteries of life and the mysteries of the universe; for through the soul a man can reach levels of consciousness and sources of knowledge far above and beyond that which can be translated into four-dimensional thoughts or objective experience. The perfected man does not know everything, but he does know where he can find the answers to questions and he has developed the capacity to discern the answers (and the wisdom of appropriateness) (except that the spiritual student who has achieved perfection is beyond seeking).

The kingdom of God is hidden within, and in the course of evolution man must pass through that kingdom. Much of the ancient wisdom and esoteric philosophy deals directly with the steps that lead man to the inner experience and union with the true self (God). The greater the quality of a man's inner life, the greater will be the enlightenment received from within. But before the student of life can consciously find the inner experience, he must be guided in the preliminary steps. Various forms of religion and philosophy have guided man from the ancient of times, revealing the path to those who seek according to the degree of consciousness. Although religions and their scriptures are mostly designed for the masses, the scriptures must also assist individuals who are (relatively) the pioneers of contemporary consciousness.

Thus the secondary source of the keys to the wisdom is hidden within all true scriptures. The scriptures are written in a sacred symbolic language, within which are encoded the various keys to the spiritual path and self-enlightenment. The higher degrees or levels of symbolic hidden wisdom are revealed as the student begins to find the God within (as the aspirant qualified himself). Through the spiritual intuition, the higher keys are discerned and the deeper lessons of life are learned.

This symbolic scriptural revelation is derived primarily from the ancient wisdom teachings discerned by enlightened individuals who have found themselves and have been trained in the allegorical language. The basic symbolic language of all scriptures is the same, though specific perspectives and intentions (for which keys are also available) vary. Intuition remains the discerning factor, for a language of words implies limitation; and since times change popular meanings of words change also. There is difficulty also in translating scripture from the original language, since few of the translators have received the esoteric training or can discern the original intentions.

Because the translation, reading, and interpretation of scripture (as well as truth discerned within) is so colored by the personal life (the imperfect personality) (the mind and the emotions) (experience and capacity), the meditative disposition is the safest in which to function. There are no sources of authoritative truth; for the experience, consciousness, and perspectives of the writer, the speaker, the reader, and the listener are different. Truth is not absolute; truth is relative. There are many perspectives and levels of truth, equally valid. One can only discern for oneself that which is presently true for oneself. The greatest value of both forms of (the keys to the) hidden wisdom is the capacity to conceal and to reveal according to the perspectives and experience and consciousness of each individual.

The Ancient Mysteries

Throughout history and prehistory there have been divinely inspired religions and philosophies, and each of these has had an exoteric and an esoteric side. Each has had three levels or degrees. The lower degree is the exoteric religion itself, the religion of the masses. The intermediate degree includes the lesser mysteries, the link between the esoteric and the exoteric. The higher degree includes the greater mysteries, the purely esoteric. Though the lower and intermediate degrees vary according to the perspective and purpose of the particular religion or philosophy, the higher degree is common to all esoteric religions and philosophies. The ancient mysteries are the ageless mysteries of the universe and the mysteries of life: an integrated esoteric philosophy (religion) (science).

In the earliest days of humanity, mankind was ruled and guided by great (superhuman) teachers. As the pioneers among men evolved sufficiently, they were instructed in the mysteries and became priest-kings who ruled during the golden era of Atlantis. As more and more of humanity evolved mentally, Atlantean mystery schools were established in order to train the more highly evolved of men in the lesser mysteries and the most highly evolved of men in the greater mysteries. With the decline and destruction of Atlantis, the mystery schools were reestablished (primarily) in Egypt. From Egypt (and elsewhere) mystery schools were established wherever there was human civilization. Initiated into the Egyptian mysteries, Orpheus, Pythagoras, and Plato each led Greece in a spiritual renewal. The Greek mysteries included those of Dionysus, Delphi, and Eleusis.

Abraham received the Chaldean mysteries; Moses received the Egyptian mysteries; and Jesus was an initiate of the Christian mysteries (through the Essenes). In ancient (historical) days there were many secret (mystery) schools, from the Druidic mysteries of Britain, to the Persian mysteries, to the mystery schools of the Orient. Not all of these schools remained in good public favor; in fact, all were eventually forced (by those who were refused admission) to either disband and dissolve or to go underground. The outer religions and the lesser

mysteries were then degraded by the multitudes (who simply failed to understand them), and what remains historically is little more than myth.

The last outpost of the ancient mystery schools was in Alexandria (Egypt), where the Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian mysteries were blended. But even the Christian mysteries were ultimately forced underground by the circumstances of their times. Today the ancient mysteries are still available to the seeker. Even the orthodox scriptures contain the lesser mysteries (symbolically), and the greater mysteries are available through soul contact. Much of the ageless wisdom is taught and published openly today, for that which was once quite esoteric has now become exoteric. With inner wisdom, the aspirant can properly evaluate the metaphysical, theosophical, and esoteric (common) teachings and determine which of the teachings are of value.

Though the outer forms of the mysteries (religions) (scriptures) (schools) vary widely, the inner formulae are always essentially the same (though the formulae are evolving also according to the consciousness of the aspirants of the world). Thus the ancient mysteries remain ageless. The ancient mysteries, in both the lesser and greater degrees, offer a pathway for the evolving human being to find true enlightenment and liberation. All esoteric paths finally become one path. And all esoteric students finally become that one path, being consciously one with God and one with the greater mysteries.

† Commentary No. 47

Criticism and Opinion

As a person (individuality) treads upon the path and proceeds to purify and develop the life and consciousness, there inevitably comes a time of crisis in mental development. When the emotions have been tamed and when the polarization of consciousness becomes predominantly mental, then the mind will tend to grow very strong. With that strength and the independence of mind will come the powers of discrimination (discernment) and observation. And along with this will come one of the greater stumbling blocks of mental evolution: the development of the critical mind.

The powers of observation and discernment are generally beneficial, for much can easily be learned through awareness of the lives and worlds that surround each individual. But the power of the mind to criticize can be quite detrimental. In the highest sense, no criticism (verbal or mental) can lack a destructive quality. There are criticisms that are (relatively) obviously destructive and uncalled for. Then there are subtle criticisms and the so-called constructive criticism. In the higher reality, even the most (apparently) constructive criticism has a damaging effect, in the subconscious sense and in the psychic sense. A critical attitude or disposition is highly detrimental to an individual (and to those around him) even though critical words may not be spoken.

In the case of the sensitive mind, to be criticized is to be attacked. The mind (perhaps unconsciously) may feel antagonized by even slight and gentle criticism, whether or not intended. Criticism in general negates or reduces cooperation between individuals and groups. Choosing words carefully (or intuitively), one can verbally transmit a helpful message or suggestion in a gentle, impersonal way (without criticism) that will encourage cooperation and consideration. Instead of telling someone (as it seems) he is wrong or that something is wrong, one might suggest that there seems to be a better way. It is not the role of the spiritual student to judge others or to correct what seem to be their mistakes or weaknesses. It is easy to criticize, unconsciously or otherwise. But the critical disposition must ultimately be tamed, if the student is to perfect the relationship between the mind and the soul.

Another serious stumbling block for the mentally developed student is opinion. Opinions (along with illusion) enslave the majority of mentally polarized human beings. In the objective experience it is nearly impossible to have no opinions, but it is quite possible to minimize such distractions and attachments. To hold fast to opinions without consideration for new or expanded possibilities is the mark of the enslaved mind. Aspirants and disciples are expected to grow, through deepening their spiritual lives and experiences. Thus the student must be free to assimilate his experience, changing or modifying his opinions and values in the light of experience and in the light of the energies from within. The open-minded and discerning individual often reviews his own opinions and philosophy and incorporates any worthy changes or additions. He is not pressured or intimidated, but changes only where there is value in doing so.

The spiritual student is not expected to assume all of the qualities of the perfected man in one lifetime. But the student on the path is expected to make some progress in each lifetime, without making excuses. The elimination of criticism is a (relatively) difficult task, but one that can be attempted and one that can show progress. To be free from inflexible opinions is also a real possibility. Ultimately the liberated soul must have no opinions, but that is as yet not a practical goal. It is however, a goal that should be kept in mind.

† Commentary No. 48

Opportunity and Limitation

One of the most potent and rewarding of energies for the evolving man is the karma of limitation and opportunity. The karma of limitation deals with physical, emotional, and mental impairment, defect, or limitation. The karma of opportunity deals with the availability of (or lack of) opportunities in the light of (or lack of) talents, abilities, and capacities. Limitation and opportunity are very much interrelated.

Limitations and opportunities are earned, as are talents and capacities. If through learning, service, and the application of consciousness, the individual earns opportunities for further learning or work or service, then that opportunity must be utilized constructively and wisely. If the opportunity is ignored or neglected or abused, then limitation is highly likely to follow, either presently or in the next lifetime. The nature of the limitation depends a great deal on the circumstances of the opportunity, the response, and the consciousness of the individual. Opportunity is a responsibility. Financial or material wealth, talents and experience, and the situations in which the personality is placed, are all opportunities (responsibilities) to be approached with wisdom. Otherwise, the consequences are stern lessons that encourage the individual in the optimum (proper) direction. The attitude toward an opportunity or experience plays a considerable role in addition to (or in spite of) the talent or wisdom held.

Mental or emotional insanity is often the result of premature psychic development and tampering or the result of mental and emotional abuse. Physical limitation is sometimes the result of the direct application of the

personality by the soul seeking to develop the personality in a certain way, in order to accomplish a certain experience or achievement. A physical limitation often leads to increased development and capacity in other areas. The blind person may develop an acute sense of hearing, smell, or touch. The deaf person may develop greater powers of visual observation. And the physically crippled individual may develop greater mental powers. Physical limitation with little pain or suffering strongly suggests the need for such experience.

The keys to such a life are acceptance and determination, to accept the condition and to make the best (most) of the experience and wherever possible, determination to overcome the limitation by all (internal) means. The person experiencing limitation may otherwise waste a lifetime of unsuspected opportunity. Guardians and teachers of such persons should strive to encourage the concerned individuals toward self-confidence and determination to live a useful, constructive life. There need be no dwelling on false hopes which may negate or actually discourage self-development.

The understanding of the karma of limitation and opportunity leads to considerable encouragement to make the best of this life (spiritually), in spite of limitations, imperfections, or the lack of opportunities; and encouragement to recognize and utilize opportunities as constructively and as unselfishly as possible. There is a great deal of work that needs to be done that does not require well-defined opportunities for service. The spiritual student who fails to respond to an opportunity for service may well be denied another chance in the present lifetime. In the face of the karma of limitation and opportunity (as in all karma) one should seek understanding. The spiritual student should seek to improve his consciousness and to learn the lessons of life, that limitation might be ultimately removed (as the lessons are learned) and that freedom to serve humanity might be returned or improved.

The Symbolic Language

The sacred symbolic language is the language of the scriptures. It is a language of symbols, parables, analogies, correspondences, inferences, comparisons, and allegories. The sacred language is a mechanism or instrument used by the inspired founders and disciples of most religions who have been schooled in the ancient mysteries and whose task it is to encode the hidden wisdom in the scriptures of their faith. The sacred language can be adapted to any human exoteric language, though each language and successive translation implies further limitation.

Scriptures are usually written intuitively; and scriptures should be read intuitively if the full meaning is to be determined. A number of keys to the symbolic language are publicly available. Further keys must come from within. With these special keys, much that offers little or no value in a literal interpretation will offer considerable meaning from a symbolic interpretation. One of the major (exoteric) keys implies that objective events described in the scriptures (which may or may not have occurred historically) occur subjectively, that outer events refer to happenings within the human being (in consciousness). Another key suggests that persons, races, or countries actually represent or personify human qualities and weaknesses. Most of the enemies referenced in scripture describe the enemies of the human soul and spirit, the weaknesses and limitations of the personality, weaknesses and limitations to be overcome.

Many of the scriptural stories describe phases or cycles of human evolution, as well as planetary and solar events. Included in the Old Testament is the (symbolic) story of millions of years of evolutionary cycles and human development. Included in the New Testament is the story of the gradual unfoldment of Christ-consciousness, an inevitable event for every human being. Included in the Bhagavad Gita is the story of man's great struggle between truth (reality) and glamour (illusion). The great value of these scriptures (and others) is the multiplicity of symbolic levels of meaning. Each story or verse may describe several different allegorical and symbolic events or truths. Each word may further be encoded with several layers of symbolic meaning. Each

letter in a word (in the original language) and each number may also have considerable significance. Some verses and some stories may even be blinds. And some may be written to support the literal continuity rather than the spiritual significance. Thus wisdom is required for proper discernment.

Another valuable complexity (simplicity) is that many of the symbolic stories describe events on the gradual path of human evolution as well as events on the hastened path of spiritual development. There are many levels of hidden wisdom contained in the various scriptures. It is a task of the evolving spiritual student to learn as much as he can of life in general and of the spiritual life in particular, and to put into practice that which is learned. The lessons of life and the lessons of the various scriptures must be learned if mankind is to achieve illumination and liberation.

The reading of scripture can be quite misleading if the student reads only in a literal sense. The reading can be as complex and as abstract as the mind chooses, or it can be quite simple and practical. With the guidance and understanding that comes with the spiritual intuition, the student should be able to discern the original intentions and overcome much that is lost through the translation and the manipulation of the scriptures. With the keys to the symbolic language in hand, a great deal of the hidden wisdom can be uncovered (revealed) to the mind and heart that have (obviously) been prepared.

† Commentary No. 50

Crisis and Consciousness

One of the primary purposes of evolution is the development and expansion of consciousness. As a spark from a great fire, the human monad (spirit) and its reflection (the soul) must be fanned into stable and progressive existence. The inherent and latent powers of the godhead are to be developed in each human life. The original unconsciousness must be developed and expanded through involution into self-consciousness; and that self-consciousness must be expanded and unfolded through evolution into super-consciousness. This development of consciousness may proceed in any one of a number of different

ways, each adding its own qualities and epigenetic factors to the eventual product. One of the keynotes of the planetary evolution is crisis.

Through a nearly infinite series of crises, the consciousness is impelled to grow, develop, expand, and undergo epigenesis. Epigenesis is the process of development in new or original ways of talents which were not obviously latent in man, but are included in man's contribution to the developing God of which humanity is an integral part. The major crises in the life (not lifetime) of a human soul include the process of individualization (in which the soul individualizes and becomes self-conscious) and the successive transitions from one plane of consciousness to another. The person of Lemurian (physical) consciousness experiences a major crisis as his polarization of consciousness is transferred from the physical plane to the emotional (astral) plane. Likewise the person of Atlantean (emotional) consciousness undergoes a major crisis as he transfers his consciousness from the astral plane to the mental plane. The integration of the personality by the mind is a crisis, as is the process of alignment between the mind (personality) and the soul. The transference of consciousness from the Aryan (mental) to the buddhic (intuitional) plane (of Christ-consciousness) is also a major crisis. Each of these major crises may take many years to fulfill, and usually bridges between lifetimes.

Within the constant struggle of consciousness with objectivity are many intermediate and minor crises. Intermediate crises include the transference of consciousness from one sub-plane to another. Minor crises include the everyday tensions and pressures of experience, each of which encourages the development of consciousness. The lessons of life can be learned through observation and contemplation or through personal experience; they can be learned rapidly (in the case of the student who has taken conscious responsibility for his own evolution) or quite slowly; they can be learned easily (through awareness) or with considerable difficulty. Through tension (crisis) large or small, intense or gradual, does the impelling force of evolution work, progressively.

The role of the adversary (duality, objectivity, imperfection, limitation, materialism) is to force development (in its own way), even in the case of the gradually evolving and relatively uninspired life. At least this is true for this particular school of experience (there are other worlds and other lifewaves). Attitude toward crisis is a major determining factor for success. With

awareness and cooperation (realization) the lessons of each crisis can be learned without pain and without discomfort, learned easily and rapidly.

With resistance (inertia) comes pain and difficulty, and a prolonging of the energies which produce crisis (karma). Crises and tensions are beneficial, for through these pressures come the development of consciousness (awareness), the destruction (transmutation) of glamour and illusion, the mastery of the soul over the limitations of objectivity, and the humble offerings and contributions of human development to the evolution of a greater life.

† Commentary No. 51

Encouragement

Life upon the spiritual path is not an easy life. When the aspirant begins to take responsibility for his own progress and evolution, he sets forces into motion which bring new intensities (energies) into his life. These new energies are the challenges and responsibilities of the path, experiences and opportunities to be fulfilled. The intensity of karma to be worked out in each lifetime is increased considerably until all has been completed. The path becomes increasingly more narrow, and difficulties and pressures abound. It is easy for the spiritual student to be discouraged, for the path is somewhat lonely and the pressure of the illusion of separation is great. As sensitivity increases, the student can become even more discouraged by the imperfections of personality and the imperfections and glammers of the external world.

But the spiritual student can ill afford to dwell in a discouraging way, for fear and depression are enemies of the soul; they interfere and hinder. Rather, the aspirant needs to recognize and appreciate the good in the world and the good within himself. The human being (soul) is a noble creature, being a reflection and a differentiation of divinity. It is only the illusion of the lower world which obscures the spark of divine life from the objective vision. God is everywhere, immanent within all lives. If the student believes first in God (and especially in the God within), then confidence will come and the student shall not lack encouragement.

Seeking encouragement from external events leads to disappointment. Seeking encouragement from within can sometimes result in false hopes and subsequent disappointment, for the masquerading mind can fabricate false energies. Encouragement should not be sought. True encouragement can only follow the student's unselfish concern for others (humanity). As the aspirant forgets himself, then encouragement shall always be with him. He who depends entirely on the Christ (God) within finds strength and confidence equal to any task.

Many upon the path become disappointed with their own lack of (apparent) progress. But the progress of the soul is mostly subjective. Indications of progress in the objective life normally come long after progress has been made. The positive efforts of the aspirant and disciple are not in vain. For though the rewards may not come for years or even lifetimes, the rewards are significant and considerable, and well worth the effort expended. Seeking to see the effects of one's work and progress only hinders and has no place in the life of the disciple who is free from the glammers (and self-importance) of personality. The disciple seeks no recognition; he seeks no reward; and he makes no claims. Though the disciple recognizes that the rewards are real, he is preoccupied with living the spiritual life as best he can, doing the work that is before him to do. The disciple chooses to do right because it is right to do right, rather than because of the rewards (for humanity) that come.

The student whose values are moral, ethical, and spiritual needs no incentive to live a joyful, helpful life. Such a life is natural, spontaneous, and lasting. Encouragement comes through knowing oneself (the soul) and in knowing God. The student finds encouragement (without seeking) as he lives in the eternal now, neither basing happiness on past events nor in future possibilities or expectations. Especially during these times of planetary tension, the encouragement received must be shared. In a sense, it is the dharma (responsibility) of the disciple to encourage mankind toward constructive evolution, that humanity will someday achieve a maturity comparable to that of the great ones who have already graduated from this human school of experience.

Time and Space

The illusion of time and space is a necessary, yet temporary experience, an experience that is mostly limited to the objective (physical) world and the perception of the mind seeking to utilize physical plane consciousness. Space is an entity, and time is simply an extension of space into a fourth dimension. From a purely objective point of view, space is the three-dimensional dense physical world (realm) (solid, liquid, and gaseous) (having size and shape); and time is objectively (apparently) constant. The perception of time is obviously not a constant, for subjective time varies considerably. But even objectively, time is in reality a variable. Objective time varies according to the polarity and degree of manifestation (as well as in relativistic phenomena). An hour of objective time today is not the same duration as an hour of objective time a hundred years ago. To speak of an event occurring a thousand years in the past is hardly accurate, since objective space-time is neither absolute nor constant.

