

# The Upper Triad Material

## Commentaries IV

Edited by Peter Hamilton

August 2004



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# The Upper Triad Material

## Commentaries IV

Third Edition, August 2004

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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.

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# The Full List of Upper Triad Books:

December 2008

**The Upper Triad Material** 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

Articles	3 volumes
Commentaries	15 volumes
Miscellany	2 volumes

**The Upper Triad Material** 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

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

**A Personal Journey** 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

**Through the Grace of God** 1<sup>st</sup> 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

To the best of the editor's recollection, all of the material in Commentaries IV 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

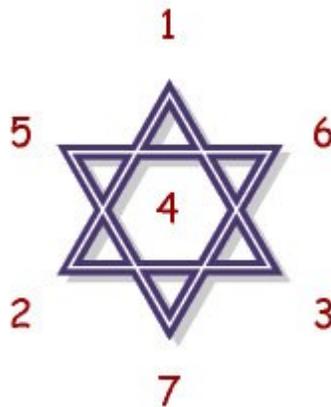
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There is a place, deep within the heart, where we touch God, and where God touches us, where human hearts achieve communion, with God, and with one another, there being no difference, no space between us.

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.



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## Recapitulation 1

In biological terms, recapitulation involves the repetition in an individual of the phylo-genetic history of its group; i.e., ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. This means simply that the individual development repeats the evolutionary history of its ancestors in an abbreviated (accelerated) form. This process (recapitulation) is actually far broader in scope than the biological, for it is an inherent and crucial aspect of (evolutionary) progress on all levels, as in each incarnation (and in each lesser cycle), the individual (and the group) recapitulates earlier experience (of greater cycles) so that experience can be reinforced and so that the products (abilities) of the experience can be made available in the current stage of development.

On individual terms, the guiding force behind this progress is the soul, though the progress is outwardly achieved through the personality (on physical, emotional, and mental levels). On a higher level, the overall aim of recapitulation is the achievement of relative perfection as an integrated life (lifewave) as part of the greater plan (of evolutionary enlightenment). History repeats itself in many ways, in the case of the individual with regard to his own particular heritage, and in the case of the individual (and group) with regard to group heritage. Repetition also constitutes a test for the respective individual (or group), an opportunity to demonstrate successful incorporation of the lessons previously learned, or at least to reinforce the earlier lessons.

The relentless progressive cyclic pattern of development is necessary to evolution to allow for proper assimilation of experience, proper guidance of development, and effective renewal of the evolutionary impulse (energy) (as energy is expended by experience and progress). Were it not for the cyclic pattern, very little progress would be made before the form would become imbedded in the inertia of the lower worlds. Therefore, recapitulation is a necessary first order of business at the beginning of each sojourn (incarnation) in order for the individual (or group) to reach the point (place) of development (awareness) reached in the preceding lifetime. In early incarnations (of each major stage in development), the bulk of the time is spent in recapitulation, but

as progress is made momentum is achieved and the portion of the lifetime given to essentially new experience (further development) increases.

Though recapitulation is important, some new development may proceed simultaneously with the intermediate and final stages of recapitulatory experience. Many of the evolutionary cycles within cycles overlap in terms of influence, as a succeeding cycle actually begins its ascent relative to the decline of the preceding cycle. The nominal duration of any cycle (individual incarnation) is a relative function of the individual's ability and responsiveness to the evolutionary opportunity (karma); i.e., death (transition) occurs (on the average) (discounting over-riding karmic consequences) when the individual has reached a practical limit, where progress has slowed or stalled by concretion of the respective bodies (depending on the stage of development).

Since the individual (life) is irrevocably interrelated with the group (humanity), the evolutionary experience (heritage) of the group is also reflected in the recapitulation of the individual (and, conversely, the experience of the individual is contributed to the overall experience of the group). Evolution is a continuous building process, an expansion of (group) consciousness in which the various individuals are elements of a much larger framework, where (group) momentum is increased as a foundation is achieved on one plane of consciousness and as development is begun on the next higher level.

† Commentary No. 302

## The Fourth Ennead 5

The fifth tractate of the Fourth Ennead is the third of three tractates entitled "Problems of the Soul." In the fifth tractate Plotinus considers the nature of vision, its relationship with the soul, and its higher correspondence in terms of integral consciousness (the continuity of consciousness) (the interrelatedness of all life and consciousness). The basic (superficial) question pertains to whether or not sight is possible in the absence of any intervening medium, and the ultimate conclusion is that all things (lives) that exist are related by an underlying medium, albeit not necessarily physical, which makes communication (the exchange of energy) possible. Even in the extreme case of light received from a distant sun (star) (logos), there exists an interrelationship

that transcends even the range (scope) (domain) of light (for light is merely radiant energy which happens to have a large velocity (and therefore a correspondingly large range) compared with lesser forms of energy).

Physical seeing is a form of sense perception that requires a physical instrument of vision and an interpretative faculty to consider the sense impressions received through the intervening medium. In the case of light (as opposed to sound), the transmission does not require that the intervening (dense physical) space be (itself) impressed, though such space may be a hindrance. The medium required is a very subtle one relative to the dense physical, the key element being a sympathetic alignment (responsiveness) of the source and its communicant. Plotinus suggests that the sympathetic quality of the universe depends upon its being one living thing, and that continuity is a condition of any perception of a remote object. Objects of vision must be either self-illuminated (in the case of a source of radiant (light) energy) or illuminated (in the case of reflective objects), but not wholly absorptive.

Air is a diffusive medium, while space is a relatively pure non-diffusive medium for light. Space is the only necessary medium for the passage of light energy (in the physical (etheric) sense). The phenomenon of hearing is an altogether different case than that of vision (though both sound and light are forms of energy and both are involved in sense-impression), since sound requires a compressive medium (such as air) which allows its transmission. The range (domain) of sound is very short in spatial terms and relatively long in temporal terms (for ordinary sound energy) in relation to light. But even in the case of sound, a self-sympathetic living whole is required. Like sound, light is an expression (outpouring) of the source, and sustained only to the extent that the original impulse is maintained.

But Plotinus inquires further, according significance to the disposition of light energy. The presence or withdrawal of light is not pertinent, as the essential existence of light is (itself) an activity. Though light energy is ultimately (continuously) absorbed (and thereby removed from the field), it is the form of the activity (illumination) (quality) that matters (and therein lies an obvious correlation to the light of the soul and the reflection or diffusion of that light), and the relative sympathy (responsiveness) of the communicant.

Every living being (at whatever stage of relative enlightenment) is self-sensitive (though not necessarily consciously self-sensitive) and bound within the one life. A higher order of vision (necessarily subjective) (and therefore much more potent) is evolved through the soul by virtue of its close alignment in consciousness with a higher order of underlying medium (continuity). That vision knows no limits of time or space, for it is a projection of consciousness rather than a receipt of communication.

† Commentary No. 303

## Karmic Relationships 1

The incarnated human being is subject to the karma of many current and accumulated (historical) relationships with other human beings. These relationships include those which pertain to (1) the current individual personality (and group relationships), (2) previous individual personalities (and respective group relationships), and (3) the soul (and its soul group).

The first relationships arise through the process of differentiation, as the various souls are individualized within a group soul. Viewed historically, not all souls are individualized at the same time; most individualize in the same relatively short period of time, but in waves (groups) according to character. The totality of human souls constitutes a soul structure within which are differentiated various soul groups (with ray correlations); within each soul group are differentiated various individual souls sharing a common character (derived from the localized (subjective) nature of the soul structure). Each such soul group is actually an original karmic group holding the highest priority (order) of group karma short of the lifewave itself. The essence of each soul group is its character (nature) (quality) which necessarily evolves as its individual members evolve. As the evolutionary quality reaches a certain level (extent) of consciousness, a soul group becomes an esoteric group.

The relationships intrinsic to a group soul are virtually everlasting, as the soul group exists intact (as an evolutionary entity) for the duration of the evolution in the human sense (on the order of many millions of years). However, the individual members of a soul group will not sense the presence of the group until the later stages of evolutionary experience (where the individual begins to

respond directly to the quality (energy) of the soul and its soul group). In the meantime virtually all human relationships are formed along personality lines rather than along soul lines, as the soul incarnates as a personality instrument, including its physical (genetic) heritage and its share of family, racial, and national group karma (relationships).

In the relatively early lives, the family, racial, and national group relationships form a necessary evolutionary environment. Family (racial) (cultural) ties can be very strong, regardless of ray relationships and regardless of the character of the soul (since the unresponsive personality is practically bound only by its personal (personality) relationships). There is normally a considerable diversity of human contacts and relationships, some relatively strong (via emotional energy), most more or less incidental, but in each relationship (strong or otherwise), there is established a karmic link (with a strength corresponding to the intensity and/or duration of the relationship) that must be fulfilled one way or another. The simple karmic links associated with incidental relationships are easily fulfilled; but the more complicated (more personal) karmic links may require continued or subsequent association in order for the relationship (karma) to be fulfilled. These links pass through between lives wherever there is either unresolved energy or wherever there is a rapport developed.

Wherever there is a close association along personality lines (pleasant or otherwise) there will exist a tendency for the individual paths to intersect, wherever (whenever) appropriate in light of mutual karma. In this sense, those who are friends (or enemies) (or family members) establish magnetic (karmic) bonds for further experience and opportunity for fulfillment. The same principle (tendency) holds true for the various groups, particularly in the case of bonds (of harmony or conflict) between races, nations, religious groups, etc.

## Karmic Relationships 2

An individual in incarnation will usually be responsive (if not reactive) to individuals with whom strong karmic ties have been developed in earlier lives, for the karma of earlier experience is carried into every successive lifetime until properly fulfilled (until a soul relationship is developed). The same is true of group karma, for an individual carries with him the karma of earlier group affiliations (as well as karma of the material heritage of personality).

A complication often arises with regard to group and individual karma, as a person who has previously incarnated in a particular group (race, nation, religion) may subsequently experience an incarnation in a contrasting group. In this way, many antagonisms can be moderated or resolved (provided the person is responsive to the opportunity), resulting ultimately in a nicely balanced (relatively detached (impersonal)) personality temperament and a constructive harmony of all group lives. Those who remain personality-centered and attached to the current personality affiliations (in the racial, national, or religious sense) are usually (relatively) unresponsive to opportunities for karmic fulfillment along peaceful (efficient) lines.

Another interesting complication frequently arises with regard to family relationships. For an individual to incarnate in a particular family does not necessarily (or generally) mean that the individual is previously related to those family members (who may or may not be previously related to each other). However, frequently (?) is the case of some family members having previous experience together, possibly via different relationships than the present. Sometimes that earlier experience will condition the current experience and complicate matters via an intrinsic rapport (harmony) or a superficially inexplicable conflict. This is not usually the case of a spiritual student, however, who is more likely to be detached from such personal relationships (obligations). In either event, there is a definite distinction between the family relationships of the personality and those of the spiritual family or soul group to which one belongs in principle.

Though almost all relationships are developed along personality lines, some may develop into deeper, soul relationships as the personalities work closer together in terms of quality (character) (which naturally attracts the attention (repose) of the soul). In this way a soul may be drawn magnetically into alignment with a particular esoteric group, particularly where the soul has advanced beyond the consensus (level or character) of its original soul group. Original soul relationships are relatively few because soul groups are relatively small (compared with humanity) and because the members of any given soul group will normally be diffused throughout the realm of human experience. But the members of a soul group who retain their essential character and evolve in response to the group vector (quality) will find their paths will cross eventually (if not occasionally), particularly in the later stages (where the individuals are consciously upon the spiritual path, for until that time, the soul group is not a particularly significant entity or influence).

Where a rapport is developed between an individual (esoteric student) (of considerable training) and the esoteric group, the individual can relate (interact) with the other various members of the group regardless of diffusion and whether or not the other members are actually in incarnation. The group then constitutes a group network within a greater network of (linked) esoteric groups. Thus the group lives through its integrated members even though some may be temporarily displaced (but not in consciousness or relationship).

† Commentary No. 305

## Recapitulation 2

Recapitulation is a necessary ingredient in a never-ending pattern of evolutionary experience, where recapitulation is essentially a process of amortization (as is karma). In order to produce the creative potency of a fully self-realized human being (having mastery of the three lower planes of consciousness), a tremendous investment of time, energy, and experience is required. And only after aeons of patient developmental experience are the fruits of the investment realized as a few souls begins to emerge with significant contributions to the quality (character) of the greater life. And only after aeons more do those souls emerge in significant numbers.

At the start of this long process (evolution) (following an eternity of involution), a vanguard of consciousness (awareness) must be established on the physical plane. A great deal of effort (force) is required at that stage of experience in order to awaken and sustain a conscious awareness of the physical world, and ultimately (at that stage) to develop the physical abilities leading (during later stages) to the mastery of the physical plane experience (to include mastery of the physical body (instrument) and mastery of the physical plane itself). The individual (humanity) must learn to consciously control each aspect of the physical constitution, but because of the relatively inflexible nature (inertia) of the physical plane, many incarnations are spent evolving the fundamental physical abilities and corresponding awareness (range).

Recapitulation is required in order to secure the gains of each incarnation. As progress is made there is more experience to be recapitulated (integrated), but as experience is repeatedly assimilated (through successive recapitulations) the process becomes easier (requiring less relative time or effort) and more emphasis is placed on the more recent experience. As some degree of awareness is achieved on the physical plane, the next level of awareness (the emotional plane) is introduced into the formula (human consciousness) and the process of assimilating the new plane into the total achieved to that point is addressed in addition to the continued development on the lesser plane. As the extent of physical consciousness increases (as ability improves), emotional awareness is introduced earlier in successive incarnations. This lengthy process is not quite as extensive as in the preceding stage, for the astral (emotional) level is more flexible and therefore change (progress) (evolution) can be affected faster. However, the astral plane is much more complicated (dynamic) (less stable) than the physical, and it is relatively more difficult to control.

As was the case for evolution in physical plane terms, the individual (humanity) must learn to evolve an awareness on the astral plane, first through the development of an emotional capacity and ultimately through the refinement (elevation) of that capacity and the conscious control (awareness) (mastery) of the plane itself (which comes long after a capacity is developed for even higher consciousness) (as mastery implies far greater ability (potency) than merely being able to manipulate matter on a particular plane). Similarly, a vanguard of mental awareness is gradually achieved and developed.

Respective awareness begins on lesser (coarser) sub-planes and is gradually elevated as control (consciousness) is improved. As the evolutionary momentum increases, recapitulation is accelerated and more time (attention) (effort) is placed on higher levels of developmental consciousness. In each incarnation, the individual must re-conquer each element of the personality constitution that has been previously achieved, before the summit (vanguard) is reached and (true) progress becomes possible (leading to maturity (quality) (wisdom)).

† Commentary No. 306

## The Fourth Ennead 6

The sixth tractate of the Fourth Ennead is entitled "Perception and Memory," wherein Plotinus discusses the nature of sense-impression, perception, mental impression, and memory. Sense-impression refers to the impression of information (energy) upon the personality senses. Sense-impressions are filtered (distorted) by the senses, the (physical (etheric)) brain, and the aura. The notion of direct (unfiltered) sense-impression upon the mind is rejected; moreover, the mind is seen as working with impressions filtered by a process of perception without being itself impressed.

Sense-impressions may be retained for some time by the aura, depending on their intensity, the attention or interest of the waking-consciousness (and subconsciousness), and the quality of the aura. In a properly trained and disciplined personality, the sense-impressions are quickly released and only the perception is retained (or in other words, experience is elevated to the mental temperament rather than left to the senses (chaos)). In the lower sense, the (concrete) mind looks through the senses outward, while in a higher sense, the mind projects beyond the senses, and in neither case are inner imprints made. In the lower sense, the mind accepts perceptions (filtered experience) which are retained not as indelible marks but as mutable impressions (memory) (memory threads). In the higher sense, the mind projects beyond the senses and perceives directly.

The mind affirms through perception or direct realization. Impressions received are distinguished from their corresponding (consequential) mental acceptance, though for the untrained mind, mental impressions (if any) follow directly from the sense-impressions and (passive) filtering of the senses. Knowing is distinguished from sense-impression, for knowing is a mental activity while sense-impression is merely an impaction of external auric impressions.

In the greater sense, direct mental impression (realization) (intuition) suggests a projection (or receipt), an indwelling identification, and a withdrawal replete with memory of the experience. Thus the higher mind achieves intuition by memory upon approach, the rapport of the object (subject), enlightenment by virtue of dispassionate participation (impersonal alignment). Such intuition is not normally a consciously guided process (such as mental projection), but an inherent power of (higher) consciousness (non-psychic) which flares into fulfillment as a consequence of inner alignment (and the quality of consciousness). On an even higher level, the soul (higher mind) integrates the perception (experience) achieved by the lower mind. Throughout, the soul remains poised (beyond the personality life) while the mind deals with both higher order (the soul) and lower order (the personality).