Many mysteries are hidden within the concept of time and space (and in their equivalency). Modern science has discovered a number of clues, including Einstein's relativity theories and the doctrine of wave-matter duality. With a few minor corrections in interpretation, relativity theory becomes a specific case of a much more generalized law, a cosmic law that demonstrates dimensional continuity. Physicists call this the unified field theory. Modern science is investigating and discovering physical (and etheric) phenomena that are limitations (special cases) of this cosmic law.

The concept of wave-matter duality (equivalence) leads to the realization of time and space as an illusion (perspective). In classical physics the atom is composed of particles: protons, neutrons, and electrons. But in modern physics, it has been demonstrated that the particle appears to behave as a solid sphere (or point) of matter in one experiment (perspective) and as a wave of energy under another perspective (which relates its properties as a particle). Each elementary (and secondary) particle then, can be envisioned as an energy resonance that may appear as matter or as a wave, depending on how it is viewed. But it cannot appear to be both simultaneously (in any one perspective).

Matter is alive, being crystallized (by degrees) spirit. Matter is energy in a form of limitation. Matter is composed of holes stretched in a cosmic aether (absolute emptiness). Time and space are phenomena associated mostly with the densest of (physical) matter. If matter is considered to be a variance of resonant energy, then time and space are variances within the illusion of the physical world. From the lower perspective, the planet Earth appears to be a solid sphere existing at a point in space and at a point in time. But space is an infinity, and time is an eternity. And from the higher perspective the planet (and its life) is an energy resonance distributed through time and space, coexisting in several ways. The past exists as fact, though through an infinite number of perspectives. The future exists as archetypes and probabilities (yet from a higher perspective, the future is as existent as the past and present).

Time and space do not exist as realities beyond the physical plane. As the disciple begins to think in terms of consciousness which transcends the limitations and illusions of time and space, then shall higher realities begin to be known and understood. One can hardly learn of the higher dimensions with any real understanding or comprehension until one can look beyond the physical illusion. Space that is expanded to infinity becomes nonexistent, and time that is expanded to an infinity becomes nonexistent; for eternity is space, and space is life, and life is a unity which transcends all limitation and existence.

† Commentary No. 53

Between Light and Dark

The descent of the soul into a series of physical incarnations is a transition from a world of light (the world of the soul) (atma-buddhi-manas) into a world of darkness (the world of the personality) (the physical, emotional, and lower mental planes). The path of descent is involution, from unconsciousness to self-consciousness. The path of ascent is evolution, from self-consciousness to group consciousness. The ascent of the soul from the lower worlds toward liberation (enlightenment and freedom) is the transition from darkness into the realm of light. The coarse lessons (experience and development) of the lower worlds are learned mostly in the darkness which is the illusion of separation

from God, and all that constitutes maya, glamour, and illusion. The finer lessons of the lower worlds are learned as the individual struggles towards the light, seeking understanding and perfection (freedom) (completion).

The darkness (unenlightenment) of the mundane world is, at first, inevitable; for the soul (personality) (mind) in incarnation is blind to the world of light until eyes (symbolic) are developed through which the higher realms can be seen or properly realized. Any sudden transition from light into darkness (or from darkness into light) will result in temporary blindness. First the incarnating soul (personality) must learn to see in the dark (self-consciousness). Having learned to see and to function in the lower worlds and having learned the lessons of the three lower worlds, the soul must learn to see again in the light. A task of the aspirant or disciple is to be able to see, to experience, and to express himself in the world that is dark, while continuing his struggle to perfect the ability to walk (see) in the light.

Enlightenment does not come through the negation of darkness. Enlightenment comes as the student recognizes the value and relationship of the darkened world to the world of reality, as the physical, emotional, and mental worlds are conquered, and as the illusion of darkness is transmuted (internally) into a greater reality. As the student makes progress upon the path, the inner light will grow accordingly and begin to irradiate the world (emotional and mental atmosphere) around him. But throughout the incarnation, the spiritual student must live in two worlds (or more accurately, between two worlds, one of light and one of darkness).

As the spiritual student deepens himself further and begins to link up with others upon the path (functioning in group alignment), the combined illumination of the group and the effectiveness of the individuals (as well as the networks between groups and links between individuals) does much to clear away (transmute) the atmosphere of glamour and illusion (darkness) that was created partially by an unenlightened humanity (and is somewhat inherent in the building blocks of the lower worlds).

Thus aspirants and disciples can not only achieve personal illumination, but can (will) (must) also contribute to the ascension of humanity. Much can be learned (and shared) by the student who is aware of living in two worlds and who

recognizes that many degrees (shades) of darkness (perspectives) exist. There are many ways of looking through the fog (darkness). Darkness is ignorance (the unreal) (illusion). The light is wisdom (reality). From the darkness man is led toward the light. From the unreal man is led toward the real. From death (illusion) man is led toward immortality. From the state of separation man is led toward union with God. Between light and dark, humanity evolves through the ascension of consciousness, ever onward and upward.

† Commentary No. 54

The Limitation of Language

The ability to accurately and effectively communicate in the lower sense (through language) is a prerequisite for the training required in order to properly communicate in the higher sense (through mental and buddhic telepathy). The normal objective process of communicating between human minds involves the use of language in either verbal or written format. It is advantageous to this process of transmitting and receiving thoughts through the mechanism of words to realize the limitation of language and some of the ways by which communication can be enhanced.

First one can recognize that the objective world and objective mechanisms are all limitations when compared to the trans-mental realms and processes. The energy behind a thought has a higher information content than the thought itself. Normal thinking is a limitation of the concrete mind. The energy of the soul or of soul levels is quite superior to thought, for that energy is of a higher dimension. Whenever an object (energy, thought, process) having a certain number of dimensions is expressed through a mechanism having fewer dimensions, then information is obviously lost. Similarly, the thought behind a word or sentence has a higher information content than the words themselves. Abstract thought is of a higher order (dimensionality) than concrete thought. Concrete thought is of greater dimensionality than objective language.

One can also recognize that the medium of expression is a further limitation. Thoughts transmitted in the form of words (and feelings) are distorted by the aura of the transmitter, the medium itself, and the aura of the receiver.

Emotional energies do have an effect on the transmission of thoughts and words. Often the intended message is not equivalent to the received (and interpreted) message. One of the problems in this process is conditioning. The personal experience, environment, culture, heredity, attitudes, habits, and capacities of an individual affect or influence the communication of knowledge or information. Thus perception has a considerable impact on communication.

Furthermore, the language itself limits the thoughts and feelings that can be expressed. Higher thoughts (abstractions) can only be approximately represented in language. What a word or phrase means to one person may mean something different (slightly or entirely) to another. Each word can have many meanings, connotations, and implications. One can often interpret from a statement what one wants to hear rather than what is really said. The translation of words from one language to another often brings connotations or meanings that are not equivalent to the original. Another problem is the determination of the truth (validity) of any statement.

In spite of these inherent problems, one can overcome much of the limitation of language. On purely objective levels, one can study the various languages, expand and enhance one's vocabulary and depth of understanding of the meanings of words, and observe or study the environment and character in which or from which a statement is made. On a somewhat more subjective level the emotions can be calmed; the lower mind can be disciplined; bias and prejudice can be minimized or eliminated; and the intuition can be evoked and utilized to discern the validity and meanings of words (to recognize the thought behind the words, and perhaps even the energy behind the thought). Knowledge is not necessarily an indication of wisdom. Only knowledge accompanied by understanding (love) can yield wisdom. To transmit and receive information as accurately as possible, both verbally and mentally, is to enhance the capacity to experience and understand, and the capacity to transform that experience into wisdom.

Symbolism

Due to the inherent limitations of language, mind, and objective experience, the highest teachings are transmitted through the use of symbolism. Symbolism is a mechanism for transmitting abstract, complex, and multiple truths in a convenient and compact form. It is a means of communicating truths that cannot (or cannot easily) be transmitted in concrete thought or language.

Studied meditatively, symbols encourage the powers of concentration, visualization, and correlation. The study of symbols is an exercise in abstract thinking, a discipline that invokes the presence of the higher (abstract) mind and intuition (of the soul). Almost any form of concentrated abstract thinking is an experience that develops the capacity of the mind and soul to work cooperatively in discerning and grasping the higher truths and greater mysteries. The study of theoretical (mathematical) physics, chemistry, astronomy, and similarly abstract subjects can have quite positive effects in the higher (subjective) life, even though such studies are not entirely practical. Thus one studies cosmogenesis and mathematical symbolism.

The study of symbols is the study of relationships and correspondences, of analogies and correlations. The order of the universe is quite symbolic and progressive. There are esoteric and exoteric relationships between the higher order of cyclic manifestation and the lower order of cyclic evolution (as above, so below). Though the higher truths (having greater dimensionality) cannot be understood in objective terms, the higher truths can be studied through their correspondence and analogy to the objective experience. One might study the objective universe and deduce or infer knowledge about the greater (subjective) universe, but only through the understanding and application of the soul (invoked through symbolism) can the abstractions be realized. There exists no real literal relationships between the higher and lower worlds. God transcendent does not exist in any form comparable to the physical, emotional, or mental form of the human being. God transcendent does, however, exist in an analogous sense in terms of spirit, consciousness, and energy. To make literal comparisons is to make serious and misleading oversimplifications.

Through analogy and correspondence (symbolism) applied free of much prejudice (in thinking), the spiritual student can receive and interpret (perceive) (in a limited sense) energies, guidance, and understanding leading to inspiration and illumination. Most esoteric symbols hold (hide) (conceal) (reveal) several layers of meaning, including some trivial (obvious) (concrete) (practical) teachings. Symbols may be in the form of figures, numbers, letters, words, or combinations thereof. They may be quite simple in appearance or quite complex and intricate (veiling a greater simplicity). The higher degrees of complexity in the esoteric teachings are often applied through symbols of rather simple form. Complexity ultimately gives way to simplicity (unification). Some of the most profound teachings are transmitted in only a few potent words.

The effective study of symbols requires considerable versatility in objective experience, thinking, memory, and vocabulary. It also calls for consciousness, freedom from bias and attachment, and freedom from habit and anticipation. The spiritual student must learn as much as he can in the lower world so that the mind can draw upon that foundation as it seeks to respond to the higher symbols and teachings and translate the abstract into the concrete thought. Both simplicity and complexity in symbolic teaching, abstraction, and concretion yield knowledge and understanding that couple with (interior) experience to produce wisdom and final liberation (perfection).

† Commentary No. 56

The Atomic Sphere

In the analogy of the atomic sphere, a correspondence or relationship is implied between lesser and greater lives, a relationship that demonstrates unity, continuity, and purpose. An atom is a spheroidal force field, an atomic sphere of consciousness. Each human being (life), each plane of consciousness, each of the seven rays, each planet, and each system can be regarded or interpreted symbolically as a rotating (and evolving) atomic sphere of some polarization, orientation, and quality. Each atom can be characterized by certain elements of vibration, color, sound, and light. Each atomic life involves action and reaction (of positive and negative aspects (forces)), relationships and interactions, and a contribution to a greater life.

Each atomic sphere has a positive (male) nucleus or central life and a negative (female) spheroidal form. The limit of the force field is the ring-pass-not. Each atom can be differentiated and exhibits discrimination. Each is responsive to both internal and external stimulation. In the first stage of development, the atom is internally active (not on the path). In the second stage of development, it is interactive (on the path). In the third stage, the atomic sphere is radioactive (perfected) (on its level). Each atom has the ability to grow (increase vibration), to evolve (expand the ring-pass-not), and to achieve perfection (liberation) by becoming radioactive and transferring its essence to the greater life (radiating beyond the ring-pass-not).

The process of transmutation involves a succession of intrinsic reconfigurations in which the polarity of the atomic life reverses itself onto a higher level (which is still a matter of perspective) (the turning of focus, inside out). The atom (positive) becomes an electron (negative) to a greater atom (life). Each atomic sphere, whether it be microscopic, human, planetary, or macroscopic, may be viewed as positive or negative (in polarity) depending on whether it is viewed up or down the spiral circuit (of evolution), and depending on the degree of development and relationship to each level of manifestation. The atomic sphere is highly dependent on polarity for its configuration.

As each atom finds its place within a group, its immediate purpose becomes apparent. The goal of each atomic life is its ultimate abstraction and synthesis. A man's atomic sphere is his causal body. As this vehicle of the soul is perfected (completed) through experience and expression, the human life becomes radioactive and the adept leaves (graduates from) the human (fourth) kingdom and enters the fifth kingdom. Similarly, at the end of a major solar cycle (or incarnation) the solar system (a cosmic atom) will radiate beyond its ring-pass-not and expend itself. This final process involves both the transmutation of one element to a higher level and the combination (absorption) of positive and negative lifewaves within the greater life.

Though the atomic processes on each level of manifestation vary in their details, they are all subject to the general rules of spherical development. Those rules include involution, karmic adjustment, evolution, integration, alignment, transmutation, and synthesis. The vertical unity of all life can be seen in the

almost infinite succession of transformations. The continuity of all levels of life is seen in the one progressive path from the microcosm to the macrocosm (and on the next microcosm). The purpose of each vertical element is seen in the interactions and relationships between levels. Within the conceptual atomic sphere (and its experience) is hidden the mystery of electrical and magnetic phenomena, the lines of force that bind together all aspects of differentiated cosmic life into a singular coherent whole (oneness).

† Commentary No. 57

Cosmogenesis

The nature of the manifestation (the coming into being) of the universe is quite simple (perfect) in concept, but quite complex when regarded in its totality. The story of manifestation begins with the absolute (or absolute being), the boundless and unmanifested entity of which the universe is only the reflection thereof. Within that boundless and unquestionable essence is the result of earlier manifestation. From the absolute, at the very dawn of each great cycle of manifestation, proceeds the supreme being (a differentiated being), the architect of the universe, manifesting as a supreme trinity. Within that being is the essence of a host of lesser lives on many levels, the matrices of further manifestation based on earlier experience and development. Manifestation proceeds along two simultaneous lines of force, that of life and that of form (matter), together producing consciousness.

The universal root-substance is set into vibration (motion) and the various planes of consciousness come into existence (in a septenary fashion) as manifestation proceeds. Each major cycle (for form as well as for life) consists of differentiation (involution) (multiplicity), balance (karmic adjustment) (experience), synthesis (integration) (evolution) (unification), and obscuration (liberation) (abstraction) (perfection) (completion). At the fullest extent of manifestation, matter (spirit) exists in differentiated form on seven great cosmic planes of consciousness. Each plane of human consciousness (physical, emotional, and mental) is only one of seven sub-planes within the lowest cosmic plane. Each major level of differentiated matter is controlled (invoked) (created) (evoked) by the corresponding major level of differentiated life.

The differentiation of life proceeds from the trinity (the three rays of aspect) to the septenate (the seven rays), each being further differentiated by threes and sevens. The supreme being exists first as a triplicity and then as a septenate of supreme logoi. A universal logos differentiates itself into a triplicity and seven cosmic logoi (seven great centers of being). Each of the cosmic logoi is a constellation of forces. Each cosmic logos lives through seven solar logoi, using seven solar systems as its vehicle. The solar logos lives through seven planetary logoi (the seven spirits before the throne), using seven planetary schemes as its vehicle. Similarly, a man (human monad) lives through seven principles and seven psychic centers.

The duration of the existence of a solar logos is three successive incarnations (solar systems). The duration for a planetary logos is one solar incarnation. Similarly, the duration of the human monad is one planetary scheme. Each solar incarnation is a mahamanvantara (one-hundred years of Brahma). Each of the seven planetary schemes consists of seven chains (seven days of creation). During each chain, lifewaves within the planetary life unfold through seven rounds or revolutions about seven globes (planetary vehicles).

Each greater and lesser cycle of manifestation constitutes a day of activity and a night of rest and assimilation. There are universal days and nights, cosmic days and nights, etc. The seven days of creation are the seven chains of the Earth planetary scheme (of which the present Earth chain is the fourth day of creation). Throughout the cosmos, the cycles within cycles go on and on, as the breath of life is alternately sent forth and recalled. The entire structure of manifestation (from logoic levels through the various schemes, chains, rounds, and globes) (for each monadic impulse) is a single thread of life.

Attitude and Perspective

Two of the keywords associated with the challenge of life and the challenge of the spiritual path are attitude and perspective. The attitude or disposition of the aspirant and disciple contributes to the measure of success (the quality and intensity of the lessons learned) in facing the tests, trials, pressures, and crises of life on the path. If the student seeks understanding in and through all events and circumstances, and if the student faces each situation with a positive disposition, then the student is much more likely to learn and to understand the lessons offered in the experience and to survive the challenge with strength, encouragement, and a minimum of discomfort. Thus the spiritual progression of the student will be more efficient.

A person is what he thinks. The quality of a person's thinking determines the spiritual quality of the objective life. If the student enters an experience with the expectation of pain, discomfort, or failure; then he is quite likely to evoke that which he expects simply by virtue of his thoughts or fears. If the student enters an experience with idealistic expectations, then he may very well be blind to the lessons available and intended for him. But if the student enters with a realistic and positive attitude, knowing well that the inner self is equal to the challenge and that the challenge offers individual growth, then the student is more likely to achieve success and further enlightenment. The reasonable expectation of learning from all things and from all events is one of the healthy attitudes looked for in the aspirant.

The relative success of each experience rests not only in the attitudes of the student, but also in the versatility and adaptability of the student's perspective. A proper disposition will encourage learning, but it is the perspective that often determines the quality and depth of that learning. Truth can be found in all things, but truth is not absolute. A single, well-defined and narrow perspective can only encourage partial understanding. Limited perception leads to wrong or incomplete conclusions. The spiritual student needs to be able to see things in many ways, with an open mind and an open heart uncluttered by bias, prejudice, or opinion. The student must remain flexible in his thinking and in his entire approach to life on the path.

An object or event or concept can be viewed objectively and subjectively; physically, emotionally, and mentally; with the mind (individually) and with the soul (collectively); through the scientific, religious, philosophical, artistic, social, and cultural perspectives; from the microcosm and from the macrocosm; from the cause and from the effect; with interest or with disinterest; from the middle or from either extreme; from a discrete perspective or from a continuum of perspectives; inclusively and exclusively; and from one perspective at a time or from a simultaneous superposition of perspectives. There is no real limit to the number of ways that truth may be perceived, for there are more ways than there are human beings, and many differentials within each dimension. The student of wisdom looks at all things as inclusively as possible, because he realizes the dangers and limitations of narrow-mindedness and exclusivity.

The mind and the soul (individual or collectively) invoke (evoke) the experience and circumstances to be faced in any lifetime. Those circumstances may be faced unconsciously (without real merit and understanding). With healthy attitudes and broad visions, understanding replaces mystery and ignorance. The proper attitudes (disposition) and the broad perspectives of the spiritual student can meet the challenges of life and enable the soul (the thinker) to achieve the optimum experience and expression.

† Commentary No. 59

Heredity and Environment

There are two interrelated factors which the evolving spiritual student should take into consideration during the study of the self. These two factors are heredity and environment, two conditioning factors which are the sum-total of the forces evoked by the soul for utilization during the early years of any particular incarnation. Together these two factors set the stage (foundation) for the incarnation and provide the initial framework of the personality.

Heredity factors include the qualities and potentialities genetically transmitted from parent to offspring (factors inherent in the physical, emotional, and mental atoms and molecules of the parents), as well as the individual's characteristics, conscience, experience, and qualities contained in the permanent atoms (which

are not related to those of the parents). The permanent atoms of the soul are the matrices (energy patterns) from which the mind, the emotions, and the physical body are created (or recreated). Within the genetic factors (and the permanent atoms) is contained the history of the human (racial) form and that of the consciousness of the individual. These histories include the lessons of experience and the positive qualities earned (and those that are unfinished), both of the race and of the reincarnating soul.

The soul chooses its physical plane parents according to karma, according to the quality of parents available (and the atoms thereof), the quality earned by the soul, and the opportunities available to fulfill various human relationships. The resultant personality (exclusive of external forces) will then inherit characteristics from the physical plane parents, modified by or superimposed with those of the individuality. Hereditary characteristics may come from the family and racial history of the form-life, as well as from the experience of the indwelling life, from past incarnations and consciousness that may or may not be related in some way to the present family or experiences.