The memory is a reservoir of mental impressions (products of perception) and the process of recollection. The reservoir is two-fold: personal memory exists relative to the individual perception (experience), and an impersonal memory exists in collective substance relative to all that has transpired (a memory of nature) (of which a trivial part pertains to the particular individual). The personal memory depends upon the attention (focus) (intensity) of the waking-consciousness and the correlative faculty. The focused mind can be trained to function correlatively, while an unfocussed mind cannot be trained, save toward focus. The personal memory is normally clouded by perception (self-interest) (personal energy); but with proper training, perception can be greatly improved and the process of recollection improved to the extent that the total content can be selectively recovered, at will.

## Brotherhood

Although humanity is linked in countless ways through karmic relationships, there are even more fundamental relationships which draw humanity together, which provide a potential for the (collective) (unified) human organism (lifewave) to achieve its intended place in the (overall) consciousness.

The basis of these relationships is the brotherhood or fellowship of man (humanity) and the continued fellowship of life. The brotherhood of humanity has always been a reality on the level of the soul, in the passive subjective sense, where the distinction of one soul from another is recognized as an illusion of objective existence. The evolutionary intention for humanity can be viewed as the achievement of that brotherhood, on the level of the soul, in the active (conscious) subjective sense, where each soul has fully achieved a quality of consciousness and a rapport with humanity that passes beyond the recognition of the illusion of individual distinction.

The reality of brotherhood is found first in the common source of all life, as all lives can be traced back through intermediate stages to an original common creation. Thus the essence of humanity (on the level of the soul) is a common source of life which sustains an existence and progression. Moreover, many intermediate bonds are found which link humanity to all other life, on every level of consciousness. Another reality of brotherhood can be found in the conclusion of humanity (which already exists) (outside of time and space) where all of humanity participate directly in the communion (fellowship) (rapport) (on the level of the soul) that passes beyond humanity (as the distinction of humanity is no longer pertinent). Between the source and the (relative) conclusion is the qualification of brotherhood, to be recognized and realized, a qualification that serves also as an evolutionary force.

An intermediate (intended) achievement is the evolution of mundane humanity (on the personality level) to the conscious realization and manifestation of a sense of brotherhood (the reality of brotherhood is actually a common sense), not merely for humanity, but for all of life (and form) (and the sense of equality one with every other life). A superficial sense of brotherhood based upon personality

relationships (friendships) is not sufficient; to have any real meaning, brotherhood must be unconditional and involve the energy of the soul manifested through an aligned personality. In this sense, brotherhood is a mutual realization of higher fellowship (communion of souls) (communion of the one soul), a realization unencumbered by the personality or mundane energy. True brotherhood (on any level) is the culmination or product of a number of elements of experience; the realization of brotherhood emerges naturally as a consequence of experience and the gradually evolving consciousness.

This sense of brotherhood is important to the waking-consciousness of the spiritual student, for it then qualifies the interaction of the student with humanity on both mundane and more mature levels. The sense of brotherhood includes the manifestation of a number of human qualities coincident with the spiritual temperament. But the sense of brotherhood also provides an awareness of distinction between aligned and unaligned humanity (between those who are relatively consciously aligned with the soul and those who are relatively absorbed by the mundane life). The student can recognize the God (Christ) (soul) within all, regardless of alignment, but the student must also learn to interact with unaligned humanity (on personality levels) without being absorbed. With impersonality (respect for the God within), the love of the soul can be a force of encouragement for humanity (toward realization of brotherhood).

† Commentary No. 308

## The Spiritual Family

The bulk of the human evolutionary path is dominated by experience and the bonds of karmic relationships. But once the soul has committed itself to the spiritual path, the path becomes dominated by quality (character) rather than karma (as karma is fulfilled and the individuals are free to express themselves in a higher group context). The bonds between souls are these bonds of quality (which are, in a sense, bonds of karma transformed into quality). An original karmic group (soul group) evolves as its members evolve and to the extent that the members are aligned with the character of the group. Occasionally, members of one group will be drawn to another group, as the quality or character of the member changes (distinctly) relative to the group. Occasionally,

individuals will be drawn together for karmic reasons and the karmic bonds (mutual experience) may lead to development along similar lines (of quality), thereby transforming karmic bonds into the higher order (quality) (magnetic coherence).

Where bonds of quality are achieved or maintained, either through the character of the original soul group or through magnetic transference to a more appropriate group, a true rapport among individual souls can be achieved, resulting in a conscious rapport among the corresponding (aligned) personalities. Where such a rapport exists among souls in incarnation, the soul group might be considered to be a spiritual family (from the perspective of the incarnated personality). Some members of a soul group (spiritual family) may very well incarnate together and form close, natural associations along personality lines, or at least recognize each other (on some level).

The attention of the individual (personality) is naturally drawn to the members of the spiritual family (who may or may not be members of the family of the personality). In the case of an esoteric group (where the majority of the soul group members are committed to the spiritual path), the recognition will be more conscious and more mature (less personal) (mentally polarized rather than emotional) and the relationships achieved will serve the group interests (upon the path) rather than individual interests.

The concept of soul mates or twin souls is sometimes used to refer to two or more members of a soul group who are particularly close (similar in terms of quality or vibration). This concept (properly) has naught to do with physical or emotional relationships (or personal love), but refers (properly) to members of a spiritual family who have worked together objectively and subjectively over a long period of time (many incarnations) and who have achieved a rapport (and an alignment, personality to soul) that transcends the ordinary relationships among souls. These soul mates are not necessary to the completion or fulfillment of any individual (though the spiritual family does provide a great deal of encouragement), since the soul is (ultimately) complete in itself (or, in a more esoteric sense, only complete to the extent that it is perfectly (and fully consciously) aligned with the entire lifewave).

The concept of soul mates can be extended to the entire spiritual family (esoteric group) (and humanity), as each member constitutes a soul mate to every other member. The spiritual family is a brotherhood (fellowship) of souls, united by the bonds of quality, to the extent that the individual consciousness merges with the group and as the individual participates in the subjective life of the group and becomes a conscious extension (agent) of the group. Members in incarnation who are properly trained and capable, can easily link up with the group (and its particular members, on soul levels), share in its thoughts and activities, and help to manifest its energy in the lower worlds.

† Commentary No. 309

## Injustice

One need only look into the external (mundane) world to see numerous examples of apparent injustice, of circumstances apparently unmerited by the character or consciousness of the individual or group. But according to the law (karma) which underlies all circumstances and situations there can be no (real) injustice, for the circumstances faced are the consequences of action (forces set into motion), over the entire existence of the soul, not necessarily earned in the current incarnation, but at least modified by the current consciousness.

Since karma is a consequential field, extending over all lives and groups, there is not normally a simple (singular) cause and effect relationship leading to particular circumstances. Though many circumstances may be traced to causes (thoughts, feelings, actions) generated in the current lifetime, the majority of circumstances are modified by the current temperament and may be traced to a collection of causes spanning several lifetimes. And these circumstances can likewise normally be traced to include relationships with a number of people. Karma is an integrative function, and its justness (equity) depends upon the whole (consciousness) rather than the individual (separated) parts.

Since the soul is the practical (individual) unit of evolution, and since the soul exists out of time and space, only the soul is in a position to realize the lessons implied by consequences that may not correlate within a particular incarnation. The mind (personality) is not normally in a position (awareness) to realize

consciously the causes leading to particular circumstances; thus it is the role of the personality to learn the obvious lessons and to develop a proper (impersonal) disposition with regard to circumstances faced (and particularly so as those circumstances appear unmerited). Apparent injustice is frequently a lesson in itself, as the response of the individual is assessed.

Where the personality reacts to the circumstances faced, further karma (complication) is generated. Reaction implies a personality-centeredness (self-centeredness) and a relative lack of wisdom. Where the personality responds to circumstances in a more intelligent (moderate) (self-controlled) fashion, the individual is more likely to learn the needed lessons and contribute more constructively to further circumstances. Of course the standards (expectations) for the spiritual student are more demanding, as the spiritual student is expected to respond to all circumstances with maturity, without ever being offended and without any feelings of injustice. All is governed (qualified) by law, and any personal response (reaction) is unwarranted by spiritual standards. To be offended by any person or any circumstances is a personality-centered response (and unwarranted). An individual cannot offend another; but an individual can be offended, and by spiritual standards, must take full responsibility for being thus offended. It is not for anyone to apply standards to any other, nor are spiritual standards even pertinent to the many.

Another element of (apparent) injustice arises from group consideration, as each individual is accountable to some extent for the karma incurred by the groups to which (and to the extent to which) that individual is related. Choosing to incarnate in a particular race, for example, brings an individual subject to the karmic effects (circumstances) earned by that race. The effects are merited, nonetheless, as lessons in themselves as well as opportunities to fulfill the group destiny, as individuals are necessarily a part of the group evolution, and since the lifewave to which the individual belongs encompasses all subordinate groups and races. Thus (central) karma enfolds equity regardless of appearance to the contrary; injustice simply cannot be.

## The Fourth Ennead 7

The seventh tractate of the Fourth Ennead is entitled "The Immortality of the Soul," wherein Plotinus discusses the essential distinction and relationship of the immortal soul with its mortal reflection. That soul and its body (personality) are two (major) constituents of the (incarnated) human being (individuality). The personality is a composite instrument, being inherently material and subject to material processes. The personality is a passing thing, destructible as an organism or instrument, indestructible in its constituents (atoms). The soul is the (relatively) immortal, true individuality.

The soul contains the ingrained (human) life, while the body (personality) contains far lesser (material) lives. The soul is the coherent force which holds the personality together, without which the personality would dissolve into its constituent elements (unless artificially sustained). The soul is self-sensitive (self-realized) (aware) (beyond material insensitivity). It is the soul which modifies matters, molding the material form to its purposes. Similarly the body of universal manifestation is material, held in place by an overshadowing (indwelling) soul (consciousness). In both cases (particular and universal) the soul provides the potential order, reason, and intelligence.

With respect to the personality, the soul is a prior configuration of impersonal energy, beyond the realm of time and material substance, which projects its personality matrix (pattern) upon the (lower) material world, and induces a personality-consciousness within the form which is related (distantly) to the soul's own stage of evolution (completeness). The soul possesses a stable variability (subjective interactiveness) in consciousness, while the body is inherently reactive (conditioned by its material and self-centered nature). The soul is a qualitative essence, not a quantitative one. As a qualitative essence the soul through its mental instrument is an integrating mechanism for the entire personality.

The soul and the mind are both beyond the intellect (as the intellect relates to the physical, brain-centered consciousness while the mind relates to mental experience). Through the enlightened and properly balanced mind, the soul

leads the personality beyond material and emotional pleasure, ultimately even beyond mental pleasure, to quality (consciousness) (being) itself, as the ego (self-centeredness) is overcome, transformed, and elevated in accordance with the will (selflessness) of the soul. Matter (of which the entire personality is formed) is not self-qualified; it is qualified by the impression of consciousness. The soul is incorporeal, as it traverses the personality as a whole rather than as a self-separative essence. The soul is not accord (health), but induces accord to the extent that the material form (personality) is vibrationally (qualitatively) responsive. The soul is neither body nor experience, but is action (subjective causation) and creation.

The soul is immune to objective energy, but incorporates subjective (integrated) energy of the proper quality. The soul possesses wisdom and authentic (divine) virtue, both potentially and to the extent of its relative completion (perfection). The soul on its own level is without distraction, being in repose and relatively complete (the young (?) soul is empty but qualified nonetheless as a soul). The soul remains a reservoir of assimilated experience (love) (wisdom) (consciousness), and though the soul possesses a self-springing life and cannot be destroyed in the sense that forms can be dissolved, the soul can be transcended and the essence of the soul reduced to a matrix on an even higher level, in accordance with the will of the monad.

† Commentary No. 311

## Commitment

In the specific sense of conscious, deliberate evolution, the spiritual path is considered the most demanding of all potential human experience. The ordinary path (of normal evolution), chosen by default by the vast majority of souls, implies a gradual fulfillment of the same (spiritual) (evolutionary) standards, with considerable individual latitude, subject only to karma (the gradual, evolutionary urge). But the hastened (spiritual) path is far more demanding because it implies a giving of oneself without recourse, to the exacting (higher) (compressed) standards of the path. However, that path is only for souls who are suitably responsive to the call.

It is invariably the soul's decision to embark upon the spiritual path, albeit not a rational decision (for the soul is incapably beyond rational thinking); it is, rather, an inevitable consequence of the soul's repose (for those souls who are disposed toward the path). The soul that responds to the call commits itself to the path in such a way that the soul is irrevocably bound to the processes (destiny) of that path. The soul that fails to respond to the call of the path is the soul that hears not that call, though it may later grow more responsive to the evolutionary process. But the soul that does respond to the call is then subject to a considerable and increasing magnetic bond with the path and with all whose lives are transformed into that path.

The real commitment belongs to the soul, and is manifested between the soul and the path (and the hastened (intensified) resulting karma). But since the personality is the instrument (reflection) of the soul, the personality is necessarily subject to the soul's commitment; indeed, it is the personality which must therefore experience (suffer) directly the perils (impositions) of the path. To the extent that the personality cooperates with the soul in its quest for perfection (such a quest being inextricably bound within the processes of the path), by subordinating its own nature to that of the soul, that direct, hastened evolutionary experience is a (quiet) joy and source of considerable encouragement. But to the extent that the personality resists the will (decision) (commitment) of the soul, the more difficult will that experience be.

It is not the prerogative of the personality (mind) to commit itself to the path; it is the prerogative of the personality only to commit itself to the soul (such commitment being ultimately forced, as necessary, by the soul). The personality that is attracted to the path (through glamour) without its soul committing itself is certainly not embraced by the path or subject to its demands or its opportunities (which can only be earned). But the personality that is drawn to the path by virtue of inner (subjective) prompting, whose soul is indeed committed, will be bound to the path and subjected to its momentum and influence. Many are the personalities who are thus drawn to the path even before a self-realization is achieved, but many too are they who resist the inner alignment, who approach the path as self-willed personalities rather than personalities humbly committed to the soul.

It is for the personality thus drawn to the path (by the soul) to ultimately overcome its self-interest and to give itself wholeheartedly to the soul and to the path. The personality who feels itself committed to the path, for whom the soul (path) is not foremost within its waking consciousness for the greater portion of its waking experience is deceiving itself and resisting that greater will. But the humble personality which seeks alignment with the soul and the path throughout the waking hours, taking precedence over more mundane demands, is one who is indeed committed, and blessed by the infusion of soul energy.

† Commentary No. 312

## Scale

The ordinary human mind is accustomed to thinking in terms of linear scale; i.e., a scale in which intervals of equal (linear) measure are considered significant relative to each other. For example, the passage of time is normally considered linear, as a period of ten years might be compared with another period of ten years. The human mind tends to measure and view all of its experience (and environment) according to a linear perspective, and that perspective is practical and sufficient for ordinary (relatively mundane) experience and the thinking that (hopefully) corresponds to that experience.

But the universe (nature) (reality) is not bound by any linear perspective, but manifests itself according to an exponential scale; i.e., a scale based upon orders of magnitude rather than linearity, in which one order of magnitude is considered relative to other orders of magnitude. For example, using a base of ten, an exponential progression of 1, 10, 100, 1000, etc., corresponds to orders of magnitude 0, 1, 2, 3, etc., respectively. As measures of comparison and correspondence, orders of magnitude (an exponential or logarithmic scale) are more significant than equal intervals (a linear scale), far more so over a wide range than a narrow range. Ten is a relatively arbitrary (human) base, while two and seven are more natural (universal) bases for progression.

Though science is accustomed to dealing with orders of magnitude in time, space (distance), frequency (wavelength), intensity (brightness), concentration (density) (of atoms, molecules, people), etc., much of the human psychological

experience is also more properly considered in terms of orders of magnitude, as quality (consciousness) (the only real measure of an individual's progression) is an exponential function. Real experience (which is subjective) is consequently not a linear phenomenon as ordinary experience appears to be. The ordinary human perspective (range) is relatively narrow and superficially correct (as a segment of any order of magnitude appears linear to the casual observer), but the true range of human consciousness extends naturally over a far broader (progressive) scale.