In addition to the inherited characteristics there are environmental factors to be considered. The soul not only (normally) chooses the parents, but it also chooses the time and circumstances of birth. The astrological and environmental forces present at the time of birth form a set of conditioning factors earned by the soul (which includes the karma to be worked out in the present lifetime). Environmental factors include the physical, emotional, mental, social, cultural, racial, and national atmosphere at birth and during the early years of the incarnation. These particular factors provide much of the soul's opportunity.

These hereditary and environmental factors are considered by the soul and must (for the disciple) also be consciously considered by the brain-mind-soul (the soul working through a mind that has achieved brain-consciousness) (the mind is mental; the brain is purely a physical instrument). The evolving individual studies himself to determine where he is, where he came from, what he is, why he is what he is, and where he is going. In understanding one's inheritance and environment in both the positive and negative aspects (strengths and weaknesses), the mind-soul is better able to direct its forces to achieve the purposes of incarnation (experience and expression). The consciously

enlightened mind-soul can then take greater responsibility for its actions and reactions in the objective and subjective worlds, transforming weaknesses into strengths and achieving freedom from the limitations of environment and external forces (astrological and otherwise), as well as overcome inherited weaknesses. The soul then consciously controls its environment and activities in the most constructive mode and manner. To know oneself is to unlock many mysteries and to take a major step forward along the path of realization.

† Commentary No. 60

The Dharma of the Disciple

Dharma is a Sanskrit word that implies (but is not limited to) duty. The dharma of the disciple includes many interrelated tasks: identification, purification, alignment, responsibility, awareness, purpose, and service. For the disciple, identification is a conscious process of identifying oneself with the soul and with humanity. The average person identifies himself with the body or with the mind, with his individualistic lower self and with his race or country. The aspirant and the disciple must develop an identification with the higher self and with a higher unity than any objective element or group. The disciple can then know with greater reality what he is and where he is.

Purification is a continuous process for aspirant and disciple alike. Always there exists the need for further refinement of the lower self (the physical, emotional, and mental instruments) to be attained while on the path of ascent. The early probationary stages deal with the coarse, more obvious needs for the purification and transmutation of weaknesses and limitations. But throughout discipleship this process continues on successively higher levels as well as during each recapitulation of earlier development. Purification also implies discipline and the process of self-analysis.

Alignment is a process which follows the integration of the lower self (personality). When the personality has been integrated and is functioning as a coherent unity with the mind in control, then the mind (and personality) needs to be aligned with the soul, so that the higher self might fully guide and direct the activities and experiences of its incarnation. Alignment requires the regular

daily, consistent practice of meditation. Meditation brings the cooperative lower self to respond to the rhythm of the soul and to the spiritual intuition, which consequently contribute further to the spiritual deepening.

Another aspect of dharma is a sense of responsibility, both exoterically and esoterically. In the exoteric world there are a number of responsibilities to be fulfilled (as applicable): to one's spouse, children, family, profession, and to other group relationships. In the esoteric realm there are even greater responsibilities: to the soul and its incarnation, to the esoteric groups on the plane of the soul, to humanity, and to the hierarchy. Neither the mundane nor the spiritual responsibilities should be used as an excuse to neglect the other. The disciple should well be able to live both lives successfully and without neglect. Awareness is a utilization of consciousness, a responsibility of the student to be aware of both the external and internal worlds, to be aware of the mind and the soul, to be aware of the esoteric group, and to be aware of the plan that is to be worked out. Awareness is also a continual process, a process of observation, retrospection, study, practice, and realization. The disciple must continue these functions, ever expanding the awareness of reality (truth).

Purpose is an inherent quality of manifestation. With experience, knowledge, discipline, realization, and aspiration, the disciple becomes aware of his relationship to the purpose of humanity; he knows why he is here, what he is doing, and what he should be doing. Then he adjusts his life accordingly. Realization of purpose leads directly to service. Service is the life's work of the disciple, a natural response to the energy of the soul. The disciple must recognize his talents and his limitations and weaknesses. He must recognize talents to be developed (in response to needs and the work to be performed), the plan itself (or portion thereof), the immediate work or needs before him, and the opportunities for service. With intuitive insight, the disciple can then contribute further to the welfare and progress of mankind and the greater group.

Detachment 1

The only orthodox definition of detachment that seems appropriate for the spiritual student is freedom from bias or prejudice. Certainly detachment in the spiritual aspirant or disciple should not suggest indifference or separation from worldly concerns; but rather, it should imply freedom from the limitations of physical, emotional, and mental attachments. Thus, detachment is actually the art of constructive freedom.

For many in this world, attachment to physical things and emotional pleasures is a serious limitation in consciousness. To enjoy things and experiences is one thing; to be attached to them is quite another and more serious matter. The aspirant need not deny himself worldly possessions (in moderation), provided he is not enslaved by them. To live in luxury and to live in the world of emotional phenomena are indications of enslavement by that which is physical or emotional. Money, materials, and other things (energies) may pass through the hands of the disciple, but the disciple does not possess that which he is given custody of or responsibility for. He simply utilizes his resources as usefully and as effectively as he can. The process of denial is normally a process of overcoming the superficial needs and dependence upon illusionary or glamorous things. When these limitations are conquered, the student stands ready to apply his resources for constructive spiritual purposes, with reasonableness, moderation, and detachment. There is no excuse for the serious spiritual student to live in luxury or to appear to. Moderation implies a measure of detachment and selflessness, a concern for others rather than a concern for self-interests.

Detachment is a measure of freedom, but it is also an indication of strength and stability. The student who has properly developed the art of constructive detachment is the student who is relatively strong and stable, a student who can be depended upon to contribute unselfishly to the work that is before him to do. A student who is attached to earthly things and phenomena is a student who simply cannot be trusted with the work of discipleship. The student who has cultivated the proper quality of detachment is neither indifferent to the concerns of men nor is he cold toward others; he is interested in and concerned

about the welfare of humanity; he is warm and friendly, yet mature (unmoved by emotional or intellectual appeals). His actions and decisions are based on a set of spiritual values. He is strong and he is free to do that which is right, not necessarily that which the illusionary world expects.

The reasonably detached student remains steady through the struggles and the conflicts of life; he is not deterred by circumstances or overwhelmed by worldly events. Being relatively free from attachment (glamour and illusion), he can see somewhat clearly through the tides of life, through the misleading clouds of worldly existence. The truly detached aspirant or disciple is indeed free from bias and prejudice, in thinking and feeling and action. Such a spiritual student is not enslaved by opinions; he has achieved a freedom equivalent to usefulness. And yet, simultaneously, he is ever true to his exoteric (earthly) responsibilities as well as he is true to the soul that he is.

The art of detachment is a progressive art based upon self-analysis and awareness. The aspirant must progressively determine his attachments and free himself from them. He must find the proper balance between the personal and the impersonal. He must continue to improve the values by which he lives in this lower world. And as the aspirant grows and deepens himself, he becomes the disciple, detached and dependable and free to serve.

† Commentary No. 62

Inclusiveness

Much has been said and written concerning the essential unity of all life and all things, and the overshadowing oneness of God. Knowing or believing in such unity may be sufficient for the aspirant, but the disciple is expected to embody that unity and to apply it constructively in his thinking and feeling. The disciple is even expected to project himself in an inclusive manner, in all situations and circumstances that may be found. The unity of all life within one God is very real and quite obvious to anyone who is functioning on the higher levels of human consciousness. On the lower levels, the underlying unity is not so apparent. It is easy for the human mind (complicated and distracted by existence in a physical-emotional body) to perceive separateness from God and

separateness from other humans. It is the lower (concrete) mind that is the seat of human personality and exclusiveness. The higher mind is linked to the real individuality (the soul) which recognizes its own self as an extension of the one life (inclusively), and it is the higher mind that realizes the inherent illusion of separated existence.

It is the separateness that is the great sin and heresy of human experience, not individuality. Most human beings in incarnation unconsciously demonstrate their separation from others due to their attachment to physical (material) and emotional (phenomenal) things. Even the aspirant generally separates himself from the masses. The sin (glamour) of exclusiveness can even be found well along the spiritual path; but ultimately, as the aspirant nears discipleship, the superficial (exclusive) love of humanity is transmuted into the greater (inclusive) love of humanity and of all life.

Though the disciple must live within the masses, he should not (must not) become attached or vulnerable to the glammers and illusions of the masses. Remaining detached, and projecting himself as one with God and humanity, the disciple should feel and think inclusively, yet function simultaneously and constructively as an individual within the sea of humanity. The leaders and spiritual pioneers of the human lifewave are ever en rapport with the masses, identifying themselves with the one life that pervades all. The classification or separation of humanity into distinct individuals and groups of individuals may be a useful instrument of learning and clarification, as long as it remains academic. In the practical (operational) sense, however, such a separation is usually a serious limitation.

The greater consciousness is increasingly more inclusive than the lesser human consciousness. A difficulty of the aspirant with respect to higher consciousness is for the aspirant to think and feel the inclusiveness of the soul within the greater soul which is the human evolutionary lifewave. The critical mind (often as much a hindrance as a helpful instrument) must be purged of its separative tendencies and disciplined to constantly consider the continuity of life throughout the human kingdom and the evolutionary spiral.

Overshadowing subjective similarities must displace the superficial objective differences that are so often the rule of thinking and unconscious awareness.

That which appears different, foreign, or alien must be recognized in a more inclusive (greater) light. Bias and prejudice are only extreme forms of exclusiveness and separateness. To think and feel inclusively toward all people and lifeforms is to embody the universal harmony and continuity (oneness) of life. The disciple who projects himself inclusively is the disciple who has the greater impact upon the evolving humanity. A life of example is then enhanced through the power of inclusiveness.

† Commentary No. 63

The Bhagavad Gita

The Hindu scriptural trinity consists of the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras, and the Bhagavad Gita. The Upanishads are considered to be the cream of the Vedas, as the Vedas are the source of Hindu scripture. The Brahma Sutras are an elucidation of the Vedanta philosophy through maxims, while the Bhagavad Gita contains the essence of the Upanishads and is contained within the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata is a great epic of eighteen books and might be considered as a fifth Veda, while the Bhagavad Gita may be considered as the condensation of the Mahabharata into understandable philosophy.

As one of the eighteen books of the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita consists of eighteen chapters, each of which constitutes a system of yoga. The eighteen perspectives are interrelated and divided into three major groups. The first six chapters deal with life (power), existence (sat), karma yoga (the path of right activity), the soul and its potential, limitations, and perfection. The second six chapters deal with love (consciousness), spiritual happiness (ananda), bhakti yoga (the path of devotion), God, and reality. The final six chapters deal with light, knowledge (cit), understanding, jnana yoga (the path of philosophical discrimination), and the relationship between God and man.

The Bhagavad Gita is santana dharma, spiritual laws applied to life and a clarification of principles utilizing a variety of methods. It is the story of yoga and the nature of the soul. It is an allegorical, symbolic treatise dealing with the becoming and being, with the theory and practice of Vedanta. The Bhagavad Gita is an orthodox Hindu scripture as well as a metaphysical discourse. It was written in metaphysical Sanskrit and has been translated into poetic

English, ordinary English, and transliterated English. Though the full English translation is helpful, a translation which mixes English and Sanskrit (with English implications) seems most helpful to the Western student. The power of Sanskrit words to enlighten and to penetrate the depths of consciousness is diminished by the use of English partial-equivalents.

The song celestial (Bhagavad Gita) is, in the literal reading, a profound dialogue between the prince Arjuna and his charioteer Krishna, about to enter the battlefield. A literal reading can be greatly misunderstood, for the essence of the treatise has naught to do with physical human warfare or bloodshed; but rather, has to do with the spiritual struggle of the human soul. The allegorical warfare implies the struggle between right and wrong, between wisdom and ignorance, between the self (soul) and the not-self (personality); the symbolic, inner struggle in consciousness and self-discipline; and the struggle between truth (reality) and the glammers (illusions) of objectivity which must be overcome in the battle for eternal life.

The dialogue of Arjuna and Krishna symbolizes a communion of man (Arjuna) and the God-Christ within man (Krishna). Arjuna is the aspirant seeking to become the disciple. Arjuna represents both the individual and humanity standing at the threshold of the spiritual path. The result of this communion is guidance in dharma (duty), the truth within. The wheels of the chariot are right effort; the driver is truth; and the destination is perfection. The experience urges man to wake up, to achieve awareness, to establish himself in the soul, to recognize the nobility of the soul, and to find the unity and coherence of man and God. The charioteer Krishna is an incarnation of God, and lives in the heart (soul) of man. Through the experience is achieved self-realization and equilibrium. Pleasure is superseded by that which is good. And Arjuna the aspirant becomes the world disciple.

Spiritual Masters 1

A spiritual master is one who has successfully completed the human evolutionary experience and who has passed beyond the need to reincarnate for further human experience. Having completed their human evolution, most of the spiritual masters do not return to physical incarnation, nor even to work with humanity on astral or mental levels, but pass on into a higher (non-human) evolutionary pattern. But some of the masters are permitted to remain within touch of the human experience in order to properly guide and encourage humanity onward and upward, or in order to work with the various lifewaves or energy patterns pertinent to this planetary scheme.

Each of the masters began his ascent from within humanity, having chosen the difficult (spiritual) path of accelerated evolution. Having attained the heights of human evolution, he is devoid of the weaknesses of the ordinary person. Human limitations are no longer present. He is free from self-centered reactions, and from all of the unbecoming human emotions and mental patterns. Personal pain and suffering do not enter into his consciousness, for he has achieved the quality and consciousness of compassionate (impersonal) existence. People mistakenly ascribe to the masters all of their own earthly qualities, but the masters have evolved beyond such mundane consideration.

The enlightened mind of the great soul (spiritual master) penetrates behind the veils which hide the basic truth and underlying mystery. The master lives in a state of revelation, but even so, his state of perfection is not a static condition, for there are a number of subsequent evolutionary paths that can be taken. The spiritual master has synthesized within himself all of the noble (spiritual) attainments to which humanity aspires, and has evolved far beyond the consciousness of ordinary man, almost as the human soul is evolved beyond the animal. In the spiritual master, love and intelligence are perfectly developed. The master lives in a state of super-consciousness, of unconditioned bliss and wisdom; a state virtually impossible to describe.

The spiritual master possesses knowledge of nature and its laws not yet disclosed to humanity. Consequently, the master is able to control natural

forces in what would appear to be a miraculous manner. Yet the powers of the spiritual master are wielded only for the benefit of evolving lives. The masters do not perform demonstrations of their powers, nor do they reveal themselves to the uninitiated. The masters work through their disciples, drawing attention away from themselves. Not all masters possess physical bodies, and not all work in relation to humanity. Their object is the working out of divine purpose, as they are distributing agents of spiritual energy. They further the planetary evolution by energizing every field of constructive human endeavor. From behind the scenes they inspire, guide, and direct the entire evolution of humanity, yet not in such a way as to violate free will.

Much of the work of the spiritual masters in connection with their disciples is done through the science of telepathic impression. The theme of such impression is ever impersonal, concerning the hierarchical plan, group work, and relationships. This bringing together of the master's consciousness with that of the disciple is the way of approach, and for this it is completely unnecessary to have physical plane contact. The seeking of the masters lies within the realm of illusion and personal vanity. The spiritual student must first seek the master within (the soul) and achieve self-mastery; then the student can be admitted into the fellowship of the masters without any of the glamour and illusion that is so prevalent on personality levels.

† Commentary No. 65

Mathematical Symbolism

The purpose of mathematical symbolism is, in part, to encode (obscure) (safe-guard) knowledge and to recover such encoded knowledge, both of human and higher sources; to infer transcendental knowledge from the unfolding science of mathematics itself; and to train the higher (abstract) and lower (concrete) minds to work cooperatively, bringing the soul energies (intuition) down to the brain-consciousness levels. The scope of the subject of mathematical symbolism is vast, from the simplicities of integer arithmetic, cabalistic reduction, and letter-number correspondences to the complexities of number systems, theorems, operations, dimensions, cumulative systems, and the higher mathematics.

One of the more common methods used to encode and recover knowledge is through letter-number correspondence and reduction operations. Some human languages were designed and based upon various mathematical systems. For other languages, mathematical systems were invented or adapted for symbolic use. Each alphabet of each language has one or more systems of assigning a number to each letter. Words and sentences are then constructed encoding the desired information in the values of the various letters and combinations. Much of the Old Testament has been encoded in this fashion using Hebrew symbolism, and much of the New Testament has likewise been encoded using Greek symbolism. In order to decode or recover the encoded information, one must somehow determine the proper alphabet and system of assigned numbers to letters, the base of the number system, the required mathematical operations or reduction techniques, and the significance of the recovered information.

The simplest of letter-number systems is the assignment of simple integers, in order, to the letters of the particular alphabet; or the assignment of the integers 1 through 10 (in decimal system), then by tens through 100, and by hundreds through 1000. Complexities arise from more obscure systems of assigning correspondences and by esoteric letters missing from the orthodox alphabet. To be valid, the mathematics must be performed on the original language. Though the decimal system prevails in the mundane world, other number systems (bases) are more significant esoterically. The simplest of reduction methods is the ordinary cabalistic reduction, in which the values of letters are summed in a word, and the resultant digits summed and reduced progressively to the simplest integer. At each stage in this process, information may be encoded. Simple reduction methods also include multiplication and summation, exponentiation and summation, and other operations and combinations.

Each number and its factor contain symbolic information according to various methods and systems. Cosmically, the integer value of each major and minor cycle implies various qualities associated with the forces or energies of the cycles. Each lifewave has assigned numbers and cyclic correspondences relating to the trinity, the seven rays, and the twelve signs of the ecliptic (zodiac). The mathematical symbolism of the seven rays and the diversities of cosmogenesis is quite an involved system in itself. Much information can be discerned from the numerological correspondences of the evolutionary scheme.

In deducing information from the mathematical correspondences, one must first ascertain whether the derived number is arbitrary or significant. A derived number is only significant and of value if the number was first encoded with information. Without some prior knowledge and preparation, much time can be expended without drawing meaningful conclusions by working with arbitrary consequences. The experience and exercise of mathematical symbolism is (in reasonableness) at least an abstract exercise of some value.

† Commentary No. 66

The Glamour of the Path

One of the more difficult problems of the spiritual path is the glamour of the path itself. Many students on the path (with some level of commitment) are afflicted with the glamour of the path who would otherwise be dependable and useful. Though a great many more aspirants are limited by earthly and phenomenal (psychic) glammers, there are those who are aware of the path but are quite absorbed by the glamour of the path.

The glamour of the path consists of the astral (emotional) and mental residual energies of personality-attachment to various aspects of the path. These include the glamour of the masters (of human evolution) and the hierarchy, and of "personal" contact with the masters; the glamour of the special or chosen group or individual; the glamour of service; and the glamour of the various personalities. But these glammers are essentially ego-centered and distract the student from achieving illumination, soul-contact, and useful expression. The masters have no glamour and no personal attachments. Actual contact with the masters comes only through consistent soul-consciousness, and is quite impersonal and normally subjective and generalized. This subjective relationship comes when the student has proven himself to be relatively selfless, stable, dependable, and useful. Such a student has practically mastered his mind and emotions and is relatively immune from the ordinary glammers and the glamour of the path.

The chosen group does not exist. Likewise there is no one special path to enlightenment. No group or individual in incarnation is especially important, for all mature spiritual organizations, groups, and individuals are utilized

impersonally according to their talents and capabilities for good. Each intelligent aspirant and disciple contributes in the one work. All paths to God and enlightenment are aspects of the one path. Those who feel themselves or their work (or their group) to be especially important are separating themselves from the (real) spiritual work to be performed. Such glamour breeds vanity and self-deception. Those students who have touched their own souls through the meditative life are those who can begin to lose themselves (lower selves) in the one soul and begin to see through the dark clouds of glamour. Every soul is important; yet no particular soul is especially important. The souls of men are one, and in that greater unity is so much greater relevance.

It is helpful to know of the existence of the masters and a greater plan for human evolution, as this offers encouragement for the aspirant to deepen himself spiritually and to cooperate with intelligent purpose. The useful worker is more concerned with the work to be done (living the spiritual life) and how to best do it than with useless personality reactions to the various glammers. The work comes first; personal aspects are subordinated and are ultimately eliminated. Service to humanity is performed naturally and consequently as a result of self-deepening. There are no rewards or recognitions sought by the disciple. The quiet joy that comes with doing that which is right to do is a sufficient reward for the discipline and dedication required.

It is not that particular and various glammers are dangerous in themselves (as stumbling blocks or impediments); it is, rather, that these glammers create and sustain an atmosphere that distracts and burdens the spiritual student (as inertia). The real problem of glamour is this absorbing atmosphere that can render the aspirant relatively (spiritually) impotent. The student on the path must be free from these limitations, ever concerning himself with the living of the spiritual path.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is a collection of symbolic scriptures canonized into three parts. The first part is called the Torah (the Law) (the Pentateuch), and contains the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The second part is called the Nebiim (the Prophets), and contains the books of the former prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; and the books of the latter prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve (minor prophets). The third part is called the Kethubim (the Writings), and contains the poetical books: Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; and the five scrolls: Ruth, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther; a prophecy, Daniel; and a history in three sections: Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

The books of the Old Testament were written in various dialects of the Hebrew and Aramaic languages by a number of different authors and at various times spanning at least a millennium. This inhomogeneous mixture of authors, times, and variations in language contains fragments of the original literature which ranges from pure fictional writings to semi-historical legends. Many of the original manuscripts (now lost to exoteric investigation) were written without vowels and in some cases without separating the letters into words.

Considerable variations in meaning can arise depending upon where and how the vowels are inserted and how the words are separated. In evolving a standardized Hebrew text, scribes have unconsciously (and some deliberately) altered manuscripts, so that not all words or phrases may contain the original symbolic undertones. Many Hebrew words are ambiguous and may be alternately translated into a number of different English words, each having a distinct but different meaning. Another complication in translation is that persons of earlier centuries did not think or speak as persons do today. Even the contemporary view of history can be quite wrong and misleading due to substantial changes in mental and cultural patterns.

The authors of the Old Testament writings include disciples who were well-trained and well-versed in the sacred symbolic language and the ancient

mysteries, as well as those who were not. Some of the scribes who assisted in the work of translation and standardization were also well-trained, but most were not. Thus the resultant Hebrew text today contains both inspired and uninspired works, symbolic teachings mixed with those which are not, and relatively complete works as well as fragmentary and rewritten works. In spite of these problems, the Hebrew language (and to a certain extent, the English translations) still contains a great deal of symbolic teaching on several levels. With keys to the Hebrew language, and with keys to the sacred symbolic language of allegory and correspondence, much that is otherwise hidden can be found. The literal and presumed historical reading should be taken lightly, for the passages of literal value are relatively few. The symbolic and intuitive reading reveals the places and degrees of symbolic wisdom to be found.

Like the words of all scriptures, the words of the Old Testament are the vestments of wisdom and should not be confused with the wisdom which is contained within them. Much that is contained within the scriptures is the message of enlightened authors to others of comparable illumination. Very little of the teaching was actually intended for the unenlightened, yet persons of various degrees of consciousness can find some teaching of value in the Old Testament. The grand scheme of cyclic evolution and purpose is outlined and the steps leading to the path of spiritual values and expanded consciousness are given for those who would apply the right effort and the right motive.

† Commentary No. 68

Arjuna Vishada Yoga

The first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled *Arjuna Vishada Yoga*, the despondency (grief) (distress) (gloom) of Arjuna. In the literal reading, Arjuna surveys the battlefield where the two opposing armies prepare to meet in fratricidal war. Arjuna has friends and relatives in both armies, and though he has prepared himself for battle, he finds himself unable to enter the fighting. He resigns himself to confusion, gloom, and distress. He appeals to his charioteer (Krishna) for guidance.

In a symbolic reading, Arjuna is the spiritual aspirant (the personality) who has prepared himself for the spiritual path, but on the threshold of the path he finds himself experiencing the dark night of the soul. The hero Arjuna is the integrated lower mind that balks at the call to battle (the suggestion of the soul for a surrender of the lower self to the higher). The torment of Arjuna is the intense battle between a strong mind and the overshadowing soul. As the focus of the waking-consciousness, Arjuna can see himself on both sides of the struggle, identifying with the good elements as well as the weaker ones (enemies). The mind values its independence, but the spiritual path demands that the proud mind be absorbed by and subjected to the (greater) soul.

Arjuna suffers indecision and weakness, for he is still human and the overwhelming crisis has turned his enthusiasm into distress. This crisis on the battleground of life, leading finally and ultimately to a state of humility, is a preparation for progress on the path. The spiritual path requires a quiet but active humble state, and in the humble state the lower self (the integrated personality) surrenders and turns to the soul (Krishna) for encouragement. Without such courage and without true humility, the student cannot achieve self-acceptance and cannot face the resultant truth (about oneself). Desperate and passive resignation bears no fruit. But sincere positive surrender of self is a stepping-stone to illumination. Time and time again the disciple and the aspirant must return to the humble state for renewal and rededication. Depression must be avoided for it is a negative (emotional) form of humility. What is needed is the positive (mentally polarized) humility where the mind controls the emotions and remains responsive to the soul.

Chapter One is the setting, the prelude, preparation, and invocation for illumination, encouragement, and progress. Throughout the epic poem, each proper name denotes certain qualities (strengths or weaknesses). Arjuna (lower self) and Krishna (higher self) are thus addressed by many different names. For example, in the first chapter Krishna is addressed as Krishikesa (being the master of the lower self or personality) and as Achyuta (one who is indeviate from dharma). The subtleties of proper names in scripture bear study. The student should also discern between the purely social teachings (which are dated or cultural) and the spiritual teachings (which are relatively timeless).

Chapter One also forms the questions: What is this dark night of the soul? Who is the enemy? Why must one fight (the inner battle)? The remaining seventeen chapters provide the answers. The student is led from the yoga of preparation to the yoga of fulfillment. The conscience of the soul is invoked (to rent the hearts); the challenge is faced; and the aspirant becomes the disciple. The proud and independent life of the mind is replaced by the merging of mind and soul. The student is then able to really see all beings in the one self and the self in all beings. Crisis precipitates enlightenment. Santana dharma precipitates spiritual order through the various forms of yoga. And of Arjuna Vishada Yoga, these thoughts are but a few of the many implications.

† Commentary No. 69

Spiritual Masters 2

The spiritual masters are not easily accessible. They are not known to involve themselves in commonplace activities or to mingle with crowds. Nor do they subject themselves to being the center of personal devotion or false idealistic (personality centered) movements. Instead, they work with subjective energies (on subjective levels), contacting the world through their disciples. This work is performed primarily through buddhic telepathy. The needed telepathic rapport between a master and a disciple can only occur when the pupil comes under the influence of his own soul (which requires considerable preparation and refinement). The masters work from the plane of the soul, and it is there that the disciple learns to approach the masters' plan for humanity with purified intelligence and unselfish (impersonal) love.

The masters have always been present and consciously active in the world evolution, but have remained unrecognized (historically) (by design). Mature recognition of the masters depends on the student's approach to the divinity within. The masters stand as living examples of goodwill, love, intelligently applied wisdom, and spiritual humility. They clearly and easily demonstrate right motive, selfless service, and vivid intellectual and intuitive perception.

The masters come together as a unit to form the spiritual hierarchy. With their long-range foresight and higher guidance, they organize the plan, what they

consider to be the preparation for attaining the next goals set for humanity. The masters communicate the plan to their disciples of the world who, being a little closer to humanity in terms of physical-plane activity, qualify, modify, and adapt the plan (in more objective terms) to contemporary humanity. This insures gradual and steady continuity of the plan. The disciples, in turn, transmit the plan through a stepping-down process to the intelligent aspirants (those who consciously or unconsciously recognize the necessity of the plan). The aspirants and disciples are those who give the plan to humanity as a whole and carry it into action on the physical plane.

The masters recognize those who are willing and able to work for the plan. They seek not the kind-hearted, but weak-willed, nor do they seek the flamboyant personality who so easily attracts the little minds of humanity. The masters do not make spectacles of themselves, nor do they accept as disciples those who collect people around themselves through personality motives. Instead they work with those strong souls who respond to the master's particular energy or aspect of the plan. Through their focused thought, they attract those whose type of mind and character synchronizes with their own because of ray, karma, and love for humanity. They do not impose their will upon their students. They do not try to impress the mind of the disciples, for it is up to each student to put into action his part of the plan. They do offer encouragement, but it is up to the disciple to respond properly.

The masters use various techniques to contact their workers, according to the circumstance and degree of soul-consciousness of the student. Symbolic teachings and other subjective and meditative contacts are included. Having contacted the student, the master stimulates the student's highest qualities, encouraging the disciple to express the higher self at all times. Thus, the disciple must be willing to set aside personality attachments and cultivate the higher qualities. As the head (mind) and the heart (soul) of the disciple are consciously related, the disciple becomes spiritually magnetic; this radiatory response gradually attracts the disciple into the greater work. Through the magnetic lines of force, the workers are related to the hierarchy and the plan.

The Light Cone

One of the implications of relativistic physics is the relationship of the speed of light to causality in time-space. Causality is concerned with a sequence of time-space events and a determination of karma (cause and effect). The light cone is a four-dimensional mathematical concept (three-dimensional space plus time) which shows past, present, and future events and their relationship to a light pulse.

There are actually two regions of time-space (space-time) described by the light cone. There is a time-like region in which events can be related by a vector of magnitude less than or equal to the speed of light. There is also a space-like region in which events cannot be related with respect to the time-like present, for a vector of magnitude greater than the speed of light would be required in order to link the events. Light represents the maximum medium of communication between time-like events. The time-like region is composed of a broad past (negative time), a present (zero time), and a broad future (positive time).

The past exists with definiteness, though each observer may interpret or perceive the past in any one or more of a number of perspectives. The future exists only in terms of probability, for the future is in the process of achieving definiteness. Throughout that process, the future is flexible within limits determined by the particular evolutionary scheme (karma). Time itself is somewhat flexible and tenuous, and can be interchanged with a three-dimensional space under certain conditions. Consciousness can transcend the limitations of time-space, since time and space are mostly functions of the physical plane.

Any present event is limited in its ability to be influenced by past events. Similarly, any present event is limited in its ability to influence (possible) future events. Space-like events cannot influence (or be influenced by) the present. Time-like phenomena exhibit a unique ordering of events for all observers. This is not necessarily true for space-like phenomena. Causality may not be preserved for all observers of space-like phenomena. Thus, different observers

may observe different sequences for certain space-like events. According to Einstein's relativity theory, there is a limit to the magnitude of the slope of any time-space path (sequence of events). That limit is the speed of light. But these conclusions refer primarily (only) to the physical plane. Thus, even time-like events may appear space-like when the total phenomena (covering several planes of consciousness) is considered. The analogous speed of light for astral (emotional) and mental levels is not restricted as the mechanistic physical plane. Time and space correspondences take on deeper meanings when considered simultaneously with physical, emotional, and mental processes. Even the space-time interval which appears physically invariant takes on a new meaning and some modification of its mathematical form.

It is possible for a time-like effect to precede a subsequent time-like cause, if the energy that relates (connects) the two events is not entirely physical. Physical, emotional, and mental events are often quite interrelated. Time-like and space-like events can become superimposed by the deeper relationships. For example, a tendency is normally a space-like event. A likely response to a given possible future (time-like) circumstance may well invite that circumstance. A person who tends to anger easily may very well invite situations which will anger him, yet his response (anger) to the situation is indeed (often) the precursor of that situation in the first place. The likelihood of future events can therefore precipitate present events.

† Commentary No. 71

The Deepening

The process of deepening involves spiritual activity in which the student seeks to build and maintain his momentum upon the path. This deepening implies inner experience and inner (mental) effort. The student must continue to seek to understand himself on successively deeper levels. Until a student knows himself consciously and fairly completely, he cannot really be honest with himself. Over the course of many lifetimes, the personality becomes confused by the illusions of objective manifestation. And so, along the spiritual path of liberation, the spiritual student must free himself from the subconscious (and sometimes conscious) illusions and self-deceptions that have been created within his personality consciousness.

The average person knows himself only superficially, understanding only the bare surface of his being (on personality levels only). But the spiritual student is expected to understand himself in considerable depth in order for him to become aligned fully with the path. The secrets and mysteries of life that remain esoteric and therefore unspeakable are hidden within. And it is only as the student deepens himself that his inner resources become available to him and the understanding of the path (and associated mysteries) becomes possible.

Deepening involves a number of inner and outer efforts that should be applied on a daily basis. Any one of these efforts alone will be of some benefit, but it is as all of them are applied in a serious (dedicated) daily program that the full benefits (of understanding) can be obtained. These daily tasks include meditation, study, observation, and self-analysis. The entire process has meaning for the beginning student (aspirant) as well as for the advanced student (the committed disciple). A program of consistent and serious daily meditation is quite essential for any real progress to be made on the path. Meditation is the medium of relevance, for meditation conditions the other efforts and sustains the momentum that is built up. It is only with some determination that the student can apportion enough of his daily attention (and therefore energy) to his spiritual task. The meditation period(s) should therefore be a determined effort, and one that consciously strengthens the overall program of deepening.

The inner work, however, should be complemented by outer work. A program of study in the philosophy or in related subjects helps in the deepening effort by training the mind to dwell upon thoughts of spiritual value (taking the mind off of thoughts of purely mundane value). Knowledge and experience are prerequisites for understanding. Reading and studying in the philosophy provide a foundation for thoughtful and meditative contemplation. Through the efforts of meditation and through the work of putting into practice what is understood, knowledge and experience are assimilated. Observation of oneself and one's surroundings assists the students in developing awareness, discernment, and understanding. The student should frequently (if not continually) examine and evaluate his thoughts, feelings, actions, motives, responses, and his overall disposition (on as many levels as can be perceived).

The spiritual path requires progress, and progress requires momentum (to overcome spiritual inertia). It is not how much or how far a student progresses in a given time that is important, but that he has progressed. Though the student may not be aware of his own progress, he can assume that the effort expended with reasonable intention (right motive) will result in some progress. As the aspirant frees himself from the lower values, he builds a path of effort based upon successively higher values, as he further deepens himself.

† Commentary No. 72

Genesis 1

The Book of Genesis is the first book of the Old Testament and the first book of Moses, the book of eternal beginnings, an outline of the evolutionary scheme and an instruction (and esoteric key) to the entire Bible. The remainder of the Bible is mostly an elucidation of the basic ideas presented in the Book of Genesis; therefore much attention has been placed on this first book.

The first story of Genesis is the story of the process of creative manifestation. It is one of the most cryptic and concise presentations of ageless wisdom. The first chapter (and part of the second) is a description of cosmogenesis, the emergence from a single unified source (God) (the logos) of a host of creative beings (Elohim) who prepare the foundation of manifestation for the evolutionary lives which emerge as the proper evolutionary conditions are properly prepared for them. These emerging lifewaves recapitulate their earlier experience and continue their evolutionary progress along the cyclic chain.

It is an eternal beginning, for the whole process is periodic (cyclic) (progressive spiral), filled with new beginnings at every turn. The dawn is a new dawn, a great cycle that begins with the emergence of finite being from the infinite, the emanation of cosmos (activity) from chaos (inactivity). The solar cycle of manifestation (the incarnation of the logos) begins and the seven planes of consciousness (dry land) are reestablished. Seven (ten) simultaneous (horizontal) planetary schemes emerge, each one of which experiences seven great days of manifestation (creation). Each of the creative days is a vast period of time (of activity) (experience and expression). And each great day is

naturally followed by a night (pralaya) of rest and assimilation. Each such great day contains many lesser cycles of activity and assimilation.

The spirit of God is the masculine (active) (positive) creative force; the face of the deep is feminine (passive) (negative) creative force. Heaven is spirit (unmanifested substance) (subjectivity); earth is matter (manifested substance) (objectivity). To be without form is to have potential existence. The God of creation is Elohim, a plurality of creative beings within one God. These creative agents work in accordance with the divine plan. Creation implies emergence (outgoing) and differentiation followed (at the end of manifestation) by absorption (returning) and integration (the Sabbath) (completion and full realization). From darkness (formlessness) (chaos) the many lives emerge into the light (form) (cosmos). The terms darkness and light are reversed in meaning from the standpoint of physical existence (darkness) with respect to spiritual existence (light), as such distinction is always relative.

The firmament refers to the ring-pass-not of the solar system and to the illusion of separation of the physical and spiritual (higher, nonphysical) worlds. That it was good signals the end or completion of a season (cycle). To bless is to provide certain potential powers (seeds of potential to be developed). Naming refers to the creation of archetypes (models) (patterns) from which the forms can be developed. The image of God is the inner spiritual and creative essence (life). Man is the spiritual microcosm. To be fruitful is to become the creative self. Dominion over the animals means the responsibility of men as the elder brothers of the animals, etc. The information used to describe each day of creation may refer to any or to all of the greater or lesser cycles having numerological correspondence. There is a mixture of cosmological references with those for lesser earthly cycles (some of which refer to humanity). That which is above is reflected in that which is below. Hidden within man are the keys to the mysteries of Genesis.

Samkhya Yoga

The second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Samkhya Yoga (the inner doctrine) (the yoga of knowledge). The samkhya yoga actually constitutes an introduction to the teachings. Samkhya implies theory (knowledge), while yoga implies the practice of such knowledge. Samkhya yoga is the concentration of attention on the higher knowledge (higher reality) and on the practical application of that knowledge. Only as knowledge (experience) is applied and understood is it transformed into wisdom (the object of experience). The outer teachings are only partially true, as they are incomplete. The inner teachings complement and complete the enlightenment. Samkhya yoga includes as its higher aspect, buddhi yoga, the yoga of the intuitive and contemplative intellect (a spiritual exercise guided subjectively by the soul).

The dialogue between Krishna (the soul or higher self) and Arjuna (the lower self) (aspirant) continues as Krishna describes the nature of man (the mortal personality and the immortal but entangled soul) and introduces Arjuna to the path of compassion. Krishna begins his teaching. The path requires humility as well as strength. Self-surrender (of the ego to the higher self) is a prerequisite for enlightenment. The strengths (friends) of the personality become weaknesses (enemies) (through selfishness) as the student progresses along the path, until the soul takes control of the willing and responsive personality. The embodied self is immortal but entangled in the objective world. Karma binds a soul to the lower worlds until the progressive cycle of incarnations ends in the completion of the human soul. The existence of karma implies attachment. Karma yoga implies a detached attitude. Self-knowledge (samkhya) leads to right thinking, which in turn leads to positive (constructive) action (karma), which ultimately leads to liberation (wisdom) (perfection). Steadfastness in wisdom leads to immortality (disentanglement); and a man ceases to be (in the lower sense), when karma is fulfilled.

The royal "fight" is the struggle onward and upward (toward perfection). The lower self is not real; neither are the lower worlds (for they are temporal and misleading) (though they do provide a means of experience). The duty of the aspirant is to overcome (absorb) the lower self and the attachments to the

senses. The mind must be trained to control the senses, for uncontrolled senses are perfidious. The student who is centered in God is desireless, for he is one, who is firmly placed upon the spiritual path. Such a student needs no rewards; for he is not distracted by the sense-world and the various glammers.