Human (color) (optical) vision, for example, extends over a very small segment (less than an order of magnitude) of the electromagnetic (frequency) spectrum. The narrowness of ordinary (human) vision finds an analogy in ordinary thinking (related to consciousness); most thinking occurs over a very small (limited) range (of thoughts and intensity of focus). As the individual evolves, the relative narrow-mindedness gives way to an increasingly broader range of thinking and the corresponding consciousness is thus able to function over a much greater range of focus, spanning (potentially) many orders of magnitude. As this occurs, the individual begins to realize the scale of universal manifestation and, more importantly, that the human mind is potentially capable of participating in (focusing upon) that broad range.

The enlightened mind accepts the illusion of temporary (linear) (local) experience, and recognizes the reality of its existence which is spread over orders of magnitude of time. Such a mind (able to transcend the linear illusion) can participate as well in microscopic life (and the far past) as in macroscopic life (and the far future), understanding that the innumerable orders of magnitude (life) are far less separated from each other than are the linear intervals of immediate objective experience and the units of separated consciousness. A thread of continuity extends throughout the manifested universe, regardless of scale (magnitude), weaving all components together in consciousness, passing freely from one correlative scale to another.

## Simplicity

Simplicity characterizes the beginning (the source) and completion of all life (manifestation) and everything of any true significance in between that source and its fulfillment. Simplicity characterizes the entire framework or pattern (fabric) (field) (basis) of manifestation, to the extent that all of the multitudinous elements (at the greatest extent of differentiated manifestation) can be related to that fundamental pattern in relatively simple terms (through a system of analogy and correspondence). Consequently, the basic tenets of the esoteric philosophy are relatively simple, and those basic tenets are the keys to understanding (resolution) that are sufficient to address any worthy question (assuming sufficient quality of consciousness). The greatest truths are the simple truths (masked), from which all (lesser) (applied) philosophy is derived.

Complexity arises from the objective, differentiated experience (existence) (perspective) where the waking-consciousness is distracted by the (almost overwhelming) (petty) details of manifestation. But the soul (higher consciousness) is more concerned with subjective energy (integrated experience) (general quality). As the waking-consciousness (mind) becomes more responsive to the integrating (unifying) influence of the soul, that waking-consciousness begins to recognize and realize (understand) the general principles that underlie all of manifestation. Those general principles form a self-consistent, relatively simple philosophy (perspective); in the understanding comes the ability to perceive the truth (reality) that is masked by appearance (glamour) (illusion) in the lower worlds. The key to truth (realization) (simplicity) is a detached and correlative broad-mindedness (freedom).

The details (specifics) of life (manifestation) are not in themselves particularly significant, but as those details are integrated (correlated) (synthesized) (simplified) the results are relatively more significant. Details do not lead to realization (directly). Narrow-mindedness impairs correlation and integration. Attachment (to anything) impairs the ability of mind to think freely (without bias) and recognize truth. A detached broad-mindedness allows the whole to be perceived rather than (some of the) individual parts and, thus, leads to understanding. Simplicity in knowledge and understanding refers to the whole

and can be applied or related to the parts (though an open-minded (correlative) study of the parts can lead to an understanding of the whole).

As a virtue, simplicity (for the spiritual student) can relate both to the individual temperament and to relationships with others. Simplicity in consciousness implies a well-integrated (simple) (coherent) (stable) personality and an uncomplicated lifestyle (and value system), relatively free from attachments and distractions (glamour) (illusion) (self-centeredness) (personal energy). It implies straight-forwardness (honesty) in relationships and communication. It implies moderation and a lack of extravagance or extreme experience (behavior). Simplicity implies a freedom from vanity and a freedom from personal complication. It implies a fundamental confidence in life and a reasonable (honest) self-assessment. And it suggests a state of quiet clarity and the expression of a relatively simple philosophy.

Simplicity does not imply a withdrawal from ordinary life, but suggests an uncomplicated discretion in dealing with mundane life. Over-simplification (in lifestyle or in reasoning) should be prevented (by intention), as over-simplification can be quite misleading. In simplicity can be found real joy (beauty) of life in the lower worlds, even more so as the soul (the simplifying aspect) comes to bear upon the personality (the aspect of complication).

† Commentary No. 314

## The Fourth Ennead 8

The eighth tractate of the Fourth Ennead is entitled "The Soul's Descent into Body." The soul is principally a transcendent (immanent) essence (aspect) (being) with respect to the body (personality). On a cosmic (solar) scale, the (greater) (one) soul is the aspect of consciousness (coherence) which governs (supervises) the universe as an unbroken (subjective) transcendence.

That soul is an essence of divinity, as are all souls differentiated within the One (life). Though that divine aspect has no weakness (save some degree of incompleteness), neither is it entirely fulfilled. It remains a pure essence, in contrast with the personality which becomes entangled in material (emotional)

(concrete mental) substance. The soul (aspect) deepens (evolves) (approaches completion) as a consequence of assimilation. That experience is obtained through manifestation (incarnation), the reflection (projection) of the soul (not the soul itself) onto a transient and a recurring life (death) in the lower (objective) worlds.

The soul (its reflection) descends into the material world as a consequence of the incessant (inexhaustible) evolutionary pressure (power) (God) (divine will). The reflection (the personality) is normally absorbed by its experience, being involved (enchanted) in (by) the maya (glamour) (illusion) of that (necessary) experience. The entanglement provides a major obstacle (opportunity) for the personality (mind) (form) to progress (evolve), as the inner (evolutionary) urge for experience (understanding) ultimately leads the mind to overcome all of its fetters (obstacles) thereby achieving far more than would be the case for imposed (direct) training. The immediate (long-range) purpose is for the soul (its mind) to become a potent, creative, constructive, and cooperative force within the framework of the greater life. Thus the soul is a God-in-the-making, and its instrument (the personality) does essentially all of the work (effort) while the soul merely assimilates and contributes its increasingly potent quality to the group lives to which it is linked.

The descent of the soul is involuntary in the sense that descent (experience) is obligatory (evolutionary) until a certain degree of quality (completeness) (character) is achieved, but voluntary in the sense that the soul has some freedom of choice, particularly in cooperation with karma, in determining the conditions and context of the incarnation. The urge to advance is considerable, though on the lower levels that urge is almost obscured by absorption. As the lesser self progresses and responds more and more to the quality (nature) of the soul, it begins to feel the urge to return to the source, and the evolutionary processes are quickened.

The compulsory alternation (progressive cyclic incarnation) is necessary for advancement, for otherwise the reflection (the mind) would become irrevocably absorbed by material (objective) patterns and progress (change) would cease. (Physical, emotional, and mental) matter has many inertial (resistive) properties that must be overcome (by evolutionary force) (constructive change) (as a consequence of natural law). The magnitude of the mind's deception (illusion)

by matter is considerable. Much of serving humanity concerns the encouragement (in consciousness) of humanity for overcoming the enchantment of the senses. Such (necessary) experience nonetheless requires eventual withdrawal and assimilation if it is to contribute to higher consciousness (the process of transcending the senses (glamour) (illusion) (self-centeredness) that provides the bulk of effective experience; the actual sensory experience is preliminary (incidental) to the real work).

† Commentary No. 315

## Human Taxonomy

Humanity is a lifewave within a stream of interrelated lifewaves, and within that lifewave exists a complicated taxonomy (organization) (classification) of human groups. The first taxonomic distinction is the contrast between the relatively obvious relationships (karma) of the form (personality) (body) and the relatively masked relationships of the life or consciousness (soul) (mind) within the form. The history (heritage) (karma) of the soul (consciousness) does not normally correspond to that of the form in any particular way.

The taxonomy of the human form is relatively simple in terms of structure (design), but complicated in practice due to the interaction of the various structural groups. The basic design (pattern) (with regard to form (not consciousness)) is racial, as humanity (the human lifewave) incarnates en masse through a series of root-races and their subordinate groups. These root-races do overlap somewhat (depending on the needs of humanity) (as each root-race provides a distinct racial opportunity), and are subdivided into various sub-races, branch races, tribes, and family groups.

Historically, the various root-races and their major subordinate elements (groups) were relatively isolated or separated one from another, so that each major subordinate group constituted a distinct and relatively sovereign entity having its own political, economic, cultural, and religious character. As civilization progressed (in general) some of the major elements experienced increased interaction (communication) (exchange) (mixing) and the constitution of major elements changed accordingly. Consequently, human forms (people) are now organized more significantly in terms of three or four characteristics

(racial, political, economic, and religious) rather than original (purely racial) qualification. Sovereign entities (nation-states) are now primarily political entities, though some remain relatively uniform in racial and religious terms.

These changes have had a relatively dramatic effect on the way people respond to higher impressions and karmic relationships as groups. In the relatively early days of human civilization, the various racial groups (tribes, families) were guided (influenced) by a relatively strong group-spirit (analogous to the group-soul) according to their racial heritage. As the groups dispersed and interacted with each other, the inner continuity diminished and the new groups were far less responsive to the group impressions. Instead, the karmic heritage of the new groups (nations) began to dominate the evolutionary experience of the group and the members (people) within each group were able to exercise a great deal more freedom (individuality) leading to greater individual experience (growth). However, for many people, many of the physical (racial) and emotional (religious) ties are still relatively strong (limiting).

The taxonomy of human consciousness is more significant than that of the human form, and is quite simple structurally. The organization (matrix) of human consciousness corresponds essentially to the seven planes of consciousness (and to the seven ray types). A person is considered physically-polarized, emotionally-polarized, or mentally-polarized when the bulk of the experience (identification) concerns or involves the physical body, the emotional body, or the mind, respectively. Many gradations exist between the major levels, and the consciousness normally flows more or less passively from one level to another, depending on the situation. In those who are relatively advanced in consciousness, the waking-consciousness remains mentally-polarized (stable), flows actively, and remains relatively detached from physical and emotional (mundane) experience. The taxonomy of the human soul is a matter of ray type.

## Nation-States

On subjective levels, humanity evolves as a coherent entity according to the combined (integrated) experience of all of its members (as individuals) and all of its subordinate groups (as groups). A number of channels exist for (subjective) (integrated) group experience in terms of root-races (and their racial elements), political units (nation-states), and religious movements. Though racial and/or religious relationships (karma) are often coincident with the political karma of the nation-states, it is the nation-state that corresponds more closely (analogously) to the individual human being in incarnation and the dynamic experience of that incarnation. Racial and religious (group) experience tends to be more subtle (indirect) (unless the group (character) dominates the individual life and/or political unit).

A nation-state is a form of political organization under which a relatively homogenous people inhabit a sovereign state. That community of people (as a group) possesses a relatively well-defined territory and government, and functions relatively autonomously. At an earlier time, these characteristics (of nation-states) were true of racial groups in general, but the races are now relatively well distributed. In further contrast to racial and religious units, nation-states are analogous to human beings in many (but not all) ways and may exhibit many of the human (personality) characteristics.

The physical analogy is more abstract, but the analogy in terms of emotional and mental characteristics is quite direct. Nations (nation-states) are able to express themselves in physical, emotional, and (in some cases) even mental terms. Nations exhibit various strengths (virtues), weaknesses, and abilities quite similar to those of individuals. Nations are therefore, to some extent, entities of consciousness and evolutionary experience. Some nations are relatively more advanced (in consciousness) than others; some are considerably older (more mature); and each offers a different experience, to be contributed to the whole (with subsequently progressive incarnations).

Each nation-state exhibits elements of personality-consciousness and (to some extent) elements of the higher (soul) consciousness, as well as ray relationships.

A particular nation may be physically-polarized, emotionally-polarized, or mentally-polarized (or relatively unpolarized), well-integrated (coherent) or relatively incoherent (chaotic), relatively mature or immature. These characteristics (and virtues) are determined by the quality and character of the mass consciousness. The quality of a nation's consciousness is thus a reflection of the consciousness of the individual members (people) and the relative cohesion (integration) that exists. These characteristics are, in turn, reflected in the actions (behavior) of the nation-state with regard to its people and to other nation-states (corresponding to human relations).

With two-way correspondence, not only does the individual contribute his character and consciousness (and karma) to that of the political (national) unit, but that political unit also contributes to the opportunity and experience (karma) of the individual. As the individuals mature, the consensus (national unit) also matures; as the nation-state matures, so are its members encouraged. International relations are analogous to interpersonal (human) relations, and as the various nations mature, so do their relationships with each other. Ultimately, the national interests are superseded by world interests (as personal interests are superseded by group interests) and the resulting civilization approaches that of a single nation-state (a mature, well-integrated, and considerate world unity).

† Commentary No. 317

## Intuition

Intuition is defined in the general (orthodox) sense as the power or faculty of attaining direct knowledge or cognition, without rational thought or inference; it also refers to the act of such apprehension and to the knowledge thus gained. There are three distinct mechanisms which can produce (apparent) intuition, though only one mechanism (buddhi) is the true (spiritual) intuition. The most common mechanism is that of astral (emotional) (psychic) sensitivity. The astral sensitivity is common to all human beings, in various degrees, though women are generally more sensitive in this respect than men due to the (female) polarization of the astral body. The astral sensitivity may resemble the (true) intuition, but depends upon the passive (psychic) processes of perception

(coloring due to character (quality) of the aura), and is therefore largely undependable (or at least subject to misinterpretation).

The second mechanism that meets the orthodox definition is abstract mental cognition. By definition, the intuition does not depend on any (concrete) reasoning. But where the bridge (continuity) between the concrete and abstract minds is well-developed, the abstract mind (of the soul) can provide correlative insight to supplement more objective reasoning processes. Scientific (philosophical) insight (revelation) generally falls into this category and information obtained via the abstract mind is generally much more dependable than that obtained via astral sensitivity (perception) or reasoning (analysis) (logic); but the information gained via the abstract mind is still subject to interpretation by the concrete mind (and dependent on mental training).

The true (spiritual) intuition is a function of an even higher process and involves the second aspect (buddhi) of the soul rather than the third aspect (manas) (abstract mind). The true intuition is quite rare and depends a great deal on the (reasonably complete) refinement of the integrated personality with the soul. The spiritual intuition requires a considerable quality of consciousness (and a blend of the head-centered and heart-centered nature), while the second (lesser) mechanism requires only a well-developed (abstract and concrete) mental development (which does not necessarily imply any spiritual consciousness (quality)) and the astral sensitivity requires essentially no qualification (though qualification is necessary to any useful sensitivity).

Buddhi involves a higher plane of consciousness than that of mental (manasic) or astral (emotional) experience, and is the most dependable (pure) mechanism since the personality (mind) must be properly trained and responsive (qualified) before the (true) intuition can flow.

True (spiritual) intuition is principally heart-centered (though mind must also be properly qualified) and provides the basis for (consistent) mystical experience (revelation) (self-realization) (for those who are qualified); it also provides occasional insight for those who are temporarily aligned (i.e., occasional mystical experience). True insight (intuition) is not communicable to others, for it is quite subjective and difficult to translate into objective terms. Drug-induced (pseudo-mystical) experience is astral (psychic) (personality-centered)

in nature and unrelated to intuitional experience. True intuition is a communion of soul and purified mind. Real intuition is the basis of the heart, the second aspect (buddhi) of the soul, and is related to the (qualified) heart center. Communion implied by spiritual intuition is unimpeded by the personality or by any personality consideration. Although lesser (mental and emotional) experience predominates, students of all faiths (rays) are gradually cultivating the alignment (buddhi) which brings soul infusion.

† Commentary No. 318

## The Fourth Ennead 9

The ninth tractate of the Fourth Ennead is entitled "Are All Souls One?" The soul is recognized as omnipresent indwelling and overshadowing unity, indwelling in the sense that the soul is everywhere related to its reflection and overshadowing in the sense that the (ordinary) personality-form is relatively (objectively) independent of the soul (while being subjectively quite dependent). From the individual (soul) unity to the group (whole) (soul) unity extends one (grand) soul, an omnipresent, eternal, universal entity (consciousness). While the mental principle is universal (unitary), the minds that utilize that principle are quite discrete, though related to the group (universal) mind via the soul. While the soul principle is universal, the various differentiated (individual) souls are a single, continuous entity. Thus reasoning is a discrete process while intuition (realization) is (beyond reasoning) a continuous process (a common thread of unitary consciousness).

Though the one soul flows through all (lesser) things, each such flowing depends upon the individual expression (personality) (form) for its distinct manifestation. Thus a single essence (the soul) flowing through (reflecting itself into) various personality-forms will have different experiences and expressions. Emotions and thoughts are both individual and group (mass) experience (expression), but neither emotions nor thoughts are of the soul for the soul (the repose of the soul) is beyond such transience. As the expression (character) of the individual (personality) approaches the soul in quality (consciousness), so shall that character become more obvious in its commonality. Those (personalities) who function more or less independently

are relatively far removed from soul contact (along with those who respond to the (lower) mass consciousness), while those who have built the bridge of consciousness between the mind and the soul will function more or less interdependently.