Arjuna is a prince (which means that he has been prepared for the path), but he is still entangled and seeks understanding. He is unable to discern between the real and the unreal. But by placing greater emphasis on the inner doctrine (higher knowledge) and through determination to rise above his weaknesses and limitations, Arjuna is expected to place himself firmly upon the path. Once committed there is no turning back; the pace of progress is quickened; the path narrows; and responsibilities (and opportunities) increase. Therefore, the placing of a student upon the path is a serious matter.

Arjuna must take his dharma (duty) seriously (it is wrong to fail to do what is right). No effort is really wasted, for karma provides guidance towards right effort. But to do what is right with right motive (and with a detached attitude) is the most efficient and effective action. Right action requires knowledgeable understanding. Thus, samkhya yoga (the application of higher knowledge) leads the student into (onto) the battlefield of life (karma yoga) as a preparation for living the life of steady wisdom.

† Commentary No. 74

Spiritual Masters 3

Perfect balance and perfect health characterize a master of the wisdom. The master experiences not only a fully awakened consciousness and a brain which is ever intelligently receptive to the soul (through the proper alignment of the brain, the mind, and the soul), but a constant inflow and transmission of spiritual life (energy) as well. These energies that are projected through the various centers to the nadis are safely related and brought into a synthetic functioning within the four-fold form (body). The orderly rhythm of the glandular system, the free use of the nervous system, and the control of the higher correspondences are achieved as the pranic energy from the planet flows freely through the mechanism of the relatively perfect form of the master.

The planetary prana comes in powerfully conditioned by the planetary ray, and this energy is often used in healing work. When the planetary ray is very active, it has an especially potent effect in liberating healing forces. The seven different paths (or energies) along which the whole (local) universe develops express themselves also in the human kingdom in special ways. The masters have knowledge of these secrets (and others) and make use of them in their application of energies to humanity and the various lifewaves.

The masters often guide (invoke) intelligent serving energies (devas) to aid advanced healers, but only healers who are pure and selfless in motive can attract these forces. When this is so, the potency and wisdom (freedom from error) is much greater. For example, these healers will not attempt to heal patients unless their karma is permissive. When a patient is at the (proper) moment of death, the intelligence that controls this process of liberation does not permit a healing energy to collaborate (though unwise persons do sometimes interfere with that process and prolong the patient's suffering). The approach of healing energies is only permitted when a healing (understanding) is indicated. Initiates above the third initiation (of the greater mysteries) know various secrets of good health. These can be employed if they wish, but if they are among those who are helping the unfolding consciousness in man and are workers for and in the human kingdom, they may choose not to apply these secrets because they feel the need is greater to identify more completely with humanity, and to share consciously the human experience.

Since the true master is free from all personal desire, he has no need of adoration or devotion toward himself. He never seeks public recognition, for his powers are wielded ever quietly and behind the scenes. Often the presence of the master is unknown, as this allows the emphasis to be placed on the task to be done, and not upon he who is inspiring it. Besides, the masters work subjectively rather than objectively. But when the attention of the student (chela) is directed toward the advancement of human life, and when the student's personal ambition is dissolved in view of the world need, then the master can draw the student into a closer contact.

Rarely is this contact on a physical basis. Instruction is given subjectively and does not pertain to personal or mundane matters. The chela must rely on his own powers of discrimination for the proper handling of daily affairs. All

training given by the master concerns the development and application of those faculties in the disciple which allow the student to give of himself more freely and more effectively. The instruction from the master only supplements and complements the subjective instruction of the true teacher, the God within (the soul) (the Christ-self). The true disciple lives within the overshadowing presence of the soul, the master, and the spiritual hierarchy.

† Commentary No. 75

Confidence

Just as confidence is a necessary ingredient in the completion of any project in the mundane world, so it is that confidence is a required component for both the individual and humanity in relationship to the spiritual path of conscious (projected) evolution. For a sentient being to so act (with confidence) invokes or appropriates (not necessarily consciously) the same fundamental aspect of first causes inherent in the first ray of will or power. It is the same invoked energy (confidence along first ray lines) that a solar logos posits in the creation and maintenance of a solar system. On a lesser scale the word of power (of the soul) employed by the disciple on the mental plane rests upon the same relationship (of thought to the thinker). Thus confidence is an associated keyword for almost any first ray activity.

The aspirant is called upon to reorient the basis of his confidence to successively more abstract and idealistic frames of reference. Gradually the energy of the concrete mental plane (spirit-thought) is utilized rather than the lesser forms of astral energy or the etheric energy (matter-form) of the physical plane. As this occurs, the artificial confidence and independence of the lower self is replaced by a more secure confidence that is a manifestation of the higher self (linked to the first cause of being).

Confidence on any level is an integral part of the successful progression along the path. The aspirant must remain steady in those crises of which the path is composed. It may appear that the indicated adjustments in lifestyle exact an unreasonable price, yet the intensity of the struggle is largely determined by the individual in the speed with which the technique of adjustment is learned (and

as confidence is achieved). The endless problems which the bodies of emotion and concrete mind present must eventually be reconciled and left behind. This is related (in time and space) to personal initiative (not ambition) and progress in group work.

The source of strength and confidence in responding to the plan is the soul, for the (one) soul is the plan. Once alignment is attained through meditation and service, the superficial displays of the personality are dampened and eliminated by the emerging spiritual poise (confidence). Such a place of mind is characterized by an imperturbable but flexible quality of being which is concerned only with the framework of an incarnation, not that which is framed. It is this master-within which supports the spiritual warrior during the age-long contest and emerges the victor. But before the aspirant can respond to or manifest the confidence of the higher self, he must first believe in himself (the soul) and in the greater purpose of which the soul is a part. The confident and flexible aspirant can then begin to draw on the strength-aspect of his being. This will occur as other tests are fulfilled, for the spiritual student must also have proven his trustworthiness and ability to function properly under pressure. Power (strength) is easily misused, so even confidence must be a qualified virtue.

A lack of self-confidence is a weakness which, if allowed to persist, may undermine progress made in other areas. With proper motive and proper purpose, the confident student can achieve progress where others would fail. The confidence of greater lives in the lesser is the real reason why the lesser lives (humanity) will succeed and fulfill the purpose of this stage in evolution. That greater confidence tends to encourage and guide the minds of men on earth toward coherent group progress. And as each individual aligns himself with his soul, that greater confidence is further manifested through spiritual progress.

Philosophy

Philosophy is a branch of learning which is given to the pursuit of wisdom, the search for truth, and the understanding of knowledge. Philosophy is one of four major and interrelated and perspectives (along with art, science, and religion). In the lower sense, philosophy embraces art, science, and religion through its seven divisions: metaphysics, logic, ethics, psychology, epistemology, aesthetics, and theurgy. In the higher sense, philosophy is the art and science of perfection, the path of self-realization.

The philosophy of that which is real includes metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and cosmology. Metaphysics is the domain of the study of relationships between the divine and the human. Metaphysics considers reality through ontology, theology, and cosmology. Ontology is the theory of reality and the nature of being; theology includes religion; and cosmology includes science in the metaphysical sense, the philosophy of nature. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, and it considers the nature of the existence of knowledge, including its limits and validity. Logic is the science of reasoning, the doctrine of reasonableness, while psychology is the philosophy of mind, the science of consciousness and behavior.

The philosophy of that which is ideal includes ethics and aesthetics. Ethics considers the philosophy and ideal of conduct, the nature of morality and character, and the nature of good. Ethics is that branch of philosophy which embraces practical or personal philosophy. Aesthetics is the idea of art, the philosophy of that which is beautiful and harmonious. The philosophy of the absolute deals with the ultimate synthetic reality, theurgy. In the abstract sense, theurgy considers the nature of absolute reality-ideality and is a synthesis of the products of the other branches of philosophy. In the practical sense, theurgy considers the living wisdom, the true purpose of philosophy.

Philosophy involves interpretation, evaluation, and utilization of knowledge and therefore considers the relevance and value of knowledge. In a sense it is the science of quality, the science of values and the applications of values in the process (art) of transforming knowledge into wisdom, the process of perfecting

the human self through enlightened living. In another sense it is a medium or perspective through which the teachings (knowledge and understanding of life) can be transmitted, encompassing the knowledge of God (religion), the knowledge of self (psychology), and the knowledge of nature (science). The esoteric philosophy is the frontier of human (soul) understanding, and requires a high degree of developed buddhi-manas (the intuitional and abstract mind). The esoteric philosophy is the most difficult to express as it is beyond thinking, in the domain of soul-realization. The theosophical philosophy is an interpretation (so far as possible) of the esoteric teachings. The theosophical teachings are that part of the divine wisdom that has become exoteric, a body of knowledge revealed over the centuries to man by his elder brothers, and is the frontier of human (mental) understanding. The metaphysical philosophy is simply the higher philosophy made more practical, through translation, interpretation, reduction, and adaptation into that which can easily be assimilated.

Whether through conventional, metaphysical, theosophical, or esoteric philosophy, the philosopher is one who so loves wisdom that he becomes its servant. The search for truth and its expression is a never-ending quest for deeper wisdom and greater understanding. The science of perfection implies ever living in the reflective (contemplative) (meditative) (intuitive) attitude, ever seeking truth and ever seeking to absorb truth through intelligent application.

† Commentary No. 77

Genesis 2

The story of Adam and Eve, and the subsequent fall of man, is the story of the human lifewave and its natural (intended) descent into the realm of matter. The garden of Eden represents a sphere of activity that precedes the incarnation of humanity, in which are planted the seeds of evolutionary development, intended to be brought to fruition through experience on objective levels.

On one level, the garden of Eden is the home-world (in consciousness) of the human spirit (monad). As part of the overall evolutionary pattern, the monad (through its reflection, the soul) must descend into the denser worlds of matter for the experience and development afforded there. Before the actual descent,

man is spiritually conscious (group conscious in a passive sense) but is not self-conscious; as a consequence of the path of descent (and the subsequent path of ascent), man evolves self-consciousness. But during his worldly encounter he is blinded (by matter) or separated (in illusion) from the spiritual self. The path of ascent is the path of the self-conscious individuality back into the group-conscious self, resulting in greater (active) spiritual consciousness.

The tree of life is both a path of consciousness and the subtle thread of the relationship between the highest aspect (the monad) and the lowest (the incarnating personality). Knowledge means first-hand experience, the means by which the life within the form evolves. On another level, the garden of Eden represents the etheric domain of human existence preceding the final "fall" into the dense physical world. On this level is described the history of humanity beginning with the third root-race. The four rivers symbolize the four ethers, the four elements (fire, earth, air, and water), and the quaternary vehicle of man (physical, etheric, emotional, and mental bodies).

Adam (before Eve) represents early humanity which was androgynous (hermaphroditic), dual-sexed and self-reproductive. The soul itself has no sex, but in order to properly develop the latent creative faculties, the human evolutionary experience involves polarity, and at an early age, the human forms were gradually separated into sexes. Adam and Eve (together) represent the human race after the separation into sexes. The expulsion from the garden implies the final fall into the dense physical world and the opening of the eyes into physical awareness. This coincided with a measure of blindness as far as the higher worlds are concerned. The Adamic knowledge was quite unlike that of the present humanity, as at that time it was a passive or involuntarily experience. The serpent represents the knowledge and wisdom to be gained as a consequence of eating the fruit, or experiencing the temporary death (illusion) to the spirit that is physical reality. The serpent also refers to the dual creative force (male-female). Nakedness implies the innocent (inactive) state prior to the degradation (from the standpoint of the spirit) by matter. Humanity has since passed the nadir of materiality and is upon the path of ascent, or returning to its former spiritual state (with the expanded consciousness that is developed along the way).

The story of descendants of Adam and Eve shows humanity at successively later stages. Cain illustrates the lower self or personality, whereas Abel illustrates the higher self or soul that is slain (blinded) by materiality. On another level Cain and Abel (through Seth) portray the two paths of development for humanity: Cain depicts the head-centered path (fire) and Abel (Seth) depicts the heart-centered path (water). The names of the various descendants indicate the qualities and characteristics of the two paths. The two paths are ultimately blended as the individual completes the requisite experience on each.

† Commentary No. 78

Karma Yoga

The third chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Karma Yoga, the yoga of action (virtue in works) (the secret of activity). Karma is the law of cause and effect, of action and reaction (consequence), of relationships between events. Karma yoga is a way of life, the path of right activity, performed responsibly (in dharma) without attachment to activity or to the fruits of activity, a path which takes into conscious consideration the factor of karma in all lives. On the path of ascent, karma is transformed into karma yoga.

Karma yoga complements the yoga of knowledge, for understanding precipitates right action. The understanding of knowledge carries with it the responsibility for its proper application. A life of constructive activity is a life of example, a life of encouragement to others through the living of a life centered in truth (wisdom). It is a student's dharma (responsibility) to cooperate with the wheel of life through experience and intelligent activity (leading to wisdom). Karma yoga is concerned with individual and group (human) progress. Progress requires effort. Right effort and activity constitute an attitude more than a function. Proper activity builds a constructive momentum. Action is superior to inaction (inertia) (laziness), for action (motion) can be guided and adjusted. Thus, flexibility and adaptability can lead to right action. Inertia is a resistance to progress. Action in accordance with duty (what needs to be done) brings progress, while the seeking of results creates resistance.

The resistance of the lower self (personality) must be overcome in order to build momentum in right activity. Karma yoga and the (endless) path of purification are one and the same. Action on mental and astral (emotional) levels can be applied internally as well as externally (outwardly). The problem of purification is the problem of desire and the distractions of the senses. The renunciation of certain physical activities without removing the desire for them is a deception. The senses must be controlled, not suppressed or inhibited. One should work from the mind to control the emotions, and through the controlled emotions to discipline the physical body. The path of discipline often involves substitution; to busy one's lower self in right action is to transform one's tendency for lesser action (motivated by desire) into greater action (motivated from the higher self). Action is neither good nor evil; it is the motive and purpose for action that determines its value.

The object of karma yoga is the transformation of the life of self-centered activity into the life of wisdom in action. Karma yoga does not involve the elimination of individual karma; it involves becoming free from the karmic attachments which limit or otherwise impede progress. To intelligently sacrifice that which is of lesser value for that which is of greater value and to intelligently serve humanity, is to recognize the continuity of the human lifewave, and the relationship of the human soul to humanity.

It is the nature of the ego (mind) to (falsely) identify the self (soul) with the not-self (the personality). Ego implies bondage. The bondage and power of desire is great. Desire is rooted in the ego, in the mind, and in the senses. Desire inhibits understanding. The distraction of the senses (through desire) leads to illusion. To control the senses is to purify the jiva consciousness (the personality). The little self (ego) dissolves as the greater self (atma bodham) (spiritual consciousness) emerges. The Atman is the highest aspect of the soul, and is reflected in the enlightened self-control of the man of wisdom and compassion. Desire is transformed into desirelessness. Virtue in works leads ever onward into the secrets of the Atman.

The Planetary Scheme

The story of creative manifestation is the story of the unfoldment of the solar logos, through differentiation and integration (synthesis), through the experience and activity of the seven great days of manifestation. A planetary scheme is the experience and cyclic progression (pattern) of a host of lifewaves bound together within a great life (a planetary logos) for the duration of a solar incarnation. The planetary scheme experiences the seven creative days as seven chains of cyclic activity.

Each chain (corresponding numerologically to a day of manifestation) is a chain of seven globes (planets) through (around) which the various inherent life-waves progress (evolve). A lifewave begins on the first globe of a chain, then experiences each of the globes in succession seven times, making seven rounds or revolutions of the seven globes to complete the chain. At the end of each chain there is a night of rest and the transference of the life onto the following chain, for further experience. The seven globes of a chain are centered on various levels (planes) of consciousness. The first and seventh globes are on the highest level for a particular chain); the second and sixth are on the next lower level; likewise for the third and fifth globes even lower; while the fourth globe is centered upon the lowest plain for the chain. For example, the planet Earth is the fourth (lowest) globe of its chain and manifests as low as the chemical region of the physical plane. The third and fifth globes of the Earth chain do not manifest on dense physical levels, but have the etheric region of the physical plane for their lowest expression (field of experience). Likewise, the second and sixth globes of the Earth chain are astral in lowest substance and the first and seventh globes are of concrete mental matter in their lowest expression.

Similarly, each chain of globes is centered on some plane of consciousness. The first four chains of a planetary scheme are chains of descent, centered on successively lower levels. The fifth, sixth, and seventh chains (ascent) are centered on the same levels as the third, second, and first, respectively. The physical Earth is the fourth globe of the fourth chain in our planetary scheme. The fourth (lowest) globe of the third and fifth chains (in our scheme) are etheric rather than dense physical. And it is the fourth globe of the second (and sixth)

chain which is astral (and it is the fourth globe of the first and seventh chains which is mental in substance).

Each lifewave passes through a kingdom of nature in each chain. During the first, second, and third chains, the lives that are now experiencing the human (self-conscious) kingdom passed through the mineral (trance-like), plant (dreamless sleep), and animal (dream) stages of consciousness (kingdoms). These passages through the lower kingdoms were quite unlike the experience of the present lower kingdoms, for the conditions earlier were far different and non-physical. Each turn of the spiral (round, globe, or chain) progressively offers new conditions for the evolving lifewaves.

Our present planetary lifewaves are in the fourth round (on the fourth globe) of the Earth chain. For humanity, each passage upon a globe may be divided into seven epochs or root-races. From root-races to rounds and globes to chains, each planetary scheme is an intricate and complex pattern (though simple in concept) of evolutionary experience for lifewaves of varying degrees of consciousness. The cycles of days (activity) and nights (rest) gradually merge into greater periods until comes the synthesis of the various planetary schemes and the ultimate withdrawal of the logos from the present incarnation.

† Commentary No. 80

Beauty

True beauty is the special quality that calls forth a state of perception (awareness) (response) in which the normal strains of emotional response and mental activity are displaced to allow a serene emotional and mental appreciation of life (nature) (through positive relaxation) (stillness) (aspiration) (inspiration). Whether the state of appreciation (rejuvenation) (participation) is visual or auditory, the abstract mental response exhibits a common spiritual transcendence over time and space, ever beckoning the world aspirant (humanity) out of the pain of form-attachment and mundane existence, upward to those states of knowledge and soul identification which characterize the peaceful reconciliation of duality (the pairs-of-opposites) (illusion). Such is the case at least for the more refined (pure) (controlled) emotions which invoke the

higher participation; not so for the ordinary uncontrolled emotional response which precludes higher activity in its lack of relationship.

Beauty (in this higher sense) leads to the contemplation of those varying revelations of divinity which require no explanation, which leave the student thankful (humble) and in awe of the compassionate presence. Such contemplation is typical of the mature mystical or heart-centered aspect of the spiritual path. The purest emotions and aspirations indicate a simplicity of attitude which eventually clothes the personality in the robes of mystic humility and reverence. The disciple, however occultly (mentally), invokes the needed rays of love and beauty with the realization of the plan of service. For the plan itself represents that which is beauty (truth) (perfection) (life). The beauty of the compassionate quality suggests the attitude of those greater lives for the lesser, who are sacrificed (made sacred) upon the cross of form and matter. The complexities, apparent inconsistencies, and generic suffering of humanity are easily reconciled within the plan of beauty (purpose) of the solar logos.

The ability of the student to analyze these mysteries of beauty is limited only by the extent to which the depths of personal and group being can be realized. There are no constraints on the essence of life, only relative and specific intention. Beauty is a truly synthetic quality, linking all of the seven streams of life (purpose) (manifestation) together in harmony. The creative and harmonious manifestation of spirit is often reflected in truly classical music (as the position of sound in manifestation is recognized). Good (classical) music (that which calms the emotions rather than that which excites them) is an effective elixir for those students needing to balance in harmony the mental polarization (fire) with the emotional aspect (water) of the heart.