As the properly integrated and aligned personalities merge in spiritual (impersonal) consciousness there is a natural sharing of (refined) emotions and thought-forms along with a natural sense of brotherhood and cooperation (based upon the common thread of the (one) soul). Each individual has its own character, temperament, and degree of responsiveness with respect to the soul, yet each contributes and responds in its own way to the common thread (the soul). Thus humanity (as an evolutionary entity) is one soul living through a multiplicity of forms (and on a higher level, humanity is a localized expression of a greater unity). Through the agency of the soul, a sympathetic relationship exists between all forms (lives), though not all forms have a conscious realization, for the higher activity (repose) (recollections) of the soul does not operate directly through all forms, but only through the bridge of consciousness and to the extent that the form is suitably responsive.

Reasoning is an individual function; (true) realization is a group (soul) function. Disease (disharmony) (independence) is an individual function; (true) health (harmony) (cooperative interdependence) is a group (soul) function. The (one) soul is not corporeal and cannot be divided, but it can be differentiated (differentiation maintains the integrity of the soul).

Differentiation of the one (soul) into many localized souls (localization implies only that the one soul is related to a particular, individual expression) suggests bimodal simultaneity: the indivisible (one) soul and the many differentiated souls, each linked implacably to the whole yet linked uniquely to its respective objective reflection (expression). Thus does the one (soul) give itself "without self-abandonment, to its own multiplication."

## Money

Money represents economic opportunity, the opportunity to acquire and utilize material goods and/or services. Though money is not energy, per se, as an opportunity (and responsibility) money does represent energy, and can therefore be considered (representatively) as a form of energy. Like all forms of energy (things, opportunities, experience) money (wealth) is governed by karma (merit) and must be earned (though the cause and effect relationship is not necessarily immediate or direct, as it is interrelated with intended lessons). The energies (and their forces) associated with money (or its relative lack) are quite similar in nature to those associated with health (or its relative absence), in the sense that the dynamics of such energy are relatively easily influenced by the state of mind (disposition) (character) of the individual and the corresponding mental projections (qualifications).

The overriding factor with regard to money is karma and associated responsibility. Money can be attracted or discouraged mentally, directly (via concentrated thought) (objectively) or indirectly (via quality or qualification) (subjectively), depending on karma (freedom). But money (in any form) brings with it not only opportunity and responsibility, but other, associated (subtle) energies (implications) (conditions and burdens) that must also (ultimately) be faced. The circumstances (honest effort, theft, windfall, inheritance, mental projection) of its acquisition play an important role in the associated karma, as do the circumstances (selfish, unselfish; wise, unwise; careful, careless; responsible, irresponsible) of its utilization (fulfillment) (release). Economic karma thus depends largely on motive and discretion (sound judgment).

Accumulated money (like accumulated tension) carries with it considerable consequences, depending on motive (intention) and its ultimate disposition. Since karma is involved inseparably with all events and circumstances, responsibility for the disposition (application) of financial (economic) (material) resources (how money (wealth) is used) should be a major consideration of the individual having such an opportunity. In particular, the spiritual student should exercise discretion in attracting, accumulating, and applying economic resources. Such resources should be utilized reasonably and principally for

constructive and worthwhile purposes. Naturally, the student will utilize some funds in maintaining an appropriate (modest) standard of living, without extravagance (which itself breeds interesting consequences).

In the broadest sense, money is a cooperative energy (more so than health). All energy (money included) is tendered by the greater life (indirectly) along with the (group) responsibility for its effective use. Neither individuals nor groups actually own or possess money (economic opportunity); the various individuals and groups are merely custodians of fiscal resources, responsible as individuals, as groups, and collectively for its intelligent and constructive (humanitarian) use. Like energy, money can be utilized effectively or otherwise with corresponding effects for the lifewave (humanity) (and allied lifewaves).

Though money is usually considered in material terms rather than in terms of opportunity and responsibility, money can nonetheless represent a potent force for the evolution of human consciousness, as that money is properly and wisely used to support efforts which encourage human (spiritual) progress. But even so, money should not be considered too important (via attachment) or unimportant (via carelessness); money should rather be considered in a moderate, practical sense, with the welfare of the whole (in terms of consciousness, not material surroundings) taking precedence over the welfare of the individual.

† Commentary No. 320

## Brotherhood and Service

As the heart unfolds and the sense of brotherhood emerges within the consciousness of the student, a natural tendency arises for the student to become increasingly concerned about the welfare of others, rather than his own. The service motive can be quite strong, and where that motive is coupled with understanding and discretion, the student becomes a relatively potent force of encouragement and helpfulness (cooperation). But where that understanding and discretion are lacking, the individual may approach others (humanity) from a perspective (and practice) of missionary zeal and its attendant imposition.

The central issue concerns the responsibility of the individual with respect to others, and the extent to which sincere helpfulness becomes imposition and an impediment to the others' self-fulfillment. Individuals with strong (political, religious, philosophical) beliefs often feel a (self-imposed) (personality-centered) need to share those beliefs with others, even to the extent of trying to change the beliefs of others. Spiritual students, on the other hand, are encouraged only to share their beliefs where they are welcomed, while allowing others to think for themselves and to draw their own conclusions (thereby taking conscious responsibility for their own actions (decisions) (conclusions)).

An imposed belief is at best transient and superficial, as it cannot be properly integrated (assimilated) unless it is coupled with the individual's own realization and understanding. With increased maturity (wisdom) (discretion), the tendency of the spiritual student to promulgate his beliefs (philosophy) is transformed into a sense of helpfulness without imposition, of respect of others' beliefs and values. The student is then in a better position to encourage by virtue of character and temperament more so than beliefs.

This concept of helpfulness (service) without imposition extends also to personality cultivation (reformation). Externally-imposed personality reformation is not at all effective compared with self-imposed reformation. The role of the spiritual student is to encourage without imposition, to stimulate self-reliance and a sense of (individual) (personal) self-responsibility. A person cannot learn lessons for another; one can only learn lessons for oneself. But a person can encourage others to learn (think) (progress), without imposition and without (the illusion of) authority. Keys to understanding (philosophical principles) (experience) can be shared as appropriate (upon invitation), but the realization (understanding) can only come (naturally) from within (as merited). It is the responsibility of the individual to exercise the various keys (opportunities) according to ability and experience (consciousness). All confusion and misunderstanding is self-imposed; confidence and realization are (self-imposed) products of individual consciousness.

Real (spiritual) progress implies a continuous process of personality refinement and the proper exercise of mental (and intuitional) faculties. Personality problems are virtually (hopefully) inevitable (helpful) (providing needed lessons and opportunities for growth). But personality problems are directly only the

responsibility or concern of the person so tried. Indirectly, others (sincere well-meaning individuals) may be concerned, and may even be helpful (encouraging), but it is not normally the role of spiritual students to be directly involved in the problems and affairs of others. Brotherhood does imply helpfulness (love) (compassion) (respect for karma), but that helpfulness (service) should be offered (with discretion) in a relatively impersonal fashion and with considerable respect (consideration) for the persons so concerned. The presence alone is often all that a spiritual student can (or should) provide.

† Commentary No. 321

## Understanding

The natural quest for understanding is related to the evolutionary urge (for progress). Understanding can be conscious and/or unconscious; much can be assimilated subconsciously to be available to the conscious mind upon reflection. Understanding is a natural result of effort and experience, of the capacity for understanding (which implies experience, assimilation, and some mental training). But understanding also implies overcoming glamour and illusion, and overcoming the predisposition of the personality to misunderstand through personality-centeredness and presumed understanding.

Understanding is defined as discernment (insight); as an act or result of proper interpretation; as the power of comprehension, the ability to apprehend general relationships of particulars (which suggests that understanding is related to broad-mindedness, and that narrow-mindedness furthers misunderstanding); as the power of making experience intelligible (meaningful) through observation (attention) and proper reasoning (reflection). On the lowest practical level, understanding is closely related to instinct; on the highest level, understanding is closely related to intuition (self-realization). Between instinct and intuition lies a continuum of reasoning. Neither instinct nor intuition leads to misunderstanding; it is the domain of reasoning that provides the opportunity for misunderstanding.

All confusion and misunderstanding is self-imposed. An individual (or group) must ultimately accept responsibility for his own condition of relative

understanding (or misunderstanding). All information inputted becomes the responsibility of the recipient. Relative understanding depends upon the perception processes as well as the interpretation of the perceived information. Misunderstanding is far less likely where there is proper observation (attention) and freedom from predisposition (expectation) (bias) (personal energy), impatience, and assumption.

Glamour (illusion) is produced as the human mind (consciousness) assumes a reality (truth) (fact) based upon appearance or unwarranted assumption. Where assumptions are made (consciously or otherwise) and accepted as fact there is a real problem in consciousness, for the presumed facts then form an unmerited basis for further reasoning and further misunderstanding (compounding). The solution (understanding) comes where personal energy is overcome, assumptions are deliberately distinguished from facts, perception and interpretation are relatively free from bias, the intuition is allowed to manifest, the individual takes responsibility for his own condition, and simplicity (broad-mindedness) (open-mindedness) is valued over complexity (narrow-mindedness).

Understanding is actually a continuum, from relative misunderstanding, to a lack of understanding, to relative understanding. With some degree of humility (maturity) the student should prefer a lack of understanding (freedom from misunderstanding) to misunderstanding. Only then is (relative) understanding possible. But that understanding must still involve some (relative) uncertainty (open-mindedness). Confidence is relative and subject to further experience and improved understanding. Certainty (unmerited confidence) can be an impediment in itself. A mature (stable) posture (conscious disposition) based upon an acceptance of relative uncertainty (i.e., there are no (absolute) certainties) is relatively better than one based upon unmerited confidence (self-deception) or one based upon unwarranted assumptions or premature conclusions (rather than tentative conclusions); spiritual poise (simplicity) (stability) (humility) in the face of uncertainty is a major key to understanding.

## The Fifth Ennead 1

The first tractate of the Fifth Ennead is entitled “The Three Initial Hypostases.” A hypostasis is a substantial existence (a conceptual reality (construct)) (a philosophical foundation). Plotinus’ three initial hypostases constitute a triplicity (trinity) of correspondence, but that triplicity has (as well) several forms (sets) of correspondences, depending on context. One such (major) set is (1) the one, (2) the one-many, and (3) the one-and-many. Another major set is (1) philosophical primaries (first class): qualities and principles, (2) philosophical secondaries (second class): their relations, and (3) philosophical tertiaries (third class): their application. Even the major set ((1) the one, (2) the dyad, and (3) the triad) contains several minor sets.

The three hypostases are considered in relation to the soul. The (apparent) forgetfulness of the soul with regard to the father (source) (monad) refers to the mind, not to the soul directly. The source of evil (ignorance) (of the mind) is self-will. The unconscious entity (personality) purposively cast into the lower worlds (for experience) has no basis of remembering the higher save as the higher (inner) qualities are unfolded from inherent (divine) potential (the soul is potentiality). The mind (initially) lacks discernment of its own nature and becomes attached to (immersed in) (enchanted by) the lower world and the (mundane) things of that lower world. There is no dishonor in exile; the exile of the soul (via the mind) is non-malicious, imposed for the lessons to be learned thereby. But the soul is not the mind (though Plotinus persists in using the word (soul) as a mask); the soul is that aspect which remains unentangled, while the mind is the lesser aspect that deceives itself.

The soul envelops all and guides all (to the extent that lesser elements are responsive). The presence of the soul brings worth (quality). God (thus) is hidden within the human form (all forms). But the soul is in this sense a secondary, an image of the first principle (the monad) (the father aspect) and the relevant set (of hypostases (rays)) is a succession: (1) monad (life) (spirit) (uncompounded), (2) soul (consciousness) (preservation) (relatedness) (between the compounded and the uncompounded), and (3) mind (personality) (form) (matter) (compounded existence). The soul is a triple hypostasis (upper triad)

while its reflection (personality) is a lesser (triple) hypostasis (lower triad). The archetypal world (authentic existence) (a timelessness which does not require changelessness) (quality) is the reality of which all lesser things are shadows; the lower triad finds its reality in its archetypal existence on the level of the soul (as a matrix).

The individual (localized) soul cannot be severed from the one (soul), except by deliberate dissolution. The soul as principle belongs to the one (first hypostasis); as a derivative (reflection) of the one, it (consciousness) (the soul) belongs to the dyad (second hypostasis); yet it functions as a triplicity (triad) (third hypostasis). The two sets of hypostases relating to the soul are (1) the principle, (2) the essence or quality, and (3) its manifestation, and (1) atma, (2) buddhi, and (3) manas. The primal (one) remains self-gathered, and (simultaneously) a “profusion of the manifold.”

The first hypostasis (of this particular set) is origin (unfailing self-intention); the second is movement (circum-radiation, induced by the primary (being)); the third is consequence (the result of movement). The one is the potentiality of all existence (energy). The dyad is the force of that potentiality. The triad is the principle of manifestation. These three initial hypostases form the basis of all life and its evolution.

† Commentary No. 323

## Group Approach

Along the spiritual path, (substantial) esoteric progress can only be obtained in group formation (on soul levels) (in relation to an esoteric group (order)). The particular esoteric group (to which a soul is related by character and quality) (or to which a soul is beginning to relate) can be approached (directly) via the soul (which involves overcoming the relatively independent personality) and (where available) via a related outer (exoteric) group. Where such a qualified outer group is available, the individual is obliged to work through that group as much as possible.

The approach to the outer group should be both objective and subjective, as the individual works through the soul in linking up with the esoteric group via the

(corresponding) exoteric group. The availability of an appropriate outer group does not preclude the (necessary) soul alignment; in fact, the role of the outer group includes assisting individual members to achieve that alignment.

Assistance to outer group members is subordinated to the overall needs (service) of the group, but those needs are normally addressed coincidentally with the opportunities (involvement) afforded the members. Unaligned individuals (the majority of spiritual students) (not formally or consciously aligned (on soul levels) with any particular esoteric group) often work with one or more exoteric groups until they can recognize their inner (soul) loyalties and relationships and can align themselves with their proper esoteric (exoteric) group. Even after such alignment, individuals may continue to work with various exoteric groups (building bridges), but as an extension of and in cooperation with the group to which they are formally (properly) related. Independent (unaligned) activity is not as effective (as aligned work), but useful work (service) can be performed by isolated (aligned, interdependent) individuals, and useful (preliminary) work can be performed by unaligned individuals.

No (true) esoteric group is manifested as an exoteric group. The primary responsibility for the functioning (activity) of a related exoteric group rests upon its incarnated (esoteric group) members (representatives). An important (practical) aspect of such an outer group is that it remain properly aligned with the esoteric group (order) and therefore remain relatively free of the associated personalities. The vast majority of (spiritually-motivated) (exoteric) groups are not aligned with esoteric groups due to (relative) personality-centeredness. Outer groups of various forms and degrees (qualifications) provide valuable experience (training ground) leading (hopefully) to compassion, patience, understanding, cooperation, etc., as well as meaningful service. The approach of an individual should not depend entirely upon an outer group (which may not be properly aligned), but should depend principally upon the soul relationship.

Due to the considerable quality inherent in an esoteric group, the various esoteric groups are themselves coherently (interdependently) (cooperatively) aligned with one another, even though many differences exist between the various groups (i.e., each esoteric group has a distinct character, temperament, area of expertise (and commensurate responsibility), etc.). Exoteric groups are not normally as well-coordinated due to the complexity of outer existence (in the

lower worlds) and the need for diversity. The inner (subjective) (qualitative) alignment of esoteric groups is far more important than that of their outer counterparts and unaligned outer groups. The approach of an individual to an esoteric group (via the soul or via an outer (aligned) group) must necessarily be on group terms, not on the terms of the individual (personality).

† Commentary No. 324

## Preliminary Work

A considerable amount of preliminary (exoteric) (probationary) work (experience) is normally required before a spiritual student can be assimilated by an esoteric group. That preliminary work normally extends over several lifetimes of relatively conscious spiritual effort and is required in order to bring the consciousness of the student into (qualitative) alignment with the appropriate esoteric group (via the soul relationship). Some students may be karmically related to a particular esoteric group (due to prior association with the group or its members), but even they cannot approach the esoteric group without sufficient quality of consciousness and character. The quality (character) of an esoteric group is such that no one can approach beyond (within) the ring-pass-not without proper qualification. But with sufficient experience and quality of consciousness, the student will naturally gravitate to an appropriate (esoteric) group and be gradually assimilated (via refinement).

The needed experience is mostly exoteric and therefore within the domain (opportunity) of experience in the lower worlds. The needed experience includes (that which leads to) a broad understanding of theosophical philosophy, a fairly good (honest) understanding of the self (the personality, its psychology (complexity), and the soul relationship), considerable reformation of the personality, considerable mental training, and considerable experience in working with people. As this preliminary work is accomplished the individual becomes less personal (less personality-centered), more service-oriented, less vulnerable to glamour and illusion, more able to recognize truth (via self-reliance), less distracted by mundane experience, and more responsive to the soul (and spiritual qualification). Some of the preliminary work can be

accomplished in isolation (introspection) (relative rapport with the inner self), but much of the work implies considerable interaction with other people.

The preliminary work is predominantly objective (exoteric), and continues to some extent even as the deeper (esoteric) qualifications are met and as considerable subjective work (experience) is undertaken. As the preliminary work is accomplished (and as the intensity (noise) of the personality is dampened), the spiritual student becomes an energy bridge between the inner world of subjective (spiritual) energy (encouragement) and the outer world of objective activity and service, particularly as the individual learns to work cooperatively (and patiently) with other spiritually-minded people.

Cooperative (social) skills cannot be developed in isolation, and many of the key ingredients (qualifications) for esoteric work (assimilation) can only be learned in conjunction with exoteric group experience.

Most metaphysical (exoteric) (outer) groups are quite sincere and spiritually-minded (well-intended), but most suffer personality-centeredness and various limitations (glamour) (illusion). But even so, they usually afford the student a considerable opportunity for meaningful experience and expression (adjustment), as the individual in turn contributes to the quality, character, and growth (in consciousness) of the group experience (service) and that of its members. Though the exoteric (outer) group affords some parallels to more esoteric work (particularly in the case of exoteric groups aligned with esoteric counterparts) and preliminary experience, the exoteric group experience is relatively far removed, for the exoteric group is (more-or-less) a group of well-intended personalities (aligned or otherwise), while the esoteric group is a group of coherently-aligned souls (where the corresponding personalities are soul-aligned and responsive to the soul (group) energy).

## Fear 1

In the orthodox sense, fear is defined as an unpleasant, often strong emotion (emotional state) caused by anticipation or awareness of danger. Fear is inherently negative (passive) (reactive) (personality-centered) and often compounded or precipitated by conscious or unconscious imagination. Fear can be internally or externally generated (self-induced, received from external sources (general or specific), and/or transmitted to others), and fear can be precipitated as a consequence of concern on any level. Fear pertains to the personality, not the soul, for only the personality can experience fear and can be emotionally or mentally disturbed by (real or imagined) danger.

Fear can relate to a concern for physical harm, emotional distress, and/or mental anguish. Fear can be instinctual, via the animal (bodily) nature. Fear can be manifested physically, via the etheric body. Fear can also (usually) be stimulated astrally, as fear is essentially an astral (emotional) phenomenon (to a lesser extent etheric and/or mental), intensified and/or precipitated by mind, or triggered reactively via the astral plane. The two primary sources of fear are the individual's imagination (which can have considerable and subconscious effects) and the collective (mass) consciousness on the lower levels (sub-planes) of the astral and mental planes. The vast majority of fear is unfounded (without merit); in fact, all fear is unwarranted, even that which relates to real danger (the individual can be aware of potential danger, without fear).

Many thought-forms (intensified by astral association) are created and sustained artificially (deliberately (consciously) or carelessly (unconsciously)) on the astral (mental) plane. Anyone who is emotionally or mentally passive (reactive) (vulnerable) (personality-centered) may respond to the coarse vibrations of the lower sub-planes, which include the mass of glamour (illusion) and fear. Much of the individual (mass) fear is a negative reaction to the unknown (uncertainty) and a reluctance to face truth (reality) (inertial resistance to change (progress) (evolution) (due to the acceptance (preponderance) of maya, glamour, and illusion). This fear (of the unknown) is a problem of the ego (individual self-centeredness). In general, fear is a problem of the non-integrated personality.

Fear is predominantly a matter of darkness (ignorance) and ego. Fearlessness (arrogance) is the opposite extreme and is also a problem. The place of the spiritual student is to be without fear (to be non-reactive), neither fearful nor fearless, but untouched by separateness or ego (to be fearless and humble at the same time). An awareness of danger is not fear; fear is such an awareness coupled with an emotional and/or mental disturbance. Freedom from fear results from individual confidence in the one soul (God) (the plan), recognition of the existence of a greater wisdom (the soul) (the brotherhood of elders), and the cultivation of an integrated, purified, non-reactive personality.

The spiritual student is expected to remain poised in the face of uncertainty, to be concerned with relative truth, to grow relatively immune from glamour and illusion, and to proceed according to what is known or understood (and according to whatever discretion, enlightenment, or wisdom is present), carefully but without fear (with due respect for the unknown factors). More importantly, the spiritual student should, as a consequence of consciousness, share whatever positive energies are present, projecting light and love to all levels of the astral and mental planes, that fear might be overcome by all. But the real object of service (evolution) is encouragement in consciousness.

† Commentary No. 326

## The Fifth Ennead 2

The second tractate of the Fifth Ennead is entitled "The Origin and Order of the Beings Following on the First." Plotinus considers relative cosmogenesis of the basic hypostasis (trinity) (set): (1) origin, (2) movement, and (3) consequence. Each of the three members of the set is considered a derivative (reflection) (differentiation) of its prior, with the one being the prior for the origin (and therefore a prior to all derivatives). In more theosophical terms, this basic set is (1) being (the monad) (spirit) (life), (2) soul (consciousness) (quality), and (3) all things (personality) (body) (matter).

The manifestation (creation) (differentiation) of the universe is a triple, harmonic generation, with each of the three generations linked so that the

lowest order (matter) is in direct, simultaneous relationship to the source (God immanent), with a flow of energy passing circularly from the highest order to the lowest and back to the highest. In each successive generation (and in the composite), the prior contains the lesser (in some transcendental sense) and draws the lesser to return, fulfilled. The source of being is not being; the source remains itself, while giving birth to its reflection (derivative) (i.e., perfection overflows) (and gives birth to an imperfect reflection which, in turn, becomes perfect and increases the perfection of the source). The source is beyond seeking, beyond possession, and beyond need.

Similarly, the source of consciousness is being, not consciousness; and the source of matter is spirit (consciousness), not matter. At each level, the lesser contemplates the greater and gradually evolves toward the greater. That evolution constitutes a principle, at each level, and that evolution is itself a triplicity, as the three processes occur simultaneously and interdependently (matter evolves consciousness as consciousness evolves being as being evolves toward non-being (its precursor)) (the absolute recedes). Coincident with each respective greater generative (creative) principle, the lesser holds the entire potential of the greater. Thus God lives within the least (matter) and provides the potential and encouragement for all things to evolve.

But each aspect (each member of the set) and each element (each member of the aspect) has a two-fold nature, a lower self and a higher self (a higher correspondence). This follows from the least, being a reflection of the highest generation, as the first generation (spirit) forces into manifestation the illusion of its non-existence (which is matter) by virtue of its own existence. This occurs at each level, so that each is simultaneously a relatively basic construct and an induced reflection; e.g., matter is simultaneously non-existence and a reflection (shadow) of (induced) consciousness, while consciousness (the soul) is both non-existent (relative to spirit) and a reflection of spirit (the monad). The non-existence has a greater reality than the reflection, though the reflection contributes vastly more to its prior, as an instrument, while the non-existence evolves in its own right (while the reflection is merely a transient phenomenon). Consequently, illusion prevails in the lower worlds.

Each derivative is a movement relative to its prior, giving rise to its image. Each intermediary looks upward (inward) to its source and downward (outward)

to its image or reflection. In all of manifestation there is no separation. For every outgoing (motion) there is an ingoing (current) to provide balance (conservation). For every reality there exists an illusion, until the essence (life) at any level passes beyond such duality (and beyond reality), as all things are integrated in the one.

† Commentary No. 327

## The Teacher

The teacher is one whose purpose it is to teach or share knowledge and to encourage thinking. In the more formal sense, the teacher is one whose major role is teaching; in the informal sense, the teacher can be anyone who teaches indirectly, incidentally to other roles. The main role of a teacher is to encourage (stimulate) learning (development) (self-reformation), particularly in the case of teaching various learning methods and encouraging individual study. The role of the teacher (student) is quite relative; all are in some sense teachers and all are in some sense students.

The primary teacher is karma (experience) (life), as the purpose of life in the lower (human) worlds is evolution (in consciousness) through learning (experience, study, expression, understanding) and sharing (without imposition). Karma provides experience and is entirely impersonal, yet relates directly to each individual according to that individual's particular needs (merits). In providing experience, karma qualifies all events in the lower worlds. The soul plays the role of teacher (albeit subordinate to the law (karma)) to some extent, as the soul interacts subjectively with the karmic force and (subjectively) with the mind and personality-consciousness (to the extent that the lesser self is responsive). The soul is a reservoir of (past) individual and group experience (wisdom) available to the mind (personality); depending on the relative quality of the lower consciousness, the soul can be a very potent evolutionary force. The early and middle stages of human evolution are largely determined by karma irrespective of the soul, while the later stages are increasingly soul-oriented.

The soul (and the soul-group) offers quality (guidance in terms of quality (character) rather than specific personal instruction) via the sharing of

appropriate energy (qualification). Karma (and the soul) facilitates (encourages) learning, but the responsibility of learning rests with the individual (mind) (personality) (waking-consciousness).

Many lessons may be presented in the course of karmic experience, but the individual must still (eventually) learn those lessons via assimilation (incorporation into consciousness). Thus karma (the soul) is an evolutionary force (pressure), but (necessarily) exacting only in the long term. The role of the student (as all human beings are students) is to learn, directly or indirectly, deliberately or incidentally, gradually or more rapidly, as the case may be. The means (methods) of teaching (learning) may vary widely, according to the particular path (ray) (soul group), the nature (character) and maturity of the teacher, and the nature and maturity of the student.

While karma (and the soul) provides intrinsic methods of teaching (learning), the individual may also learn substantially in response to external sources (teachers). In the exoteric case, the teacher is relatively objective; in the esoteric case, the teacher is almost entirely subjective (as the learning occurs via energy processes (presence)). In either case, the individual remains responsible for the acceptance (deferral) (rejection) of a teaching and for assimilating whatever lessons are afforded. In the traditional spiritual sense, spiritual (theosophical) (philosophical) subjects are presented in a formal school (academy) setting and/or via the (guru) teacher-student relationship. The guru-concept involves each (worthy) student having a personal (individual but not necessarily exclusive) teacher and spiritual guide (authority). As the path evolves (and as the standards for spiritual students evolve), the guru-concept is quite naturally replaced by the group-concept.

## Positive Thinking

The concept of positive thinking forms one of the foundations of metaphysical philosophy. The basic idea is that energy follows thought, that (generic) man is a creator, and as a person thinks so is energy projected which tends to bring about the manifestation of the thought in more objective terms. Positive thinking can be causal in the case of an overall (pleasant) disposition, or more deliberate in terms of affirmation, visualization, or projection of mental (astral) (etheric) energy. The processes of positive thinking are similar to those of negative thinking, except that positive thinking is inherently constructive (but potentially selfish) while negative thinking is inherently destructive.

Positive (negative) thinking (the projection of positive (negative) energy) can be conscious or unconscious (generalized (disposition) or careless (or habitual)), potent and coherent or relatively impotent and incoherent. Considerable momentum can be achieved in positive or negative thinking, regardless of deliberation. In the more deliberate sense, positive thinking involves the projecting ahead (in time) of energy in the form of a visualization or mental construct (which may be an intricately conditioned formula). The novice will normally intensify the projection (with desire) (which complicates the process) and may actually project a looking back in time from the projected reality (i.e., placing the manifestation of the desire reality in the past tense in order to evoke subconscious processes indirectly). The properly trained student will project without desire (and without any personal considerations) and will condition the projection as well as the subconscious mind.

The advantages and merit of positive thinking are considerable. Positive thinking (as a process) is an integrating force for the personality; it strengthens the mind and its hold upon the personality, via concentration, affirmation, visualization, and projection. Positive thinking can be a creative force to bring about desired (appropriate) effects, both in terms of the development of the personality and in terms of external conditions. However, there are inherent problems and potential dangers in positive thinking, particularly where it is carried to an extreme. Unless the mind is properly subordinated to the soul, the

mind is likely to grow too strong (independent) (separative) and actually inhibit spiritual responsiveness while encouraging personality-centeredness.

Another problem of positive thinking (and of prosperity-consciousness) is proper motive. Desire involves personal energy and generally reflects a degree of self-centeredness which is enhanced by positive thinking along personal lines. Carried to an extreme, positive thinking fosters illusion and concretion leading to a serious denial of reality and a preponderance of extreme (binary) thinking. Highly specific positive projection is generally less effective. A substantial potential problem associated with positive thinking is interacting naively (arrogantly) with intended destiny (attempting to change or improve (circumvent) conditions intended via karma to afford certain learning opportunities (karmic fulfillment)). However, such circumvention (if effected) only constitutes temporary evasion (postponement) and a denial of opportunity.

The student is encouraged to incorporate positive thinking as a general disposition and (positive) energy projection in properly qualified (impersonal) ways, in harmony and cooperation with karmic forces. In working with consciousness (and realization) rather than specific events, conditions, or circumstances, the student actually encourages effective karmic fulfillment.

† Commentary No. 329

## The Human Animal

Man, the generic human being in incarnation (having a male or female physical body as the case may be), is a combination of matter, consciousness, and spirit. That combination incorporates various characteristics and principles of several different natural kingdoms: the elemental kingdoms, the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, and the human kingdom. In essence, man is human consciousness induced upon or within an animal form (body). That animal form effectively integrates the incorporated lesser lives, while the human consciousness is man's link to the spiritual essence of the higher kingdoms.

Self-consciousness is the major distinction between the animal and the human being. The animal is governed almost entirely by its natural instincts (habits)

(training as a consequence of programmed experience and development). The human being is (progressively) governed by self-consciousness which is asserted upon the human (animal) form. That form ultimately becomes a responsive instrument of human consciousness. In an analogous fashion, the integrated human consciousness (personality) becomes a responsive instrument of the human soul (except that in both cases the initiative comes from the human consciousness, as the mind responds to higher encouragement (law) (quality) and conquers the lower (animal) self, reforms and qualifies the integrated personality (and itself), and elevates the consciousness into alignment with the soul.

The discipline and qualification of the animal aspect is a major challenge. Once accomplished, the attention of human consciousness can be properly focused on the next major challenge (which is ego or self-centeredness). But the proper qualification of the human animal is no easy matter, for many natural (lower) urges and tendencies are deeply ingrained in the animal nature. Many of the urges may be natural for the animal aspect, but certainly not for the (intended) human aspect. The process of overcoming is the process of transformation and elevation (not suppression).

If the animal energies are merely elevated (to human levels), then the human being merely remains a potent, self-centered animal. If those animal energies are properly transformed into more appropriate energies and elevated, then the human being has tamed (disciplined) the animal self and has taken advantage of the available energies in the most useful (progressive) (evolutionary) fashion. The keys to this process of transformation are recognition and temperance. Man must recognize the animal urges for what they are, without incorporating them directly into the human subconsciousness, and recognize their higher (intended) correspondence, then temper them sufficiently to permit transformation. The (animal) sexual urges, for example, should be tempered (moderated) by human consciousness, and as the polarization of human consciousness becomes predominantly mental, the sexual urges can be naturally and ultimately transformed into the higher, creative potencies and mental abilities.

The human (animal) personality naturally seeks to maintain the animal nature, while the natural call of the higher self is to renounce lesser things and

transform the animal nature. The ego (personality) is placed in the middle ground between the animal nature and the higher human (spiritual) nature. The ego and the animal nature are particularly vulnerable to external (astrological) (circumstantial) forces. The external (lesser) forces play a needed evolutionary role in human developmental experience, but the higher experience can only be afforded as the animal nature is properly overcome and as the human being overcomes its vulnerability to proceed according to higher, inner guidance.

† Commentary No. 330

### The Fifth Ennead 3

The third tractate of the Fifth Ennead is entitled "Knowing Hypostases and the Transcendent." Considered are the knowing principle, the various means to knowledge, and the relationship of knowledge to transcendence and immanence. External knowledge involves the senses, perception, and the interpretation of impressions; internal knowledge involves the mind free from the distractions of sense-perception. Reasoning involves the mind in consideration of some object or subject, and is related both to external and internal knowledge, short of realization. Knowledge obtained via sense-perception and interpretation, and knowledge obtained via introspective reasoning represents a small portion of the field; the totality of the field can only be embraced internally in the higher sense, via realization and the agency of the soul.