The majesty of certain twilight pageantry emblazons forth the importance of the middle spiritual path (harmonizing the polar opposites). The panoramic differentiation is seen in the tidal spray of sunlight (spirit) projecting subtle rainbows of purpose (soul-mind) amidst clouds of darkness (matter). This suggests the twilight state of meditation bridging between the waking-consciousness and the revelation of the crown of spiritual gold (the light of the soul within the head). The spiritual student sees the presence in obvious splendor while the disciple's light shows the way through the darkness.

The evolved spiritual will synthesizes the seven ray qualities into rich and synergistic patterns (color and harmonies) of greater life from the lesser, the sacred transmutation of microcosmic attributes into macrocosmic aspects. The disciple seeks to identify and encourage the divine principles within humanity in those personalities with which he has contact, a beauty evident only in the group-polarized perspective.

† Commentary No. 81

Happiness

Happiness is a sense of well-being and contentment, but happiness can vary in degree and quality depending upon the basis for happiness and its effect on the personality. From a spiritual perspective, happiness can be either artificial or real (or somewhere in between).

Artificial happiness is a sense of well-being based on fulfillment of desire. That fulfillment may be material, financial, phenomenal, emotional, or even mental. There is a degree of glamour or illusion associated with any sense of artificial happiness, happiness based on lower-world values or personality (ego) values. True (real) happiness is founded in spiritual quality. Happiness that is an expression or result of harmony between mind and soul is a relatively permanent quality, whereas happiness that is based on pleasure or lower-world values is only temporary (and therefore unreal, in the stricter sense). Real happiness is not a distracting emotional quality but a soul quality that comes as a consequence of purified (serene) emotions and a steady mind responsive to inner (higher) spiritual impression. It is a quiet, peaceful feeling of joy that is dependent only upon the inner self (the soul) and its relationship to the personality. Artificial happiness depends on the winds and tides of (apparent) fortune which may come and go and vary with circumstances.

Artificial happiness is rooted in selfishness. Real happiness is rooted in unselfishness. Lasting happiness cannot be attained through seeking; it can only be "attained" through being. Even the spiritual student is vulnerable to a certain extent to artificial happiness, for wherever there is a good (but uncontrolled) emotional response, there is a temporary lessening of (interference with) spiritual poise. The aspirant is expected to be happy in the quiet sense of

inner peace and joy. The aspirant is not expected to be excitable or even enthusiastic to the extent that the emotions are involuntary or undisciplined. Where there is true happiness, there are the higher (refined) emotions of aspiration, devotion, humility, peace, and serenity. With the spiritual discipline comes the inner confidence in a greater reality that is unmoved by circumstances. Where there is the natural (spiritual) feeling of compassion and identification with the soul and with humanity, there is also the natural demonstration of goodwill and quiet cheerfulness so characteristic of the true happiness. Such happiness cannot be deterred by (apparent) misfortune or other worldly events, personal or otherwise.

With discernment comes clarification (in relative terms) concerning pleasure, happiness, joy, bliss, samadhi, and nirvana. Pleasure implies the phenomenal or personality-centered fulfillment of desire. Happiness is the overall sense of well-being of widely varying basis. Joy can imply excitement (pleasurable loss of self-control) or it can imply the quiet peace and inner (real) happiness. In the eastern tradition, bliss implies complete happiness; samadhi is a mystical (higher) meditative state; and nirvana implies heavenly liberation, a final beatitude and a state of oblivion.

In the higher sense, (in the eastern esoteric tradition), bliss is an unemotional, impersonal, abstract experience that involves soul-consciousness; samadhi means self-mastery; and nirvana implies an exceptionally abstract and impersonal state of consciousness, beyond that of individuality-consciousness, where the soul is absorbed in absolute consciousness (beyond perfection). Each of these terms points in some way to a degree of spiritual maturity through which (necessarily) should the real happiness be manifested. For such is the response of a purified personality to the true nature of the higher worlds.

Genesis 3

The story of Noah and the flood is a story of preparation, a transition (migration), and new beginnings, on several levels. In cosmic, solar, and planetary terms it is the story of gatherings (abstraction) of experience to be carried over into the next cycle of activity, the gathering of seeds for further development. Evolved archetypes and patterns of life-forms are saved (withdrawn to safety), the forms are destroyed, but the life remains (on its level). On another level is described the human transition which is called death: the ascent and descent of human consciousness in preparation for a new birth. The old forms (bodies) are discarded and new forms are created from the fruits of past experience. The story of Noah also describes symbolically the end of the Atlantean (fourth) root-race and the beginnings of the Aryan (fifth) root-race.

Whenever old forms crystallize and become unresponsive to further spiritual (evolutionary) impulse, they are destroyed so that new, more flexible, more responsive forms may be created and utilized. Such is the case on all levels of manifestation. The Atlantean civilization had declined and degenerated such that only a few were still spiritually responsive. Noah and his family represent those few (generically), the remnants of the Atlanteans who were saved by migration and prepared for a new beginning, and from which the Aryan root-race was developed. The flood described was the fourth and final cataclysm which destroyed the old Atlantean continent. The migrations from Atlantis provided for a rebirth of the Atlantean mystery schools in Egypt, Chaldea, and India. The liberated souls (freed from the old forms) were then able to incarnate as new Aryan bodies were provided for further development.

The story of Noah is filled with numerological and linguistic symbology. The forty days and forty nights symbolize foundation and preparation. The ark is a vehicle of higher consciousness (the causal body). The raven and the dove represent the lower self (intellect) and higher self (intuition) respectively. The (purely symbolic) animal sacrifices refer to the purification (burning) of the animal nature in man. The covenant refers to the link between God (the monad) and man (the soul and its reflection, the mind), and to the link or thread

of life between the various cycles. The names of the descendants of Noah (and in subsequent genealogies) offer further insight into the nature of man and his enlightenment.

The story of the Tower of Babel is the story of the diversification of humanity from an original unified race into various sub-races and branch-races (and individualism), each with its own language and particular experience. The east represents the unified source of light and spiritual perception. The lower plain implies lower (external) (objective) consciousness, materialism, and intellect, all of which must be transformed before higher consciousness can be made manifest. At the conclusion of diversification, humanity (and all life) shall return again to the unified source.

The story of Abraham considers the great journey of spiritual unfoldment in which each major event in the life-story of Abraham marks a stage or step upon the spiritual path. The tests and trials are many, as the disciple progresses. Each place and each person in the story has its symbolic value. Ur in Chaldea represents the light of the mysteries. Egypt represents darkness and materialism. Palestine represents spiritual consciousness (the promised land). Lot denotes the lower nature from which Abraham withdraws. Lot is finally redeemed (purified and disciplined). And the mystic marriage of feminine and masculine principles is consummated and consciousness is exalted.

† Commentary No. 83

Jnana Karma Sanyasa Yoga

The fourth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Jnana Karma Sanyasa Yoga, the yoga of renunciation of action in knowledge. Therein Krishna discusses the nature of the divine incarnation, knowledge of God, action and inaction, works as sacrifice, and transcendent wisdom. The teaching presents itself on several levels as Krishna represents the life and consciousness of cosmic intelligence as well as that of a soul within a chain of spiritual teachers who share in a common source of consciousness and purpose. Krishna also represents the mature soul of the disciple. The soul or spirit remains unborn (on

its level) while the personality or manifestation of the soul (or cosmos) makes its temporal appearance in the objective world.

From time to time throughout the ages of man, highly evolved souls (Sons of God) are made manifest in response to the spiritual needs of humanity (or a segment thereof). Each of these great teachers releases a renewed spiritual impulse of encouragement. Though the outer teaching may vary with the circumstances, the inner teachings of each dispensation resonate with a common source and character. As the spiritual student studies the teachings and begins to participate in the higher consciousness (through meditation), he gradually attains the consciousness of the source. To know God is to share in the divine mode of being. Through such knowledge and participation, the student ultimately becomes the Christ-consciousness, and is no longer required to incarnate, as he is one with the higher (group) life, and is fulfilled (completed) (perfected).

The purpose of the outer teachings of each dispensation is to encourage the spiritual progress of the masses and to hide or veil the inner teachings. The purpose of the inner teachings is to provide the training necessary for aspirants and disciples (spiritual students) to perfect themselves and simultaneously serve humanity. There are so many paths to God, and yet each one has an experience and offering for those who pass that way, and each one ultimately blends with every other in the final stages. The amount of work required for fulfillment is the same on any path, but the intensity of effort and the duration may vary (inversely). Each path involves action and inaction, and in the mystery thereof is the understanding of wisdom.

Action implies becoming, and pertains primarily to the lower life which is in the process of purification and experience. Inaction implies "being" and pertains to the soul and its greater focal point, the monad. Right action is auspicious work performed in a detached manner, a state of mind in which there exists no bondage of works. Right action places emphasis on how and why rather than what (which presumes some illumination). Discernment is required for an understanding of the relativity of action (mind) and inaction (the Atman), and the implications of reaction. A secret of action is sacrifice. The spirit of sacrifice (action) is a holy work of self-mastery and humanitarian service. This

secret involves the transformation of identification out of the lower self and into the higher self.

Wisdom is the fulfillment of works, the identification (and manifestation) of eternal being; whereas ignorance is the identification with phenomenal existence. The sacrifice (detached service) is the renunciation of the lower life, replacing it with conformity to the will of God. This (action) breeds enlightenment, destroys doubt, and creates confidence in the inner self. Self-harmony is the key to this truth, as purity in God-consciousness (self-harmony) breeds wisdom transcendent. Thus the warrior (Arjuna) (the aspirant) must arise and meet the challenge of sacrifice in everlasting yoga.

† Commentary No. 84

Meditation Triangles

As the spiritual student progresses in the daily (personal) meditation work, there comes increasing identification with humanity and with the evolutionary purpose or plan of spiritual fulfillment for humanity. As this identification with humanity unfolds, the thoughts of the aspirant turn naturally toward the element of service. One of the opportunities for constructive service is the work of meditation triangles.

The purpose of a meditation triangle is the unified invocation and focused release (distribution) of spiritual energies into the mental atmosphere of the planet. These energies, flowing through the planetary network, encourage the upliftment and transformation of human consciousness. The meditation work is quite simple and the effects are considerable. A triangle requires three people who agree to link up mentally on a daily basis. Appropriate spiritual energies are invoked and visualized as circulating through the three points of the triangle and pouring outward through the network.

The triangle meditation work may be a segment or part of the regular daily meditation work or it can be performed as an additional (informal) meditation period of a few minutes duration. It is not necessary for each member of the triangle to perform the work at the same time (or in the same place), for once the

triangle is established, it can be activated by any one of the three members. The first stage in the triangle meditation is the visualization or activation of the triangle. The second stage is the pondering upon a seed thought of some appropriate virtue or quality and the invocation of the energies of light and goodwill, visualizing the energies as circulating through the triangle (clockwise). The third stage is the sounding (verbally or mentally) of the Great Invocation and the release or transmission of the invoked energies into the network of triangles. If the triangle work comes at the conclusion of a longer meditation period, the (impersonal) quality of that meditation is also transmitted mentally into the network.

Each individual may function in a number of unique triangles, but the emphasis should be on the quality of the meditation period rather than the number of triangles established. The triangle is the basic (smallest) geometric unit of circulation; the triangles (and their effects) are combined to strengthen the planetary (mental) network. Meditation triangles generally invoke and release more positive energy (quality) than could be manifested by the individuals independently. This is also true of larger group meditation work. The experience in daily meditation work (visualization, invocation, concentration, and meditation) naturally provides a foundation upon which to build the triangle work. Serious group meditation work is much more demanding, but the triangle work can invoke the appropriate adjustments in preparation for group work. Continued triangle meditation along with continued daily (individual) meditation will enhance the overall group work.

The symbolic triangle (upward pointing) represents the Trinity (the three major rays) of life (purpose) (power), consciousness (wisdom) (love), and activity (intelligence) (light). The triangle also represents the upper triad, the three aspects of the soul; atma (spiritual will), buddhi (intuition), and manas (mind). The circulation of energy through the three focal points of the triangle finds an energy correspondence within the human being and humanity, and within the planetary and cosmic lives. It is in this respect that the Great Invocation calls forth a powerful flow of energy on behalf of humanity, as the meditation triangles evoke and release that energy.

Spiritual Inertia

Inertia is a property or quality of matter (or force), representing resistance to modification in its state of motion or mode of application. Inertia suggests an inherent lack of flexibility in matter, an indisposition to motion, exertion, or change. It also implies deficiency in active qualities. Spiritually, inertia is a property of the personality (exoteric) and a property of space (esoteric). In each case there exist forces for progress and forces to resist progress. The progressive (evolutionary) force is superior, but the (inferior) resistive force acts as a check and balance in order to guide the evolutionary experience.

That which has motion (and momentum) is less resistant to change. Apathy generally requires considerable circumstances to overcome. The momentum of the spiritual student implies a measure of flexibility and open-mindedness leading to balanced progress. The inertia of the so-called aspirant to the spiritual life for whom spiritual activity remains a small part of the daily life, is an inherent property of the personality (form) (matter). But there are no real obstructions to living the spiritual life; for one who considers himself an aspirant, neither poor health nor worldly (family) responsibilities are acceptable excuses. All alibis and excuses (for the spiritual student) are selfish rationalizations. The demands of the path are considerable, and the spiritual work (study, meditation, and service) must be placed in its proper perspective of primary importance (without neglecting other responsibilities).

The implications of the inertial property of space, and their meaning for the spiritual student are somewhat subtle and abstract. Inertia is the third or substance characteristic of the spirit (rhythm), consciousness (mobility), and form (inertia) triplicity. The effects of form on consciousness and perception are considerable, for the instruments and medium of consciousness are composed of matter. The student is the observer who is concerned with his mechanism (mind-sight), the observation (perception through a medium), and that which is observed. Each of these aspects depends on the quality, intensity, and character of the perceptual (inertial) sphere. Perception is an extension of the perceiver, and each of the various aspects in the process of observation are interrelated. The concordance of space suggests perceptual inertia.

Perception may be horizontal (through different media or reference frames) or vertical (through different planes or levels of consciousness). At each point of translation (tension) between a higher and lower plane (or sub-plane) (or between perspectives) there occurs a perceptual distortion due to the contrasting polarity and quality, a characteristic of contrasting inertial properties. Each plane (or sphere) is somewhat exclusive and resistant to casual bridging efforts. Within the human being, it becomes necessary to build a thread or channel of rapport between the various planes or levels of self (being). Such threads occur naturally with certain forms of correspondence.

For example, on an atomic (highest) sub-plane of some plane of consciousness, it is possible to interact (perceive) in two directions: below (into denser substance) to the next lower sub-plane and to lower atomic sub-planes, and above (into finer substance) to the next higher sub-plane and to higher atomic sub-planes. This phenomenon is a function of quality (purity) and rapport (magnetic alignment) between corresponding or adjacent levels. A similar thread of consciousness is possible for the disciple. Through purification and spiritual activity, the disciple recognizes and overcomes his spiritual inertia and steps forward into a higher magnetic (soul) alignment.

† Commentary No. 86

Destiny and Free Will

Complicated by semantics and perspective, the paradox of destiny and free will has plagued thinkers throughout history. The problem involves the inherent limitations of human experience and consciousness, and the interdependence of events (cause and effects). A man is the dynamic totality of his experience and the totality of the (external and internal) forces acting upon or within him. Any decision (action) that a man undertakes is necessarily (and relatively if not altogether) dependent upon that dynamic totality of his being. Through karma (action and reaction) a man and his condition of consciousness are the result of past action and present being.

In a practical analysis, the problem of destiny and free will is relatively simple; it is the problem of freedom and law. Life is conditioned by natural laws which

place bounds or limitation on freedom. All natural laws find some place and purpose within the evolutionary scheme. The overall purpose of natural law is to encourage and guide evolution. The unevolved man knows nothing of higher purpose and has minimal freedom. His actions are almost entirely the result of external forces. The truly enlightened man understands (to a certain extent) and intelligently cooperates with higher purpose, and has considerable freedom. His actions are based on realizations; for the most part he chooses his response to the various forces acting upon him.

But even the practical analysis is not without its difficulties. Science postulates a mechanistic universe that may even have an analogy in terms of consciousness. The (scientific) energy perspective is a very powerful one. The human being (soul) and its personality instrument are both affected by external and internal forces. Though the application of the various forces may be adjusted, what (ultimately) determines the adjustment? In an absolute sense, is not the totality of being instantaneous predetermination? Is there an energy output, not directly dependent upon conditioned energy inputs, that might be called new (unique) causation? Religion postulates an omnipotent (having unlimited influence), omnipresent (immanent), and omniscient (having infinite awareness) God. But cannot omniscience imply a consciousness beyond that of human mentality, an impersonal (nonhuman) (abstract) intelligence unconcerned with trivial details (individual human souls), but concerned with a purpose and the means of accomplishment on a grand scale? Are not the various natural laws simply the (unconscious) consequences of divine purpose? And what about the philosophical doctrines of determinism (predestination) and fatalism (human powerlessness)? Are not these (limited) perspectives resolvable (more meaningful) within a broader framework of relative freedom? Even deterministic philosophy with its antecedent causes can be interpreted in relativistic terms.

The proper exercise of freedom, being dependent on external forces (destiny) (consequence of past actions) and internal forces (experience) (consequence of being), is an intelligent balance between free will and destiny (the bounds of law and consequence). Free will implies the ability to choose between alternatives such that the choice is creatively and consciously self-determined.

But what is self-determination? Relativistic philosophy reveals the middle path in which either extreme (destiny or free will) is simply a (valid) way of looking at (apparent) reality. But who can say how the little world of human consciousness appears from above (beyond)? The whole key to the paradox is the nature of creativity and the concept of new causation (epigenesis), of unconditioned energy (from the monad) used in an unqualified manner. In the absolute sense, the paradox of destiny and free will remains, a paradox.

† Commentary No. 87

Metaphysics 1

Formal (academic) metaphysics is the branch of philosophy which deals with the nature of reality, the nature of being (ontology), the nature of God and the interpretation of religious faith (theology) (the nature of divine and human relationships), and the philosophy of nature. Where physics (in the most general sense) (science) is the study of the visible (apparent) universe, metaphysics (beyond physics) is the study of the invisible universe. Where physics deals with visible forms and effects, metaphysics deals with the underlying principles and (invisible) causes.

In the formal sense, metaphysics includes religion; in the informal (popular) sense, religion includes metaphysics. Metaphysical religion is the frontier of religion, religion that is (in its reasonably pure form) relatively free from the crystallized structure and limitations of the orthodox churches. The popular metaphysical movement is a very broad and loose synthesis of metaphysical philosophy, metaphysical religion, and metaphysical science, embracing many degrees and levels of maturity and perspective. Where the individual approach is not self-centered (and is on mental levels), there is metaphysics in its higher (spiritual) form.

Formal metaphysics is somewhat impractical (being abstract and abstruse), though it is the foundation and the frontier of academic (orthodox) philosophy and does provide considerable insight into reality. Informal metaphysics tends toward the practical application of philosophy in daily living. In this sense, it is a translation, interpretation, and reduction of the higher philosophy into a form

that can be readily and easily understood and assimilated. Popular metaphysics is the bridge or link between philosophy, religion, and science. The intention or goal of metaphysics is for man to understand the universe and the place of humanity therein, to give mankind some (enlightened) purpose or motivation for living (and growing), to free mankind from the bondage of materialism (and glamour), and to provide a bridge between the orthodox world of appearances and the esoteric (superphysical) world of realities.

The higher metaphysics (beyond the popular or informal metaphysics) consists of two branches. The first is theosophy (and its link with the esoteric philosophy) and the second is classical (academic) philosophy. The two paths naturally overlap somewhat, as many of the great philosophers lived consciously in both worlds (the esoteric and the exoteric). It is within these two paths of higher philosophy that is found the key or clue to the mysteries of life. That key is simply the difference between (and the relationships of) life (reality), quality (consciousness), and appearance. In this respect, metaphysics considers the supersensible world, beyond that which is apparent to the senses. To most people, sense impressions (appearances) determine reality, but to the metaphysical student there is (or should be) a great deal of "reality" beyond appearance. Thus metaphysics attempts to answer the question of what is reality.