Knowledge based upon reasoning is relatively more valuable than that obtained via casual or passive interpretation of sense-impressions. Even more valuable is self-knowledge or consideration of oneself as a being or consciousness. But all knowledge based upon perception or reasoning is necessarily superficial and inferior to true knowledge or realization. The lesser knowing may or may not involve understanding; the higher knowing involves both comprehension and realization based upon the oneness of all life, as the knower becomes the field of knowledge: the self-knowing of an uncompounded being, where self and content are one and the same. Subhuman consciousness is capable of indirect knowledge (e.g., instinct) as a consequence of group experience, while human consciousness is capable of self-knowledge, in the sense of self-observation. In a

higher sense, self-knowledge can be extended to include a consideration of conscious thoughts, feelings, and motives; even further, to a realization of subconscious and super-conscious qualification.

True subjective realization is superior to objective reasoning (which is superior to emotional subjectivity). Via the soul the properly qualified mind can participate in self-identification or self-realization, as the individual consciousness enters the greater, becoming that greater all-embracing self and obtaining knowledge (insight) directly. There is no partition of consciousness in that higher sense; there is only an indeliberate focusing of consciousness, within the integral whole. All glamour and illusion are left behind, as the reality of the soul is entered, and as the knower, knowledge, knowing, the object of knowledge, and the field become one in the higher sense.

Truth (reality) thus obtained via the soul carries with it compulsion (compulsive acceptance of the reality of truth) rather than the persuasion ordinarily demanded by the mind (ego) (except where the ego is self-deceived). Consequently, the mind needs qualification to overcome its self-interest (independence), for soul-infusion is not otherwise possible. The double phase of the mind, concrete (objective) (external) focus and abstract (subjective) (internal) focus, is fully overcome in true self-realization (immanence).

The transcendent is the source, beyond vision, beyond self-vision.

Transcendence (being in the highest sense) is beyond knowledge, incapable of knowledge, incapable of being known. The transcendent confers, and cannot be confounded, even by its own induction. The emanation (radiation) (conference) (conveyance) of the transcendent is inferior to the source, and is induced within that which is not the source. Thus the major set of ultimate reconciliation is (1) the Transcendent, (2) the all, being the total of which the Transcendent is the source, and being different from the source, and (3) the many (diversity) (distinction).

## The Teacher and the Group 1

The traditional student-teacher relationship is one in which the student and the teacher are (relatively) mutually dependent. It naturally depends upon the relative quality of the teacher and the relative quality and responsiveness of the student. The role of the teacher (traditionally) is to teach, guide, instruct, or otherwise directly influence the student. The teacher may assume some authority, and the teacher may also be a taskmaster. The traditional (student-teacher) relationship is relatively easy to achieve and maintain, and considerable learning and progress may result.

The major weakness of the traditional (teaching) concept is the dependency relationship between the student and the teacher. The problem is considerably exaggerated in the case of an emotional (devotional) attachment on the part of the student (in the case of disciple-guru rather than student-teacher). In the traditional definition, a disciple is a student (aspirant) who is personally (emotionally) (devotionally) bound to the teacher (guru). Even this relationship can provide considerable learning and progress, albeit at some expense (attachment) (dependency). Where the relationship is more mature, the student may also learn (develop) self-reliance, detachment, impersonality, etc.; but in general, the traditional (spiritual) relationship is relatively personal, centered on the teacher rather than the teaching (albeit the teaching is indeed more important).

In the traditional group concept, the group is a collection of students centered upon the magnetic personality and/or soul of the teacher. The energy flow is predominantly outward, from the teacher to the students, with relatively little response (flow) from the student. There is in the traditional concept only one essential relationship, that of the student to the teacher (and in the higher sense, to the teaching). In the (relatively) current (evolving) group concept, the teacher (senior member) plays an increasingly subjective role, and the group is far better coordinated (interactive) (coherent).

The progressive group (student-teacher) relationship is group-centered and soul-centered rather than teacher (personality) centered. Personal (personality)

energy is minimized and several essential relationships are cultivated: (1) the relationship of the student to the group (soul) (teaching), (2) the relationship of the student (group) to the teacher (senior member) (elder brother) (guidance) (teaching), and (3) the relationship of the student to the other (student) members of the group. These relationships are actually much more demanding than those of the traditional concept, though (in the (progressive) group concept) the individuals have more freedom (self-reliance) and there is no dependence on (asserted) authority (the (mature) group depends rather upon (esoteric) energy (quality)). Consequently, the qualifications (ability, quality, alignment, maturity, previous training and experience) for group involvement are considerable compared with traditional qualifications.

The lessons learned via the traditional (teaching) relationship are relatively basic and essential to further spiritual unfoldment (and subsequent service). In the current era the same, basic lessons are learned by the aspirant, generally without the aid of a teacher. Students (aspirants) are expected to teach themselves all of the basic material and develop all of the basic qualities, in preparation for more serious (group) work. As the path evolves, the traditional teaching methods (for spiritual purposes) are becoming less significant, being replaced by individual study and development in the case of the aspirant, and by (advanced) group methods in the case of the disciple.

† Commentary No. 332

## The Teacher and the Group 2

The traditional (spiritual) teacher teaches objectively (directly). In the (progressive) group concept, the teacher teaches (shares) more subjectively (indirectly) and encourages (qualifies) the group without necessarily any direct instruction. Many lessons are afforded students (disciples) in (subjective) group formation that are not available to individuals, but much (effectiveness) depends on the relative impersonality of the teacher and the relative maturity of the group members (i.e., their ability to elevate their waking-consciousness above and beyond the personality). The (advanced) group formation referred to is quite different from the traditional, exoteric (personality-centered) groups that predominate, even along metaphysical and theosophical lines.

The group concept therefore involves only relatively qualified students and provides a framework for continued (and enhanced) self-unfoldment and service. The essential purpose of the group is some particular, appropriate service activity, while the evolution of its members (as individuals and (more properly) as a group) remains secondary, and to the extent that that evolution supports the group purpose. The role of the teacher (in such a group) is to encourage the group in its service (expression) and evolution (in group context), placing the needs (quality) of the group formation above those of the individuals. The (advanced) teacher offers encouragement more by qualification than by any other means, more by example (presence) than instruction, more by questioning and impersonal teaching (of principles) than personal revelation.

In the primary relationship (between the students and the group (soul)), the responsibility for individual integration, adjustment, and alignment is placed on the student, while the teacher remains to a large extent in the background. The secondary relationship (between the students (group) and the teacher (senior member)) is important only in the sense that the senior member represents the quality and consciousness of the associated esoteric group. The senior member facilitates the transference of energy between the esoteric group and its exoteric counterpart and between the outer (exoteric) group and the surrounding environment according to the purpose (charter) (responsibility) of the group. The tertiary relationship (between the various students (members) (disciples)) is significant only in the sense of cooperation (coherence) (rapport) which facilitates the expression of the higher, group quality. That (qualitative, subjective) rapport, however, transcends the personality nature and is an essential ingredient in the success (effectiveness) of the group.

The energy flow within the (advanced) group is threefold, with each of the members participating actively (via meditation) and subjectively (via quality of consciousness). The lines of force relate all of the members to the group (and to each other) and (via the senior representative) to the esoteric group (and its quality). The teacher (senior member) (elder brother) (presence) may work entirely from subjective levels (impersonally), depending on the maturity (quality) (character) (responsiveness) (circumstances) of the outer group.

The higher qualification comes more from the subjective presence of the senior member than any objective presence. In an even greater sense, even the role of the senior member is transcended, as the character (quality) (energy) of the entire esoteric group may be brought to bear upon the outer manifestation (depending ever on its alignment, responsiveness, and circumstances). In any event, the traditional role of the teacher is considerably transcended in the evolutionary (group) concept, and the students (disciples) become themselves active points of light (love) (power) and extensions of the group energy.

† Commentary No. 333

## The Human Ego

The human being in physical incarnation is a human personality or ego induced within an animal form. That personality is a transient creation (instrument) of the soul, further complicated by its close association with its animal body. It is the self-consciousness of the human ego or personality (lower self) that distinguishes the human being from the animal. The ego is the personal, self-centered individuality which experiences the illusion of externalization.

In the pure sense, the personality is the personality matrix (pattern) of the soul (which is inherently very different from the quality and nature of the soul itself) prior to its imposition upon the animal form (i.e., as it exists on archetypal levels). In incarnation, however, that personality is easily absorbed by the demands and illusions of mundane existence and is normally quite rapidly complicated by the circumstantial (earned) factors of heredity and environment. The ego is that more complicated, self-centered aspect of the personality that motivates self-centered (selfish) experience and expression, which normally values its own existence and self-importance over all others; and it is the ego which sustains and reinforces illusion and resists alignment with the soul (for such alignment portends the cessation of the ego's independence).

In the practical sense, the personality is derived in part from the personality matrix (which is a source of assimilated experience and developed abilities) and in part from heredity and environment. The personality is the loose totality (not necessarily properly integrated) of all the physical, emotional (affective), and

mental (cognitive) characteristics of an individual (including conscience). The psyche is essentially equivalent to the personality, taking into consideration both conscious emotions and the unconscious mind. The psyche is often referred to as the soul, but in the esoteric philosophy (terminology), the soul and psyche (total personality) are distinctly different concepts (entities), the soul being the impersonal, subjective self which is the cause of the individual personality life, yet remains distinctly beyond objective, personal experience.

The ego is more properly the relatively conscious part of the personality (psyche) that relates more or less directly with the external reality (illusion) via sense impression, the waking-consciousness (the focus of personality awareness), and personal, subconscious processes and conditioning. The external (objective) reality is the illusion of physical existence and separateness (relative to spiritual existence). The ego is that aspect of the personality that is deceived by that (apparent) reality and its own self-consciousness, that aspect of the psyche which has become enchanted by consciousness (to the extent that it has become an artificial entity), the center to which a person's psychological experience and expression is referred. In a more practical sense, the ego is the essence of self-deception and self-interest.

The principal illusion of human psychology is the identification of the human individuality with the personal self or ego, rather than the soul. The waking-consciousness (the mental focus) is only the superficial aspect of the human being and is not the soul. The ego is only the complicated self-illusion of the human personality, and is not the soul. Reality (enlightenment) dawns only as the ego, psyche, and waking-consciousness are recognized as aspects of the transient personality. Much glamour and illusion (and many levels of self-deception and egoism) must be overcome before the reality of the universal soul can be assimilated.

## The Fifth Ennead 4

The fourth tractate of the Fifth Ennead is entitled "How the Secondaries rise from the First, and on the One." Plotinus considers further the relationship of the all (the second aspect) to the one (the first aspect) and the many (the third aspect). Each of the three aspects can be considered as an independent reality, but only the one is entirely self-consistent. The one is without need, while the all and the many are derived realities (dependent on cause and effect relationships for their relative and respective reality) (the one is causal but not effective). In the reference frame of the first aspect, the one is the only reality, with the all and the many constituting a void. Within that void, the all (secondaries) are intervenients and the many (tertiaries) constitute a grand illusion.

The first aspect (simplex) stands before all, remote (self-gathered) and unaffected by its derivatives. The one is authentic (pre-existing) unity rather than synthetic. Anything that exists after the first aspect must be derived by order and succession (via intervenients (consciousness) as needed). A cause and effect relationship exists for all secondaries and tertiary, even though the intervenients may be obscured. The one is "untouched by multiplicity," absolute in itself. Anything less than the one needs the pre-existence of the one (and all intervening relations) as a prerequisite of its own composite existence. There can be only one first aspect, being not a body, a process, or a thing of generation. Any successive unity is not utterly simple, but is imitative, a composite and derived unity. The authentic unity (transcendent being) must exist (as a source), regardless of the reality or illusion of any subsequent or lesser existence.

The one is an inductive source, the beginning of all (induced) power, by virtue of its own existence. The one is perfect; all else is a dim reflection, compounded and with little resemblance. The one imparts but is not imparted; all others impart and are imparted (such is the equilibrium of derived reality). Successive derivations are more remote (less perfect) than the source, with consciousness being superior to matter (with spirit being the least interactive (and most

inclusive) extent of consciousness, representing the first act of induction (being superior to consciousness)).

The one is the reality of potentiality, the source itself in its self-repose. The first action is the act of essence (potentiality). The second action is the act of essential induction, as potentiality is reflected into the void. The third action is the act of response, as the void accepts the induced potentiality (which is immanence) and begins to evolve. The second action or movement constitutes actuality, the inevitable consequential existence. The one has no reference frame for relativity; the many lacks true awareness of relativity, being compounded and bound by illusion. The all is the medium of awareness and relativity, and is the highest attainable reality (the absolute recedes upon approach), having no limit to the number of layers (levels) of consciousness (except that higher and lower extent thresholds of consciousness are related to the integrated focus, so that higher (lower) consciousness enters (leaves) the system of consciousness as the focus evolves (i.e., some ultimate limit may exist for the number of orders of magnitude in consciousness embraced by any given focus) (as one extent may be slaved to the other)).

What is true concerning the one, the all, and the many is also true by correspondence and analogy for the monad, the soul, and the personality, respectively, as for any correlative atomic sphere in general.

† Commentary No. 335

## Meditation States 1

Meditation can be characterized in many ways. In general, meditation encompasses three major processes: concentration, meditation proper, and contemplation; each has an inner (subjective) (higher) and outer (more objective) (lower) correspondence. Concentration is characterized by a focusing of the mind; in the outer sense, the mind is focused upon some appropriate object or subject; such concentration (properly directed) is a means of observation, analysis, energy projection, etc. In the inner, deeper sense, the mind (in concentration) is brought to a point of occult tension, without object or subject; such concentration is a necessary prelude to proper meditation.

Meditation proper is characterized as a state of balance between the outer world of the mind and personality and the inner world of the soul; such meditation (discipline) is achieved as the waking-consciousness withdraws from mundane, personality considerations and enters the stillness of inner experience and alignment with the soul. In the outer sense, meditation is a deliberate approach to the inner self and includes meditative activities (e.g., invocation, prayer, purification, reformation, study, application of energy, etc.) (all of which are relatively superficial and involve the mind and personality). In the inner sense, meditation is self-realization, the bathing in the presence of the soul, complete humility, where the personality presence is wholly overcome, wholly quiescent.

Contemplation is characterized in the lower sense as contemplative activity, involving the abstract and concrete minds in a detached, impersonal mental consideration of some object or subject. In the higher sense, contemplation transcends mental activity altogether and transcends the higher, meditative alignment and awareness of the soul, to a selfless, non-thinking realization of being. In either case, contemplation, meditation, and concentration are qualified as third ray, fourth ray, and fifth ray processes, respectively, principally. In general, meditation procedurally involves all three processes.

As a procedure (discipline) (spiritual exercise), meditation can be characterized as a succession of states involving levels and quality of consciousness and degrees of discipline. Three preliminary states (1) superficial, (2) nominal, and (3) inertial lead the qualified student to the void (meditation proper) (the sustained state of meditation). The superficial state is described as a personality in a meditation posture but still absorbed by mundane matters or personality consciousness. Deliberate determination is required to pass from the superficial state to the nominal state or beyond. In the nominal state, the mind qualifies the personality and brings the physical body and the emotions to complete stillness (clarity) while invoking deeper meditation. The nominal state is the state in which invocations, mantras, prayers, visualizations, etc., are experienced preliminary to meditation proper.

If the inertial state cannot be attained, then the nominal state is also the condition of consideration of seed thought, quality, etc. The first serious

meditation state is the inertial state, where the personality is so stilled that it is virtually impossible for the body to move or for the emotions to fluctuate. It is also a state in which transient thoughts should not be permitted. In the inertial state there is only very limited awareness of physical or emotional existence. The emotions are purified or stabilized so that there is no physical or emotional distraction (but there may be some mental activity). The inertial state is, literally, a state in which the integrated personality is physically and emotionally inert, wholly indisposed to movement or exertion, thoroughly detached from physical or emotional experience.

† Commentary No. 336

## Meditation States 2

The inertial state is the preferred state for invocation, visualization, energy application or projection, etc., since the potency of the individual or group is considerably enhanced by the inertial posture. In the inertial state there is a freedom and clarity of thinking, uncluttered by lesser aspects of personality, naturally disposed to energy qualification, contemplative activity, etc. In the superficial and nominal meditation states there is superficial thinking (and thought formation); in the inertial state, the student can experience deeper thought formation, preliminary to meditation proper (which is necessarily seedless (thoughtless)). Even in the inertial state, the student may function entirely as a personality, necessarily integrated, but not necessarily aligned with the soul. Both heart energy and head energy can be experienced in the inertial state, in the lower, personality sense, or in the higher sense if the bridge of consciousness between soul and personality is achieved and maintained.