The "reality" of the observable (material) world is fairly well-known by orthodox science. But the world of causes is known only to the few, who through the evolution of consciousness and the cultivation of wisdom have attained first-hand self-knowledge of that greater reality. There are many who have received distorted impressions (and conclusions) (based on a lack of understanding) concerning metaphysical realms, but so few who truly understand. Perception without proper training (preparation) and understanding is of little value. The wise remain relatively silent.

Sanyasa Yoga

The fifth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Sanyasa Yoga, the yoga of renunciation. The teaching concerning the soul and its potential, its limitations and its perfection, continues as Krishna discusses the renunciation and performance of action, the means of self-purification, the Self and its agent, the light of wisdom, and the (higher) path of renunciation.

The renunciation of action (karma sanyasa) and the performance of action (karma yoga) each lead to freedom, but theory (renunciation) and practice (action) are not separable, for each includes a measure of the other. There is a time for withdrawal and a time for right activity (holy work). Each path leads to the other, for each is but a perspective (emphasis). The path of renunciation leads to a state of mind in which the lower self identifies with the higher self. The higher self is not involved with action, for it is the lower self which is the agent in the performance of service through action. The path of action is the path of self-purification, the endless path of refinement which leads to freedom from action. The true self is above action; true renunciation is above duality (the realm of the pairs-of-opposites). Thus one can renounce action whilst performing it.

The realm of the pairs-of-opposites is the domain of objective experience, the realm of action and its consequence (karma). The various pairs-of-opposites provide the field of experience, and the unenlightened man is caught between them. As evolution proceeds, the spiritual student (Arjuna) must gradually free himself from their influence and pass on into the higher worlds where the sense of duality is nonexistent. It is through this experience in the lesser worlds and through self-purification (leading to service) that liberation is attained.

Karma is the medium of self-purification. But karma pertains to the phenomenal world (nature) (prakriti) and not to the realm of the true self (soul), which is the domain of noumenon (purusha). It is the "I" that bathes in inaction (the subjective disposition of the soul) while the mind (personality) is the agent. In the metaphysical sense, the "I" denotes identification with the soul, spirit, God, the life that thrills through all of manifestation (wherever the Krishna

dialogue becomes personal, it refers to this greater (impersonal) "I" rather than that of the lower, personal self). It is the work (dharma) of the lower self to produce (create) (evolve) quality (consciousness) as a consequence of action, and to allow the Lord (the Christ-self) (the soul) to work through its instrument without impediment. Through such action (self-purification and service) works are transcended. Through such action is found the light of wisdom, the light of the inner self.

The inner light leads to further participation in (realization of) God and the elimination (transformation) of the sense of duality. The integrated man (yukta) is one who realizes the unity of all life, one who sees that from the knowledge (of God) comes same-sightedness, for God lives through all, equally. There are no real differences, for all is one life. The path of unity is the (higher) path of renunciation. In this sense, renunciation means integration (unification) (absorption in the higher life). Thus, renunciation draws forth (invokes) the quality (consciousness) (joy) of the higher self. The self is known and sins are left behind (transformed into spiritual strengths); the spiritual student is led to no-return (the completion of human experience) (freedom from birth and death) (perfection) (nirvana). Nirvana is the end of phenomenal existence, the blowing out (renunciation) (sublimation) of the lower self in the (abstract) bliss of Brahman (higher existence) (peace).

† Commentary No. 89

Group Meditation

An essential ingredient of meaningful group meditation is regular daily (individual) meditation performed seriously by each participant in the group work. Without such a foundation, group meditation as a constructive activity will not be as effective as it should. Another essential aspect of (true) group meditation is a quality of (unselfish) purpose expressed inwardly by each participant. The ability to contribute effectively will naturally come to the participant in accordance with the quality of effort and motive expended in the daily meditation work and the quality of the commitment to the group work.

The triangle meditation work is an intermediate step that further prepares the student for effective group work. The individual daily meditation work must

continue, even though the spiritual student may have entered into group work; the (daily) triangle work should likewise be continued, as both forms of meditation work support and complement larger group efforts. The contribution of the triangle work is considerable, as the individual learns how to work constructively (and impersonally) with others in a project with a purpose that should transcend personality-relationships.

An isolated individual may (through training and preparation) participate directly (mentally) in planetary group meditation work, or through an organized group (on exoteric or esoteric levels). An individual may also attend (physically and mentally) group meditation meetings and contribute through such a group to the overall planetary effort. The student must discern the most appropriate group or activity for his efforts. Group meditation for individual development or special interests should be discouraged. Group meditation for humanitarian or more universal (relatively impersonal) causes should be encouraged. Purpose and motive are much more important in group work than in individual work. The student who is still concerned with how he can benefit from group work is not ready for serious group meditation.

Meaningful (and coherent) group meditation work contributes considerably more energy than would be possible for the sum of the individual efforts. But the requirements for successful group meditation are considerably higher. The participant must go beyond the personality actions and reactions of the common-place. The individual must adjust himself and his participation for effectiveness and efficiency. The more obvious weaknesses (and some of the subtle ones) in the individual must be transformed if he or she is to contribute properly to the group effort. The nature of (serious) group meditation work is the invocation and evocation of spiritual energy for humanity. This energy is invoked, received (on as high a level as possible), transformed, and distributed on lower levels (primarily mental) for the benefit of human progress (in consciousness). If the group is sufficiently impersonal and sufficiently unified (coherent), then very little (if any) energy will be wasted. Otherwise the effort will be unproductive.

The dynamics of group meditation, both on personality and soul levels, provide the spiritual student with the preparation for (or participation in) the work of discipleship. As the aspirant approaches discipleship he is expected more and

more to concern himself with humanity. The continued evolution of consciousness leads to constructive cooperation and higher degrees of group consciousness and identification. Group meditation provides an avenue (opportunity) for service (and group service). The right efforts expended therein can only contribute to the essential progress (evolution) of humanity, through the purification and elevation of consciousness.

† Commentary No. 90

The Seal of Solomon

One of the ancient symbols of wisdom is the seal of Solomon, two triangles interlaced to form a six-pointed star. This emblem has been used in a number of ways to symbolize various aspects of ageless wisdom. The downward-pointing triangle is the lower triad, the symbol of the path of descent (involution) and the symbol of matter (form). The lower triad also denotes the three principles of the human personality: the physical (etheric), the emotional (astral), and the lower mental. The upward-pointing triangle is the upper triad, the symbol of the path of ascent (evolution) and of spirit (life). The upper triad also denotes the three principles of the human soul: atma (spiritual will) (purpose), buddhi (spiritual intuition), and manas (higher mind). Together, the interlacing triangles demonstrate the unity of spirit-matter and life-form.

With the numerals of the seven rays (and planes of consciousness) placed auspiciously in the field of the emblem (one at each point of the star, in sequence, beginning with the peak, clockwise 1-6-3-7-2-5 with 4 in the center), many of the relationships and correspondences can be seen. The upper triad then indicates the three major rays of aspect and the associated trinities: spirit, consciousness, and matter; power (life), love, and light; monad, soul, and personality; will, wisdom, and intelligence; life, quality, and appearance; and so forth. The lower triad indicates the reflection of the upper triad into matter (objectivity). The seventh ray of organization is the reflection of the first ray of power (will) (life) (purpose). The sixth ray of devotion (idealism) is the reflection of the second ray of love (wisdom). The fifth ray of concrete knowledge is the reflection of the third ray of comprehension (active intelligence). In each case the qualities of the major rays are reflected as the qualities of the objectified minor rays. The fourth ray is seen as the ray of

balance (tension) (harmony through conflict) in the center of the emblematic field, providing a point of linking between rays 1 and 7, 2 and 6, and 3 and 5.

As the seven planes of consciousness (physical (7), emotional (6), mental (5), intuitional (4), atmic (3), monadic (2), and God-consciousness (1)) are associated with the corresponding rays, insight into those relationships is also demonstrated. Similarly, the human principles associated with the upper and lower triads can find elucidation (atma (1), buddhi (2), higher mind (3), lower mental (5), emotional (6), and physical (7)). In that set of correspondences, four denotes the antahkarana, the bridge between mind and soul, between the lower personal self and the higher impersonal self.

The six points of the star (seal) of Solomon can also show some astrological relationships (two interrelated signs per point) in addition to the placing of the seven sacred planets. The septenary cycles of the evolutionary spiral and their relationships to other septenates can also be shown. The human (fourth) kingdom and the fourth (earth) globe (chain) stand prominently in the center.

The upper triangle also indicates God the triple logos (Shiva-Vishnu-Brahma) (father-son-holy spirit) while the lower triangle symbolizes man, the reflection of God (in principle). The two triangles indicate further the various pairs-of-opposites and their transcendence in unity. In this respect, the two triangles (upper and lower, respectively) denote the duality and relationship of macrocosm and microcosm, of good and evil, life and death, reality and illusion. As ancient as the universe, the seal of Solomon brings together the wisdom of manifestation; the emblem blazes forth as a symbol of creation itself, and the ageless wisdom that shall lead man from darkness into the light.

Spiritual Poise

Spiritual poise is a synthetic (composite) quality that eventually comes to the spiritual student as a consequence of character and consciousness. Spiritual poise is an indication of the uncompromised manifestation of the soul through its lower self. The implacable (inner) self (soul) brings upon the personality the quality and disposition of spiritual poise, provided that the proper foundation of character and consciousness has been accomplished.

As a synthetic quality, spiritual poise cannot be cultivated directly, as it is a consequence of being more so than of becoming. There are many essential ingredients that must be attained before the synthesis of composure and spiritual disposition of the higher self can be evident. Much of the lower life must first be tamed, else the necessary ingredients (virtues) (qualities) shall remain elusive. Where the lower self remains undisciplined, the higher life cannot be achieved. So with some progress in the self-control of the senses and with the impression of higher purpose upon the lower self, the spiritual student can begin to cultivate the character and consciousness required.

The ingredients are interdependent, as each quality has its prerequisites as well as a bearing upon other characteristics. Three essential ingredients are stability, serenity, and strength. Without stability there is distraction; and where there is distraction there can be no dependability or responsibility, and no consistency in the spiritual life. Without serenity there can be no selfless love, no peacefulness in humility, no clear vision of the needs of humanity and the work to be done. And without the unselfish love can there be true serenity? Without stability or serenity can there be spiritual strength? Without spiritual strength can the stoic ethic (insensitivity to pain or pleasure, and the quality of detachment) be maintained? Since the pertinent virtues and ingredients are so interdependent, it is the overall quality of the spiritual life (as it overshadows the objective existence) that is so much more relevant. To seek spiritual poise directly serves only to undermine (through desire) the spiritual effort. To work quietly to improve the quality and consistency of the spiritual life, serves indirectly to bring about the soul-infusion implied in spiritual poise, by creating the foundation (fertile ground) for such manifestation. The motive is ever

significant, since it is only with right (unselfish) motives that the work can be properly performed.

The confident and tranquil repose of mind, bearing, and appearance, even in the most trying of circumstances, implies an acceptance of the consequence of action and being, and the reliance upon the inner self for assurance. The balance and equilibrium of the poised (comfortable yet flexible) spiritual student rest upon the alignment of soul and personality, for the personality (mind) cannot be permitted to reason independently of the higher self, nor can the desire-nature (emotions) be permitted excitement or distraction, if the true self is to properly guide the lesser life.

Spiritual poise is a quality of balance between the head and the heart, between the soul and its reflection, between the inner life and the outer. Without such balance the esoteric path cannot be realized. The path ultimately requires the continual attention of the waking-consciousness. The part-time aspirant is not the esoteric student. The full-time student (in consciousness) is the disciple who lives in the spiritual disposition, (nearly) perfectly balanced between the inner contemplative life and the life of action (service) in the outer world. Through such outer life the spiritual poise (the quality of the spiritual life) is transmitted (induced) (shared) as encouragement.

† Commentary No. 92

Logic

Logic is one of the more practical departments of philosophy and deals with the principles of reasoning and the validity of inference. Logic can be a means to greater understanding, and as such is dependent upon knowledge, intelligence, and reasoning ability. Success (understanding) (correct or valid conclusions) depends very much on the logical method, the consciousness applied, and the validity of assumptions upon which inference is based.

There are three basic logical methods. Inductive reasoning is the reasoning of ascension, from a part to a whole, from particulars to generals, from the individual to the universal, from the lesser to the greater. Deductive reasoning is the reasoning of descension, from the greater to the lesser, from the universal

to the particular. Analogical reasoning is the reasoning of correspondence and analogy. Analogical reasoning includes symbolic reasoning and the proper study of relationships. Each of the three methods can be valuable, especially where combined into a broader perspective. Of the three, the study by analogy and correspondence is the more powerful philosophical method. The deeper study of the esoteric philosophy, for example, can only yield understanding where there is an appreciation (recognition) of relationships through correspondence.

But each application of the (singular or multiple) logical method depends on consciousness. The realm of logical thinking is mainly the exclusive domain of the intellect (concrete mind). But the testimony of science often indicates intuitive realization and understanding (followed by intellectual correlation). And religion speaks of the mystical experience of direct realization beyond the intellect. Beyond the intellect (the mind of the personality) is the spiritual intuition (the realization of the soul as projected through the abstract mind). If logical reasoning is to be truly a path or means of understanding, the intellect must be uplifted into (and subservient to) the intuition (soul). Purely rational (intellectual) reasoning is limited by the capacity and experience of the mortal mind. The intuitive "reasoning" of the contemplative is only limited by the ability of the intellect to properly interpret the realization. Rationalization is quite inferior to direct realization.

Two further elements of logic are essential to success (understanding). The first is the reservoir of experience (knowledge) held by the mind and the validity (correctness) of the assumptions which initiate the reasoning process or upon which conclusions are expected to follow. That which is logical is not necessarily true, for conclusions may be only as good as the validity of each assumption at each stage in the process. If any of the assumptions are false, then the conclusion may be inconsistent with that which is true. Another essential element to success is the ability (through training and experience) to interpret realistically the conclusions or realizations obtained. Here the facility of language (the correlation between thought and words) is quite significant. If the logical (and intuitive) studies are to be meaningful, the understanding must be brought down to some practical (addressable) level.

Logical thinking can be practical and reasonable provided that all of the elements are both valid and consistent. Effective logic (intellectual and intuitive) requires the continuity (consistency) of ideas. Where the correct (reasonable) relationships do not exist, the conclusions reached will not (generally) be consistent or valid. The science of inference and implication can be a serious and consistent means with which to attain the greater understanding that complements the studies of the philosophical student.

† Commentary No. 93

Dhyana Yoga

The sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Dhyana Yoga, the yoga of meditation (self-mastery). The teaching of Krishna (the soul) continues with a discussion of the spiritual exercise (meditation) and its relationship to the yogi (spiritual student) (Arjuna). The responsibilities of the karma yogi and the karma sanyasin are similar in the later stages as meditation and its associated activities are common to each path. Even the ascetic (sanyasin) has the responsibility of purification and meditation (holy sacrifice).

Not only must the rules (guidelines) of the path be adhered to (with some understanding), but the student must also put into practice the spirit of the teachings. This requires the surrender of the earthly will (the little wills of the personality) and the establishment of the meditative atmosphere. The head and the heart must share in each commitment (to the path), so that serious meditation can be accomplished. Right meditation then enhances (in quality) all of the (right) activities of the student. The constancy of the yogi implies the (process of) unification of the two selves. The lesser self can be a friend or an enemy to the greater self (soul). Through self-purification and meditation the enemies become friends.

The atmosphere for meditation should be purified (quiet) and the setting should be a place of solitude. Each aspect of the lower self must be stilled, in turn: the body rested, the emotions quieted, and the mind mastered, at rest in God. With practice comes the ability (ease) to achieve the meditative and contemplative states where the self in all (and all in self) can be directly recognized. The

student can then look upon all persons as souls incarnate, regardless of the personalities. This perspective can be readily applied to the daily life of activity, as a realization (vision) of oneness (sameness) and the renunciation of the personality values.

One of the most essential elements in the meditative (spiritual) life is moderation (temperance). Spiritual exercise is a middle path; extremes have no place in the life of the student of wisdom. But what may be moderate for one person may be an extreme for another. The rules (discipline) of the path should not be confused with the standards expected of the worldly persons. The goals of the yogi are quite different (consciously), for the spiritual student seeks to remain steady in the wisdom (unity) of the soul. To achieve the yoga of equanimity, the student must be free from body-consciousness, free from feeling, and with the stilled mind in the contemplation (seedless meditation) of being. Arjuna finds contemplation a difficult task as he (the struggling aspirant) recognizes the character of the mind as restless, strong, and obstinate. Krishna replies that the mind can be controlled with patience, firm resolution, and determination. With effort and discipline (while living a life of harmony) the restive (wandering) mind can be conquered and the silent thoughts (no thoughts) of eternity (truth) can be achieved in contemplation.

Finally, the fate of the imperfect (incomplete) spiritual student is considered. Krishna reaffirms the ancient truth that that which is once gained cannot be truly lost, for each new life is built upon the foundation established in the preceding life. Those who fail (as most do) to reach perfection in the present life find themselves again in incarnation, but with the fruits of earlier existence as conscience, wisdom, and natural talent. After a period of recapitulation, the student again continues upon the path, at approximately the place of earlier achievement. Nothing is lost, for the path of perfection (dhyana yoga) is one with the purpose of evolution, ever onward and upward.

The Elevation of the Lower Self

The path of aspiration (seeking) leads naturally to the probationary path. The path of probation (preparation) is only one of many steps along the endless path of further preparation and purification. The further a student progresses along the spiritual path, the greater is the degree of refinement (of faculties) expected. The physical, emotional, and mental bodies must be purified (refined) (sublimated) (disciplined) if the student is to achieve that relative perfection that is implied at the fulfillment (completion) of human evolution. All along the way the lower self (personality) must be improved as a controllable and effective instrument and elevated such that the higher consciousness may be properly expressed in the lower worlds.

The process of refinement and elevation is a process of conversion and transformation of quality (of matter) from a lower state (a relatively coarse vibration) to a higher state (a higher, purified vibration or quality). This process is required in order to overcome the limitations of objective experience and to encourage the cultivation and manifestation of the spiritual consciousness demanded of evolution. The process of physical refinement and purification normally proceeds simultaneously with that of the emotional (astral) and mental natures as the three levels (instruments) are somewhat interdependent (though not necessarily cooperative at the earlier stages). The three bodies must be integrated such that the physical, emotional, and mental aspects function as a coherent (and controllable) whole. The integration of the lower self is a requirement for its elevation and alignment with the soul.

As long as the three elements of the lower self are permitted to function more or less independently, they cannot be properly controlled or effectively utilized by the higher self. The three aspects of the personality must be purified if they are to function harmoniously and cooperatively. Only relatively purified elements can be brought together to form a coherent and unified instrument. Such an instrument can then be elevated so that the soul energies may come to dominate the lesser life (the form).

As progress is made in the discipline of the lower life, the process of refinement becomes easier in some ways (and more subtle in others) as the "hold" of the personality is disengaged and as momentum is built up. Considerable and consistent effort may be expended over a long period of time before observable results or improvements can be noted. The strength of the elemental lives which form the three bodies is considerable. Even stronger is the personality-life of the integrated lower self (governed by the concrete mind) that is not quite responsive to soul direction. The resistance of the lower self must be fully overcome before the instrument becomes the faithful and cooperative servant of the God-self. The time required to achieve self-control (from the standpoint of the soul) depends upon the process and experience attained in earlier lives. The student who faces the spiritual path for the first time may need a number of lifetimes to sublimate the personality and to achieve discipleship. The student of considerable experience on the path may need only a few years.