If the bridge of consciousness is led to function at the threshold between soul and personality (and simultaneously at the threshold between the inertial state and proper sustained meditation), then the focus of consciousness can look into the personality (into the subconscious mind and emotions), properly detached and impersonally. The waking-consciousness is only the superficial consciousness of the personality; the personality is actually mostly beneath the threshold of ordinary conscious awareness. But at that point of focus between soul and personality, the lesser self can be properly programmed, qualified, etc.,

with discretion. More significantly, through that bridge of consciousness the energies of the soul can flow unimpeded into the lesser, personality domain.

Meditation proper (occult tension) (true contemplation) is experienced as the focus of consciousness passes from the inertial state of the personality into the entirely subjective, abstract, impersonal state of the soul. The posture of the focus of consciousness (in proper meditation) is one of inner listening, of awareness without thinking or feeling, of abstract mental and intuitive consciousness. Heart (head) meditation proper is experienced as the impersonal consciousness dwells in buddhi (atma) (respectively), without thought or feeling. Any lesser heart or head meditation is relatively superficial (by comparison), yet nonetheless worthy and useful as applied energy experience (manas). Very few people who meditate actually pass beyond the inertial state, due to the resistance of the (self-centered) personality.

The inertial state and meditation proper are actually each a spectrum or continuum of states of consciousness, depending on the ability of the individual and the relative quality of consciousness. In the higher inertial states and in some of the meditation states proper it is possible to maintain a very remote indirect, peripheral awareness of the existence of the personality and the external world. But where there is any attachment (thought formation) the consciousness necessarily returns to personality levels. Withdrawal from deeper states should proceed slowly and deliberately (without thought formation).

In general, meditation involves a movement of the personality toward the inner experience of the soul (quality) (being), that inner experience, and the gradual movement (withdrawal) toward a meditative outer disposition. Such a cultured disposition is difficult to achieve, for the personality and mundane pressures (illusions) are considerable. But with persistence and dedication, the spiritual student can achieve the needed disposition and remain a constructive, spiritual influence in the external world.

## Consciousness

Consciousness is an induced quality, the intermediate aspect of the trinity, balanced between matter and spirit, and born of their interaction. More properly, consciousness begins as that interaction and develops as a consequence of that interaction. Consciousness is the quality of relationship (relatedness) and the means of equilibrium and evolution, being relatively intransient, potentially more permanent than matter but less permanent than spirit. Matter and spirit are the two extremes of consciousness, being relatively inert save for the activity of consciousness. Consciousness is relatively dynamic, though its domain covers a tremendous range of levels, types, and quality.

All matter (on any level) is infused with its spiritual counterpart (spirit) (from which matter is ultimately derived), but spirit remains a uniform (unitary), all-inclusive essence, while matter is highly diversified and differentiated. Consciousness provides relationship (communication) between matter and spirit, and for all practical purposes represents the life (spirit) aspect. By induction and infusion spirit provides the inherent life within all things, while matter simply provides the elements for the construction of (composite) forms. The life (consciousness) within each form evolves as the consciousness expands and improves in its various characteristics (quality) (its degree of refinement and degree of elevation). As consciousness is manifested on the (relatively) lower levels, the products of experience and manifestation are communicated via the more subtle aspects of consciousness to its higher counterpart. The paradox of material existence is that matter itself cannot exist without inherent consciousness, that every composite form is actually a superposition (integrated or otherwise) of various aspects of consciousness, each evolving on its own level. Consciousness can be defined as internal, self-consistent awareness on some level, having some relative quality. Atomic (and elemental) consciousness is necessarily limited in range and comprehension (compared with higher forms of consciousness), yet nonetheless a means of consequence of evolution on that level. On more human levels, consciousness is defined as the totality of conscious (and unconscious) states of an individual (or inter-related group). The waking-consciousness is normally characterized by sensation, emotion, volition,

and thinking (including perception, cognition, and comprehension). But the (human) waking-consciousness is only the current focus of consciousness, and is therefore only a small portion of the individual's consciousness. That consciousness includes many (simultaneous, transient, and/or continuous) relatively conscious and unconscious states, both subconscious (above or beyond the normal threshold of the waking-consciousness).

Through experience and training the spiritual student learns to expand the conscious awareness far beyond the ordinary human (superficial) consciousness, at will and with conscious direction, being able to deal directly with energy and consciousness, while most of humanity deal directly only with the superficial and material aspects of human experience and expression.

Overall consciousness (the normal state and quality of conscious life (as a personality)) is an indication (albeit independently non-conclusive) of relative evolutionary development (achievement). The significance of consciousness (and its quality) lies in its relationship to evolution. As consciousness is improved on individual levels, so is the group consciousness improved. Consciousness provides the only effective means of health (harmony) (peace), evolutionary development, and liberation (freedom) (perfection).

† Commentary No. 338

## The Fifth Ennead 5

The fifth tractate of the Fifth Ennead is entitled "That the Intellectual Beings are not Outside the Intellectual Principle; and On the Nature of the Good" (what has been translated as intellectual refers to something far superior to the human intellect (the human intellect being inferior also to the mind and its processes)). Plotinus considers the various means of knowledge and enlightenment, and relates realization to his concept of God (good).

The least dependable knowledge is sense-knowledge, which depends on an apparent reality (illusion) in which sense-perception cannot discern between the existence of the (superficial) perception state and the (external) material state. The senses deal entirely with images and cannot enter any objective. Reasoned

knowledge, being superior to sense-knowledge, is mere consideration of conceptual reality (and may be enlightened by higher processes or otherwise), and it too is inferior to realized knowledge. Realized knowledge comes from interior processes through participation in the all (rather than externalized experience in the many). The all (on its own level) is a grand intelligence, essentially recollective, which accesses all knowledge. Via the soul, the mind can draw upon that linking essence to know (realize) clearly, without hesitation. True knowledge (confidence) comes therefore from inner (higher) realization which is linked to the communion of all life; realization provides a sense of appropriateness (discretion) and insight far superior to rational processes. The interpretation of that knowledge falls into a lesser class.

Every object possesses consciousness, a conjunction of the soul principle. Principles are conceptual realities which have distinct (entirely subjective) existence. Truth can only be found within, and any projection leading to true comprehension (realization) (rather than presumed comprehension) must necessarily involve an interior rapport. External (objective) observation and evaluation is at best superficial (an image is not the reality). Identification of reality with the image leads to further deception. Consequently, sense-perception involves belief not truth. Esoterically, truth cannot be found externally (though external knowledge recognized for what it is nonetheless useful) (by providing threads which might otherwise not be afforded).

The instrument of realization (not reasoning) possesses self-knowledge; thus higher knowledge is self-accordance. The domain of argument and debate is relatively pointless, for no truth can be determined externally. With (true) self-realization all appropriate knowledge is available. But such realization requires an elevation of consciousness far beyond the personality. The highest realization involves an authentic unity, undistorted by multiplicity or diversity. Enlightenment comes to those who fit themselves without seeking (enlightenment comes only via detachment). Objects irradiated reflect light; seeing via that reflected light is inferior to dealing directly with light itself (i.e., without objective vision). The pursuit of God (the good) (truth) results only in detection of its trace.

God is infinite via pure unity. The outer signs of God are the great logos, themselves dim reflections; the trace of God establishes intermediate reality, as

archetypes (ideal-forms) emerge from the one and as the all is induced from the archetypal existence (and similarly for the all and the many). Transcendence is indefinable; the one is the negation of plurality. The ultimate source is uncontained. Beauty (a relative illusion) is secondary to good (truth). Any good thing (simplex) has become so by communion. God (good) can only be embraced via proper qualification.

† Commentary No. 339

## Development and Service

Individual development is an important part of the spiritual path, particularly in the sense that as the individual evolves so does the group (humanity). But the spiritual student must learn to balance the individual development with sincere service, for the two are ultimately coupled such that individual development (beyond a certain point) is not possible without service and service is not possible without some elements of individual development.

The head-centered approach to the spiritual path is often relatively self-centered and rational (more or less mentally polarized), where the individual is principally concerned with his or her own development. Considerable development is possible without spiritual motive, but such development does not normally include the quality of consciousness, being principally a development of mental abilities. Without spiritual motive such development leads to a potent, integrated personality limited to personality levels of consciousness (i.e., physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels). Without spiritual motive (and spiritual responsiveness) there will not be afforded any of the proper training and balanced development characterized by those truly upon (committed to) the spiritual path. With spiritual motive, the individual development is tempered by concern for others; personal development is transformed into impersonal development and service. And the spiritual student becomes relatively selfless.

The heart-centered approach to the spiritual path is also often a relatively self-centered approach, in the sense that it is often initially motivated by glamour or emotional consideration. The individual may be absorbed by personal development or the individual may be absorbed by the glamour of service. In

either case, the individual must ultimately progress beyond the personal, emotional polarization into the relatively impersonal, heart-centered (but mentally polarized) condition of consciousness, where individual development is valued but secondary to proper service, as the spiritual student becomes relatively selfless. Those who fail to make the needed transition (development) (balance) (to relative maturity) are generally not really committed to the path.

The proper (effective) service motive is not personality-centered. Personality-centered service is simply a self-centered, superficial service that is a reaction to glamour or a rationalized activity. True (proper) service is natural, spontaneous, impersonal, and balanced between the head-centered and heart-centered natures. Proper service is more a condition in consciousness than an externalized activity, a sharing of energy and encouragement by virtue of being spiritually conscious and reasonably aligned with the soul. There may be service activities, nonetheless, but those activities are intended to facilitate the general, impersonal sharing of energy (life, love, light).

But service (disposition) (purposive activity) is no excuse for neglecting individual development (reformation) (refinement), just as development is no excuse for lacking a service motive. A lack of service motive is a lack of quality in consciousness; a lack of individual development is an indication of mundane (personality) absorption (albeit the converse is not necessarily true). The spiritual student should commit the bulk of his discretionary (available) time to service (directly or indirectly) while leaving sufficient time for individual qualification. The spiritual student should be committed to a conscientious daily mediation (including retrospection) (and including energy qualification for humanity). A lack of sufficient time is an illusion engendered by the personality; the mental life of a dedicated spiritual student is quite sufficient for all appropriate purposes.

## Thinking Processes

Coincident with the development of human consciousness and mental development is an expansion and evolution of the various thinking and reasoning processes exercised by human consciousness. In the early stages of human evolution there is no real thinking or reasoning; experience is principally physical and emotional and that experience is assimilated indirectly (more or less unconsciously) (by association) and contributes to the basis of acquired instinctual consciousness. As evolution proceeds a rudimentary mind or mental body is developed and eventually the experience becomes dominated by kama-manas (the desire mind), a relatively developed mind operating under emotional influence. Further along, the mind matures and becomes an integrating force for the entire personality and, ultimately, a means of alignment with the soul.

As the mind develops, so does its physical instrument (the brain) (actually the brain is developed well in advance of mental development, but the mind must learn to use the brain effectively, which takes time), albeit the fully developed mind ultimately evolves beyond any need of any physical instrument. During the stage of development associated with kama-manas, the thinking processes are rather lacking in organization and discipline, being rather fragmentary, disjointed, and easily distracted by sense-impressions; the consciousness is generally absorbed by sense perception rather than thinking or reasoning, but gradually various thinking habits are acquired, developed, and exercised. Those processes begin with relatively short trains of relatively concrete, practical, logical, non-rational, linear, objective thinking, and culminate after considerable mental experience in relatively abstract, impractical (but enlightened), super-logical, non-rational, correlative and subjective thinking. The various characteristics of thinking processes are developed interdependently (more or less simultaneously). The major stumbling blocks to such development are mundane absorption and mental concretion.

One element or characteristic of thinking is the degree of abstraction, which depends almost entirely on the bridge of consciousness between the concrete mind and the abstract mind. The ordinary mode of thinking (as a personality) involves primarily the concrete mind, but as the individual evolves so do

patterns emerge which link the lower, concrete mind with its higher, abstract counterpart (similarly for the emergence of an enlightened blend of subjective (higher) and objective (lower) thinking. Another element or characteristic of thinking is rationality (and associated or analogous logic). Rational thinking depends principally on the concrete mind and provides an important mechanism for the transition from dependence on sense-impression. However, rational processes are deficient in the sense of dependence on assumptions and particularly where carried to an extreme.

Irrational thinking processes are the consequences of impaired mental faculties, or in the case of close association of mind and brain, of a defective brain. Non-rational thinking processes are the culmination of reasonableness (and openmindedness (flexibility)), as rational thinking is elevated onto non-rational (abstract) (subjective) levels, in which case the rational mind becomes the instrument or mechanism of interpretation of higher, non-rational (superior) processes. The logical analogues of rational, non-rational, and irrational processes are logical, super-logical, and illogical, respectively, though rationality and logicity are not necessarily related. The more advanced elements or characteristics of thinking involve the dimensionality of thinking; i.e., matrix or correlative processes rather than linear thinking.

† Commentary No. 341

## Vibration and Consciousness

Spirit, consciousness, and matter are actually a single essence (energy) viewed in distinctly different ways (perspective), with vibration being (in perspective) common to all. The evolution of consciousness is actually a development of the quality of consciousness, and that quality relates (in perspective) to the quality and character of the vibration associated with consciousness. Vibration can be described in terms of several attributes or characteristics, including its frequency, its phase or polarization, its amplitude, and its relative purity.

The frequency of vibration refers to the level or elevation, in temporal terms the number of cycles or oscillations per unit time, but in the frequency domain (which is an altogether different domain than that of time and/or space) there is only a characteristic corresponding to frequency (but lacking time-dependence).

In general (symbolically), the higher frequency refers to a high level of consciousness within any given plane or sub-plane of consciousness (e.g., the physical plane, the astral or emotional plane, the concrete region of the mental plane, etc.). Between each of the various planes or sub-planes is a transition called a phase change or a change in polarity (polarization). Each plane or sub-plane represents (relatively) an order of magnitude change (variation) in frequency, with minor (major) phase changes between sub-planes (planes).

Each phase change represents an inertial barrier, a distinct difference in character from one level (plane) (sub-plane) of consciousness to the next. A vibration (focus) can pass from one level to another only by changing the frequency and phase accordingly to meet the conditions of the subsequent level. Any vibration in equilibrium at some level is considered to be polarized at that level (e.g., a spiritual student may be mentally polarized, meaning the integrated waking-consciousness is stabilized on the mental plane). The amplitude of a vibration refers to its intensity or potency (magnitude), and refers to some extent to the activity of consciousness on some level. Phase changes generally occur at lower amplitudes and are relatively subtle.

Of considerable significance is the purity of vibration. Purity refers to the degree of refinement (smoothness) in vibration (e.g., relatively coarse (less pure) or relatively fine (more pure) at some given level. The purity of vibration is a measure of distortion in the frequency or amplitude components. A truly pure (steady) vibration has no distortion (instability) (perturbations) in either frequency or amplitude. The purity of vibration (and consequently, of consciousness) is a measure of harmony and relatedness (and potential integrity). Vibrations of a given frequency (or harmonic) and purity are attractive, but coarse vibrations are potentially destructive (leading to chaos (unaligned diversity)), while refined vibrations are inherently constructive (leading to integration and alignment) (harmony) (except in the sense that refined vibrations tend to destroy (shatter) (disperse) the lesser, coarse vibrations.

Any given vibration has a characteristic frequency, phase, amplitude, and purity (and other, more subtle characteristics), each of which can vary to some extent. In general, the higher frequency, lower amplitude, more pure vibrations are more easily controlled (disciplined) and integrated into larger (greater) composite

vibrations (or consciousness). Of particular significance to the evolution of consciousness is the purification (in consciousness (vibration) of each of the vehicles (physical body, astral body, concrete mind) and the elevation of the integrated personality consciousness to higher levels.

† Commentary No. 342

## The Fifth Ennead 6

The sixth tractate of Plotinus' Fifth Ennead is entitled "That the Principle transcending Being has no Intellectual Act; What Being has Intellection Primally and What Being has it Secondarily." Intellection of the external (duality) (observer and object) is relatively inferior to self-intellection, where "the subject is its own object." The primally intellectual principle is that of self-intellection, a unity in duality (a unity without duality is non-intellective), while the secondarily intellectual principle is that of observer and object related by some greater unity. The primally intellectual act is a "duality by the fact of intellection and single by the fact that its intellectual object is itself." That which is below the intellectual principle is non-intellective by reason of deficiency; that which is above the intellectual principle is non-intellective by reason of transcendence, being "perfect in its own essence" and thereby needing no intellectual activity.