The student of life can experience and progress substantially without concern for conscious efforts toward personality adjustment and improvement. But there is a limit to the progress that can be made without consciously directing the purification and elevation of the mortal self. The unprepared personality cannot be spiritually responsive, but as the work of refinement proceeds on the mind, the emotions, and the physical body, so shall the lower self (eventually) be infused with the spiritual energies of the soul.

† Commentary No. 95

Root Races

The longest major planetary cycle of practical significance for humanity is the passage of the planetary life upon a globe (planetary body). The present passage is upon the fourth globe (the present Earth) of the fourth round of the fourth chain. For humanity, this passage can be divided into seven epochs or root races. Each root race is a distinct collection of human forms that are evolved to provide humanity with vehicles of expression of certain characteristics. Human souls can then incarnate and express themselves, gathering experience to further the evolution of consciousness.

It is essential to recognize that the form evolves and that the life within the form (the human consciousness) (the soul) also evolves. The two evolutions (life and form) are related only on a temporary (useful) basis. When a particular racial form has expended its usefulness, that form will quite naturally pass into extinction as new forms are developed to meet the growing needs of the lifewave. Each of the present root races may be divided into seven sub-races (and further into branch-races). Each division is a relatively distinct modification of the racial type, though the general characteristics of the root race are retained. The formation of a new root race is simply a major modification. The useful characteristics evolved in earlier racial forms are available for inclusion (and adaptation) in the patterns or archetypes of succeeding forms. In fact, even the older forms take on a measure of the new characteristics, and with the gradual blending and overlap of racial forms, it becomes virtually impossible to identify a pure racial type. The present Aryan root race, for example, contains valuable elements of all colors.

One might ask why so many racial forms are necessary in the human evolution. The answer is not a simple one. There was a time when differing races were not needed; and there shall come a time again when the diversity of forms is not needed. But the present is a time of diverse experience, in which the (human) race is evolving simultaneously in many ways. Each race provides experience of a (relatively) distinct nature. The perfect (most appropriate) human form is slowly being developed (as an archetype) as the significant qualities of each variety of racial expression are assimilated. It is pointless to consider one form as being superior to another, since each has its outstanding qualities and each contributes to the progress of the greater (human) race. Besides, each human being is a soul that has neither color, nor sex, nor race, nor nationality. The form is merely a temporary instrument. Each soul may incarnate directly a number of times in each root race, according to need.

The root races of the present passage are, to date, the Polarian (first), Hyperborean (second), Lemurian (third), Atlantean (fourth), and Aryan (fifth). The first two root races were not of the dense physical type and are long extinct; the third is almost extinct; and the fourth and fifth are still quite active (the sixth and seventh have yet to appear). The Atlantean and Aryan races are each contributing significantly to human progress. The Atlantean consciousness is essentially emotional, while the Aryan consciousness is primarily mental. But

one cannot presume a level of consciousness directly corresponding to the racial form, for life and form follow different paths.

The majority of humans in Aryan bodies are Atlantean (emotional) in consciousness rather than Aryan (mental); and there are many in Atlantean bodies who are Aryan in consciousness. It is the quality and polarization of consciousness that matters, not the type of racial form. For mankind is one, a family of souls living through a family of forms, one soul living through many.

† Commentary No. 96

Keys to Understanding

The evolution of human consciousness proceeds in accordance with the assimilation and application of knowledge and experience. With increasing wisdom comes the ability to assimilate experience directly and consciously. This implies the capability to understand and relate knowledge, experience, and consciousness. Though the ability to understand depends on many factors, there is much that the student can do to cultivate and expand that ability.

Understanding is directly related to mental proficiency, which is an acquired characteristic (generally developed in earlier incarnations). The mind should have a broad foundation of knowledge available to it, as well as appropriate, specific knowledge; that knowledge can be expanded almost continuously. The student can acquire (with discernment) all pertinent or generally meaningful knowledge. Knowledge is not the only essential key or requirement, but without knowledge or the ability to acquire knowledge, the mind is relatively helpless. The mind can be trained to enhance the acquisition of knowledge (through observation and study) and with some exercise, the student can learn to mentally program the memory and the patterns of information retrieval so that practically all the knowledge acquired consciously (subconsciously) (super-consciously) can be recovered (selectively), at will.

One of the more difficult of the keys to understanding is correlation. The ability to relate items of information in a meaningful way requires a mind properly trained in the art of correlation. It is this correlation of information (consciously

or otherwise) that actually results in understanding and comprehension. Often the student will have all the necessary information but be unable to put it together in the right way to achieve a meaningful conclusion or realization. Discernment must be cultivated (and the mind trained) so that relationships can be recognized and threads (programs) of insight can be developed. It is in the art of discerning relationships that the intuitive ability is a most valuable aid. The lower (concrete) (intellectual) mind can be nicely programmed, but it is still quite slow compared to the intuition. The concrete mind operates in a single-track mode; only one thought, thread, comparison, or piece of information can be considered at any one time.

Though efficient programming of the lower mind can speed up the process of comparison (determining relationships), the abstract (higher) (intuitive) mind can function almost instantaneously. It is the intuition (buddhi) working with the abstract mind, and working through the disciplined (trained and responsive) concrete mind, that evokes immediate understanding; for the abstract mind (guided by the intuition) can work along many tracks (with cross-correlation) simultaneously. The intuition can also bring down into waking-consciousness knowledge (realization) from higher levels, provided the lower mental framework (appropriate knowledge and language) is present. But the proper development of the intuition requires considerable spiritual training and the building of the bridge of consciousness between the personality and the soul.

Even with the attainment of all this, there may remain serious hindrances to understanding, that are attachment and habit. In this respect, detachment means freedom from bias, prejudice, preconception, and misleading assumptions (illusions). Without such detachment, the mind is quite limited in its ability to correlate and accept realization. Only the open mind, free from opinions and free from bias, can consistently function as an instrument of understanding. With an open mind and a disciplined personality, the student can cultivate understanding, assimilate knowledge and experience, and improve consciousness.

Ethics

Ethics is the philosophy and ideal of conduct, which considers the nature of morality and character, and the nature of good. Ethics is the practical (personal) branch of philosophy, for it considers individual human rights and the values of human motives, thoughts, feelings, and actions. A standard of ethical conduct and morality can be relatively artificial, personal, or natural (universal). An individual standard of ethics should take into consideration the moral (legal and cultural) standards of society, the inherent (personal) standards realized or evolved, and the understanding of universal (spiritual) law which determines the ideal of conduct.

The spiritual student is encouraged to live in ethical harmony with the external (orthodox) world and the internal (personal) (spiritual) world, to express wisdom in human relationships, and to achieve consistency in the inner life. Though many ethical and moral guidelines are available, the ultimate responsibility rests with the individual to realize and achieve a personal standard. Each must determine for himself a practical ethical code, keeping in mind the consequences of behavior. The only real (general) guideline is that the consequences or results (effects) of conduct should be constructive (positive). Through observation, evaluation, and experience the student should become increasingly aware of the value of right human relations.

Human relations and the science of morality bring about the question of what is right and wrong, and what is the nature (and extent) of individual rights (freedom). Individual freedom can only really be considered in relation to the rights of others. If the student truly respects the rights of others, then the student must determine where the individual freedom ends and the freedom of others begins. Individual freedom cannot remain unlimited if the human lifewave is to progress and evolve. What appears best for the individual must ultimately (spiritually) be subordinated to what is best for the group (universal). Self-centeredness (selfishness) must inevitably give way to selflessness, as the individual identifies with the God within (every form of life). Individual purposes are usually scattered (incoherent) with respect to the greater life, but such purposes provide experience. As the individual aligns himself more so

with (coherent) group purpose, that experience is contributed to the group progress (humanity in its relationship to the greater life).

The natural, personal standard is both inherent (latent or potential) and acquired (developed through experience). Ethical and moral behavior is usually a consequence of intelligence (based on realization) leading to virtue. The science of ethics seeks to understand morality and to put that understanding into practice. Self-realization naturally yields an inner urge to that which is right according to spiritual law. The ethical (spiritual) student seeks to honestly observe and evaluate his behavior (and motives) and the effects of his thoughts, feelings, and actions. The student should recognize the ideal (code of conduct) and determine his practical relationship to that ideal.

The student may observe the behavior of others (and the effects) (with the intention of understanding), but without judgment, remembering that each can only determine what is right for himself. But the student can learn from the experience of others and seek to apply that learning in the individual life. The student can increasingly understand the virtues (as principles) and how they can be applied to ethical conduct (adherence to spiritual law). As the life of the student becomes the life of wisdom (in human relationships), so shall the practical (ethical) philosophy be assimilated and naturally manifested.

† Commentary No. 98

Jnana Vijnana Yoga

The seventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled Jnana Vijnana Yoga, the yoga of wisdom (knowledge) (jnana) and experience (realization) (vijnana), the yoga of spiritual discernment, which leads from the teaching anent the individual self to the knowledge of God, from psychology to theology. Krishna continues the dialogue with a description of the two natures of God and the passage of the serious student through illusion to reality.

The lower nature (prakriti) of God is form and consciousness, manifestation itself (immanence). The higher nature is spirit or life, the unmanifested, the cause (transcendence), the fountain of life. God is the beginning (origin) and the

end (dissolution) of that (universe) which is merely the reflection of true being. Knowledge is concerned with the lower human nature and manifestation, while realization is concerned with the higher human nature (the soul and the monad) and that which lies beyond manifestation. God immanent is the seed of being, God in manifestation, the presence within all things (as all things are within that presence), of which attributes can be given. God is the Sacred Word which creates, sustains, and liberates all that is (all that appears to be).

The universe (illusion) is superimposed upon reality (the essence behind the universe). God is that reality which is hidden in and concealed by nature. Illusion (darkness) (the shadow) (appearance) is separation (from God), attachment to form; reality (beyond the world of shadows) is liberation, realization of life, the source of being. The three constituents of nature (appearance) are goodness (peaceful light) (sattva), passion (restless life) (rajas) (activity), and darkness (tamas) (inertia). These are the three gunas in which the soul (or its reflection) becomes entangled. The relationship of reality and illusion leads to the apparent paradox of a creator (precursor) living through (reflecting itself in) a universe to which it is not attached. God evolves, but does the Absolute evolve? What is the nature of the divine (cosmic) sutratman, the thread or continuity of life that relates all in the manifested universe to that which is beyond?

Manifestation conceals (through a veil of mystery) the unknown God (the Absolute), immutable and changeless, imperishable and supreme. Manifestation yields a sense of duality, a perspective that deceives and confuses reality (with purpose). The lesser nature (the reflection) can be known, but the greater nature (reality) can only be realized beyond human (personal) (dualistic) (intellectual) (illusionary) levels. Through unification in the higher self, the waking-consciousness can enter into reality and transcend pairs-of-opposites. All of oneself must be given to the one God and to the Path, if the student (Arjuna) is to attain the goal and allow the paramatman (the greater soul) to properly manifest through jivatman (the individual soul). Such nearness to God (in consciousness) then ever reflects the quality of that greater life. The one who has realized the truth is the student of vision, who needs nothing in the identification with God (being integrated in the one self).

To worship Krishna alone means to worship (recognize) the one God, regardless of its various representations as Krishna, Christ, Buddha, etc. The names of God are many. Lesser gods (objects of desire) are likewise many, but worship of such clouds the vision. Desire destroys wisdom. One cannot be absorbed (entangled) (bewildered) in desires (little values) and absorbed in God (through the greater values) simultaneously. Revelation (salvation and freedom) can come only through the highest essence within, as the lesser values are cast aside and the commitment is made to the spiritual path.

† Commentary No. 99

Physical Sublimation

Physical sublimation begins with the cultivation of good health and self-control (discipline) of the physical body. There is much that can be adjusted on physical levels to encourage the vitality and fitness (for spiritual work) of the physical body and its etheric counterpart. Reasonable cleanliness helps to loosen the hold of earthy matter which dulls the physical vibrations. Moderate physical exercise encourages flexibility and physical capability.

Of considerable relevance (in physical refinement) is diet. There is nothing really wrong with the popular standards for diet; it is simply that the spiritual aspirant must determine (and achieve) for himself a diet that is practical for the spiritual task. The diet may be gradually adjusted and transformed (improved) over a number of years according to the needs of the student. Occasional (moderate) fasting may be helpful in this effort. The spiritual student cannot really afford to be much overweight (or underweight) as that would be an unnecessary burden. Through mental and physical discipline an optimum weight should be found. Many guidelines for the improvement of diet are available to the aspirant. Water, milk, most fruit juices, and most vegetable juices; and most cereals, fruits, vegetables, cheeses, and nuts are considered to be beneficial. Alcoholic beverages (including beer and wine), carbonated drinks, and coffee are considered (by degrees) to be detrimental. Flesh foods (meat, poultry, and fish) are also considered to be detrimental.

In withdrawing from the animal-food (flesh) diet, the student might first substitute successively smaller quantities of meat or substitute fish for meat as

an intermediate step. Fish (cold-blooded) is preferable to meat (warm-blooded) as fish are lower on the evolutionary scale and therefore less harmful (distracting). But even fish sustains limitation. The objection (for oneself) to flesh foods may also be a moral or karmic one (karmically, the plant kingdom provides food to sustain the animal and human kingdoms; such is not the case for the animal kingdom to provide food, except in the case of products of animal processes, such as milk), but the practical objection is that the animal food inhibits spiritual consciousness and self-mastery. There is a practical limit to the spiritual progress that can be made on a meat diet.

It is, of course, better to eat meat and be spiritually minded than to be a vegetarian lacking in spiritual concern. The vegetarian is not necessarily spiritually responsive; but the spiritual student (at some point) becomes vegetarian as that encourages spiritual progress (providing other necessary qualities are present). The spiritual aspirant must rise above the animal distractions which are otherwise well-established in the lower self, if the personality is to become centered in the soul.

The spiritual student is also discouraged from taking drugs (unless prescribed for health). Meat, alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and aspirin are examples of nonessential drugs (or items containing such), which unnecessarily dull or burden the physical system and interfere with communication between soul, mind, and brain. The "mystical" drug experience is artificial (astral) in nature and only serves to weaken the capacity for higher consciousness. Smoking is similarly a burden on physical vitality (with undesirable side-effects on subtle levels). In fact, anything which distracts the personality instrument from its evolutionary task is usually discouraged. Moderation is simply the first step in the transformation process. Though the student may be slow in recognizing (in himself) the effects of conscientious physical sublimation, the subsequent (gradual) deepening of the spiritual life is reward soon enough.

Charity

One of the most characteristic aspects of love-wisdom is charity, which implies love, kindness, and benevolence. The spirit of charity leads to kindness in thoughts, feelings, and activities. Charitable gifts may be gifts of time and interest, thought or energy, or money and material sources. Charity also calls for responsibility and efficiency, for the wise and economical utilization of talent and resources in or to a charitable effort (individual or otherwise) is (spiritually) inherent in the opportunity to express kindness through benevolent work.

Charity can be a spirit of participation in the welfare of humanity. In relatively mundane terms, that can include the relief of (apparent) human suffering and the fulfillment of the basic material needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. It can also mean educational opportunities for self-improvement. In spiritual terms, it means the encouragement of progress in human consciousness, both individual and collective. The humanitarian (and philanthropic) efforts are probably as important as spiritual tasks. Humanitarian work generally deals with effects rather than causes, whereas spiritual work generally deals with consciousness (which is closer to the causes of human problems); but both types of effort are needed, and even in the humanitarian work there is a sharing of charitable energy (love and kindness) that ultimately leads to consciousness. Humanitarian gifts normally come from the large numbers of persons who are concerned or interested in humanity and humanitarian work, while gifts for spiritual work normally come from the small numbers of persons who realize the benefits (in consciousness) (for humanity) of spiritual work. Spiritual effort (especially in group formation) contributes substantially to the consciousness of humanity (through induction and stimulation), complementing and supplementing the humanitarian work.

One of the aspects of charitable giving is ownership. The concept of ownership is a worldly one, for philosophically (spiritually) no one can own or possess anything. But the individual or group may be given the guardianship and responsibility for that which is said to be owned. Such responsibility must (by cosmic law) be earned, either karmically attracted as a learning experience or attracted as a consequence of effectiveness (having suitable consciousness).

The responsibility of the individual or group can be quite considerable. Failure to (reasonably) efficiently utilize resources for the common good often results in limitation and a lack of such opportunity in succeeding lives.

Another aspect of charitable work is the manner of participation with respect to the opportunity. Discernment is required in addition to a sense of responsibility, to insure usefulness. The existence (and recognition) of the opportunity (having the resources and realizing the need to be filled) should be accompanied by the discernment of alternatives and the relative usefulness of each. The specific areas or tasks that the spiritual student prefers to support are not as important as the purity (reasonableness) of the motives behind the assistance or gift and the relative value of the task. Above all needs to be the charitable interest in humanity and the spirit of participation through the meditative life (constructive thoughts are often as valuable as deeds).

In any event, the student should realize that under spiritual law, that which is given is not lost, but shared within the one life; that all is energy to be used as wisely as consciousness permits; and that all within the one life is interdependent. With such realization and with charitable intent, the student can invest his time and resources wisely, for the good of humanity.



Index I

Ancient Mysteries, The	76
Applied Meditation	19
Arjuna Vishada Yoga	112
Astral Plane, The	17
Astrology	44
Atomic Sphere, The	92
Attitude and Perspective	96
Beauty	132
Between Light and Dark	87
Bhagavad Gita, The	104
Charity	166
Cheerfulness	41
Confidence	124
Cosmic Law and Order	71
Cosmogogenesis	94
Crisis and Consciousness	82
Criticism and Opinion	77
Cultivation of Personality, The	2
Deepening, The	117
Destiny and Free Will	142
Detachment I	101
Dharma of the Disciple, The	99
Dhyana Yoga	154
Elevation of the Lower Self, The	156
Encouragement	84
Esoteric Astronomy	54
Esoteric, The	37
Etheric Body and Healing, The	14
Ethics	161
Fifth Ray, The	59
First Ray, The	32
Fourth Ray, The	52
Genesis I	119
Genesis 2	127
Genesis 3	136
Glamour and Illusion	26

Index 2

Glamour of the Path, The	109
God	21
Grace	61
Group Meditation	147
Happiness	134
Harmlessness	31
Heredity and Environment	97
Hidden Wisdom, The	74
Inclusiveness	102
Involution and Evolution	34
Jnana Karma Sanyasa Yoga	137
Jnana Vijnana Yoga	162
Karma Yoga	129
Karmic Equation, The	62
Keys to Understanding	159
Light Cone, The	116
Limitation of Language, The	89
Logic	152
Mathematical Symbolism	107
Matter and Energy	47
Meditation	11
Meditation Triangles	139
Mental Plane, The	24
Metaphysics I	144
Monad and its Reflections, The	9
Nature of Truth, The	1
Night of Time, The	4
Old Testament, The	111
Opportunity and Limitation	79
Path of Discipleship, The	42
Path of Probation, The	36
Philosophy	126
Physical Sublimation	164
Planetary Network, The	56
Planetary Scheme, The	131
Reincarnation and Karma	27

Index 3

Religion 1	64
Retrospection	7
Root Races	157
Samkhya Yoga	121
Sanyasa Yoga	146
Science	57
Seal of Solomon, The	149
Second Ray, The	39
Seven Planes, The	12
Seven Rays, The	22
Seventh Ray, The	72
Sixth Ray, The	66
Spiritual Hierarchy, The	49
Spiritual Inertia	141
Spiritual Masters 1	106
Spiritual Masters 2	114
Spiritual Masters 3	122
Spiritual Path, The	29
Spiritual Poise	151
Stability	6
Symbolic Language, The	81
Symbolism	91
Third Ray, The	46
Time and Space	86
Trinity, The	16
Twelve Festivals, The	69
Value of Silence, The	67
Virtue	51