A unity must underlie every aggregate or manifold, as the unity is required for its source and field (relatedness). The source is a necessary precursor (creator); the field is necessary for sustenance (persistence). Without such unity there could be only isolated elements without aggregation and each would not exist relative to any other. That unity (manifold coherence) must be self-existent, but it is only self-evident to those who consciously respond to that unity (or higher principle within the self-realization) and actually participate in it. Or in other words, for each manifold there must be a precedent unity, a simplex unity independent of identification.

The First (good) is simplex and without need; it possesses nothing and remains non-intellective, while all that exists in a lesser sense possesses participation in some unity in duality (diversity). That participation may be conscious or

unconscious, and the perspective (and consciousness) may vary considerably. Each unity (simplex) exists in its own right and needs no derivation relative to the contained manifold, but each manifold is a dependent existence relative to its underlying unity. All things are therefore interdependent, and independence is at most a relative phenomenon.

The manifold (and its elements) ever seeks the one (its identity), under law (accordance) (harmony), meeting the emanation of the one through the intermediary of consciousness (the second aspect). All lesser things are attracted toward their greater, as each greater is a vortex (projecting forth and simultaneously) drawing the reflections ever inwardly. In the lesser can always be found the likeness (image) (inherent goodness) (potential) of the greater, albeit symbolic and far from similar in form. Realization of unity is the reward of persistence of vision. Duality exists in any thinking being. That duality can only be transcended as thinking processes are overcome in the act of self-realization (being) (which is beyond consciousness).

The higher principles possess as virtue the consummate fullness of being, which contains existence, intellection, and life. That aggregate is an interdependent multiple consisting of ideas (principles) (concepts) and representations. But the idea is more real than the manifestation or representation (i.e., the concept of justice is more real than justice), for the representation is merely a reflection or derivative of the idea (archetype) (i.e., the idea persists far beyond the transience of manifestation). But ideas (principles) (concepts) are not thought-forms; thought-forms belong to the realm of transience; ideas exist beyond concrete mental levels (beyond transience), yet ideas nonetheless exist in consciousness, being inferior to life (the one).

## Development and Limitation

Individual development and its relationship to group (human) progress should be of some (moderate) concern to the spiritual student, although, like most aspects of the spiritual path (and the esoteric philosophy), it should not be a major focus but should be properly balanced with sufficient concern for meeting responsibilities (including service). Though many forms of limitation may seem to deter or inhibit development, in fact there are no real limits to individual development as long as that development remains in harmony with greater purpose (and associated cosmic law).

Apparent limitation relative to individual development includes the limitation of immediate karma, the limitation of personal energy, and the limitation of environment which transmit to the individual (and the group) the karmic consequences of previous activity and expression, i.e., the earned circumstances of personality condition, tendencies, and external influences and opportunities. Those karmic consequences may be viewed in terms of opportunity and limitation but in fact are wholly aimed at providing the very lessons needed (earned) by the individual. In every apparent limitation lies an opportunity for learning and progression, but that progression may be slow where the learning process is more or less unconscious, and less slow where the individual is learning more consciously and actually trying to apply or incorporate the lessons so learned.

Karmic consequences regardless of form are always the responsibility of the individual to face and experience. As the individual progresses so do the karmic consequences (conditions) change accordingly (if not understandably). Those who attempt to embrace their own condition and circumstances with a realistic and reasonable attitude are more likely to learn and progress on to more worthy (more difficult or more subtle) challenges (there is never any real lack of opportunity (!)). This attitude toward karmic consequences (whether or not understood as such) relates to some extent to the degree of personal energy or ego.

Personal energy is probably the greatest single (apparent) limitation to individual progress and as a form of limitation ranges from self-centered distraction, to the case of absorption in personal development (which is no less a form of limitation) (people who are absorbed in their own development (and their own self-interests) tend to develop and sustain actual (psychological and/or physiological) barriers to their own advancement). Personal energy (ego) is inherently self-deceptive and tends to resist spiritual progress due to inertia and the fear of subordination (lack of personal freedom). Many are those who make excuses for their own lack of attention to individual cultivation, but such excuses generally indicate some form of (personal) self-indulgence rather than responsiveness to duty (albeit the majority of humanity are not expected to evolve consciously).

Though personal energy may be the greatest apparent (and self-imposed) limitation, the real limitation of individual development is the limitation of qualification, which implies that there are intended (general) standards for individual development in terms of character and quality of consciousness, balance (service) and direction. The path ultimately involves all of life, subject to the specific (subjective) purposes of the greater life (logos), and therefore all individual development must ultimately be integrated to serve that higher purpose. This means that though considerable freedom exists for individual development, that freedom must be tempered by the unity of all life.

† Commentary No. 344

## Discrete Thinking

Some of the challenges associated with mental development, self-mastery, and the expansion of consciousness involve habits in thinking and the difficulties of transition from narrow-mindedness to broadmindedness. When the individual begins to develop the mind, the individual tends to think in an extremely concrete fashion, where phenomena are perceived and interpreted narrowly according to limited experience and an oversimplified sense of values. That sense of values generally involves pairs of opposites (e.g., black and white) in an either/or mentality (accepting either one (extreme value) or the other).

This either/or condition can be called binary thinking, where the possible range of values for any given character, quality, etc. is limited to two. Interpreted in a binary or dualistic fashion, philosophy is reduced to a series of arguments (right or wrong, black or white, true or false) and a concrete form of logic in which the (supposed) proof of one premise eliminates the opposite. This way of thinking constitutes narrow-mindedness that actually inhibits mental development in a number of ways. There is, however, some merit to passing through a stage corresponding to binary thinking, for it does exercise the mind (concretely) and helps it to develop a (primitive) sense of discrimination.

Binary thinking is actually an extreme subset of a more general concept, discrete thinking. Discrete thinking is still rather concrete-minded but allows some range of values (e.g., black, white, and various discrete shades of grey rather than exclusively and distinctly black and white). Some (few) phenomena can be adequately described in binary terms, but many more can be (more) reasonably described in multi-valued discrete terms. Discrete thinking is important because it provides a transition from the fallacy of dualism and expands the mental processes somewhat. But even in discrete thinking (*vis-à-vis* binary thinking) there are potential problems of close-mindedness and attachment. The (lower) (concrete) mind of the personality easily forms attachments to personal values and easily takes exception to the contrasting values and a continual testing of one's own values (and a willingness to change them on the basis of experience).

The spiritual student is encouraged not to be attached to personal values (which implies ego and self-centeredness), but rather to be flexible and open-minded with regard to individual values, tolerant of other ways of thinking, and increasingly subjective (inclusive) (broadminded) in thinking and realization. Discrete phenomena and discrete thinking have their place and serve many useful (intermediate) purposes in mental development (experience), but the spiritual student must ultimately embrace the higher concepts of balance and relativity in all matters, continuum values rather than discrete values, and integral perspectives rather than differential perspectives.

Discrete thinking should lead to continuum thinking where a given quality or characteristic may involve a continuous spectrum of values, each relative to every other. But the evolution (transition) from binary thinking through discrete

thinking to continuum thinking (and beyond) is not an easy one, for all progress is the result of effort (harmony), and the concrete mental and emotional attachments and habits of the lesser self (personality) are inherently difficult to overcome (due to the inertial resistance of matter). Even after considerable mental development, the mind may remain relatively narrow in its habits and relatively potent. But once the reality of the soul is accepted by the mind, the mental attachments and resistance can be fully overcome as the mind becomes an instrument of cooperation and subordination to higher processes.

† Commentary No. 345

## Quality and Consciousness

The quality of consciousness refers to its essential character or nature. In a higher sense, consciousness is quality, but in the more practical sense, quality refers to the relative purity, elevation, character, and type of consciousness. The purity of consciousness refers to the refinement or smoothness of vibration. The elevation refers to the level or position within a plane of consciousness, or for a composite (multi-planar) consciousness, to the highest level of the integrating force. The character of consciousness is a function of its relationships to the seven rays (which are seven parallel (equal but distinctly different) qualities of energy (and consciousness)). The type of consciousness refers to the type or character of the life aspect (e.g., in the case of the human being, to the soul, the personality, and the monad)).

Though the particular character of consciousness can be distinguished within the seven ray qualities (or combinations thereof) and though the particular types of consciousness can be distinguished one from another, taken together (life aspect and particular qualification) the various qualifications become interrelated. Another factor is the spectrum of seven planes of consciousness which are each also qualified distinctly by the seven rays (as are the various cyclic factors). The character and type of consciousness each involve distinctions in quality).

Of more practical significance are the relative purity and elevation in consciousness. Pure (refined) consciousness is more harmonious (stable) and is

much more easily integrated and qualified than coarse consciousness. Relatively coarse consciousness (i.e., a coarse vibrational component of consciousness) is more reactive (unstable) and, being reactive, is relatively vulnerable to external forces. Since coarse vibrations are only partially damped, an external force can usually induce a relatively large magnitude (intensity) reaction, which is relatively difficult to moderate. The reactive personality, for example, is easily excitable by external experience (astrological influence) (personal energy), while the integrated personality, being much less reactive, is more intelligently responsive to experience and self-intention. The highly qualified, integrated, and aligned personality is essentially non-reactive and highly responsive to inner direction (via the quality of the soul).

In evolutionary terms, as the overall (composite) consciousness (of some particular life-form) is increased so is the relative purity of the composite aspects also increased. Of the two aspects (purity and elevation), purity is more essential (fundamental), for an elevated consciousness without comparably sufficient refinement is relatively ineffective (transient). A relatively unevolved personality for example, may function (simultaneously) on physical, emotional, and mental levels, but since the consciousness is relatively coarse, the senses and thinking will be distorted by the personal (coarse) energy, while a relatively more evolved personality, being integrated and more refined in consciousness, may function on the same levels but with greater clarity or perception and thinking (i.e., less distorted by personal energy).

Thus greater quality of consciousness refers principally to greater refinement, integration, and elevation in consciousness, while distinctions in consciousness refer principally to the character or qualification in consciousness. The relatively primitive consciousness is largely (coarsely) qualified by one (or two) of the seven rays, while the more progressed consciousness may be effectively qualified by a larger number (or all) of the seven rays, in an integrated (harmoniously interdependent) (correlated) fashion.

## The Fifth Ennead 7

The seventh tractate of the Fifth Ennead is entitled "Is there an Ideal Archetype of Particular Beings?" Plotinus considers the relationships between archetypes and particular beings (i.e., individual existence or manifestation). In the case of humanity, for example, there are two basic archetypes on the highest level of significance for the human lifewave (the highest level for which a distinct pattern or thread can exist relating a greater life to humanity (beyond which humanity ceases to exist as a potentially distinct lifewave)): one primary archetype for humanity as a collective evolutionary organism and another primary archetype for the generic human being.

What is conceptually true for the generic human being and its particulars is also, analogously, true for the archetypal lifewave and its collective manifestation. In the case of individual existence, the individual archetype on whatever level is derived from the primary in several ways. The (generic) human being is a threefold archetype, with a distinctive (secondary) generic archetype for each of the three levels (monad, soul, and personality). The generic monadic archetype exists on a level just beyond the monadic plane, and that archetype is differentiated into seven types of energy qualification. From the monadic archetype of a particular qualification are derived the individual archetypes which correspond to the manifested (individual) (particular) monads.

Within each (manifested or individually existent) monad exists an archetype for the individual soul, relating both to the monad (and its archetype) and to the archetype of the generic soul for a particular (one of seven) energy qualification. The individual is then derived from its archetype under the subjective qualification of the monad. Similarly, the personality is created by the soul from a particular personality matrix or archetype of a generic nature, but qualified in particular by one of the seven rays and qualified in particular by the soul itself (based on prior experience and the intentions of the soul for personality experience). All is subject to individual and group karma, as well as the qualifications and guidelines for the human lifewave.

Within each major root-race, there are archetypal qualities and characteristics that are reflected in a large but finite number of personality matrices (patterns) from which a soul may choose (albeit subjectively) (within karmic and practical bounds) to provide the basis (basic personality pattern) of incarnation. The more experienced souls have relatively more freedom (and ability) to modify the basic pattern according to their particular (individual) experience and intentions, but the basic pattern can be recognized nonetheless. In essence, there are far fewer personality patterns (each with distinctive mental, emotional, and physical attributes (and racial implications)) than there are individual personalities in incarnation. But each is nonetheless individually qualified, and therefore can be found both similarities and differences in particulars from one to another.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of individual differences on the objective levels of manifestation, an archetypal continuity (commonality) of basic quality and character and inherent relatedness makes each and every incarnated human being basically the same (equal but not identical). The archetype contains all of the basic quality and character, but the manifested personality only resembles that more basic existence, for the circumstances (environment) and experience of the personality are conditioning factors. The integrated (assimilated) experience and development of the personality is nonetheless reflected in the continuing qualification of the archetypal personality pattern.

† Commentary No. 347

## Linear Thinking

The intermediate stages of human (mental) evolution involve one-dimensional (linear) (analytical) thinking, where reasoning and logic are important ingredients (and where physical and emotional (personal) distractions are not prevalent), and where unbroken (linear) chains of thought lead to relative (limited) and conscious understanding. Linear thinking is intermediate between kama-manas (the desire mind) (emotionally-biased thinking) and the cooperation of the abstract (subjective) mind with the concrete (objective) mind.

Though most of humanity are enchanted by kama-manas, the vast majority of those who are not so enchanted are able to think in a linear fashion, which is the path of least resistance for the ordinary (semi-trained) concrete mind. Linear thinking involves focusing the mind (the waking-consciousness) upon a single object (concept) (problem) (question) and proceeding more or less deliberately upon a relatively logical, rational (objective), straightforward path (or analysis). For a more complex problem, the problem would be separated into component problems or elements, and each component would be analyzed in turn, with components being correlated one with another (in a linear, step-by-step fashion). Linear thinking (and linear analysis) may involve relatively short, simple trains of thought, or relatively long, complicated (yet essentially linear) trains of thought, with or without decision points.

Decision points involve the conjunction of two or more apparently diverging chains. A decision may involve a conclusion, and/or it may involve a choice of which trains to follow (or abandon) (or defer until a former train is reasonably exhausted (completed)). Ordinary speech (listening) (writing) (reading) involves simple, linear trains of thought, where the speaker (listener) (writer) (reader) flows naturally from one point to another without impediment or distraction in a smooth, easy-to-follow fashion (for the concrete mind), where decision points are recognizable within the form or organization of the speech (conversation) (writing). Linear thinking processes externalized (liner communication, interactive or otherwise) (via speech or writing), if well-organized and coherent, involve relatively simple sentence structure and conventional word order. Through years (and lifetimes) of concrete mental experience and development, the mind grows quite accustomed to linear processes.

Considerable are the advantages of (ordinary) linear thinking over kama-manas, yet even so, there are a number of problems or limitations. Logical (deductive and/or inductive) and rational analysis (or communication) is limited by language, perception, understanding (consciousness), and (significantly) by assumption (or presumption). Making assumptions is often necessary to rational thinking or analysis where knowledge is limited. But assumptions complicate the thinking process (particularly where assumptions are confused with facts), even though they may allow conclusions to be drawn (correctly or otherwise). The real limitations of linear thinking are the limitations of the concrete mind and its associated personality (habits, bias, perception,

experience, knowledge, etc.). The individual is particularly limited by the (ordinary) field of human (concrete) knowledge and the extent of mental ability (training) and experience.

Linear thinking is enhanced by an overall qualification of reasonableness (balance) (avoidance of extremes (narrowness) in thinking and incorporation of continuum thinking (values). On the other hand, broadmindedness (in moderation) is helpful to linear thinking (analysis) (understanding), but broadmindedness (openmindedness) leads to more correlative and inclusive thinking, as a transition between linear thinking and the more subjective, matrix thinking.

† Commentary No. 348

## Matrix Thinking

The relatively advanced stages of human (mental) evolution involve multidimensional (matrix) thinking processes, where linear thinking is gradually replaced by thinking along several (or more) correlated threads of consciousness (linear thinking remains available as a subset of available processes). Matrix thinking involves following two or more correlated (interactive) threads of consciousness (which may or may not be thought-forms) simultaneously, or in the greater case, of intuitively embracing the entire substance (matrix of correlated energy).

Linear thinking and linear analysis (as a thinking process) are primarily the domain or function of the unaligned concrete mind. As that concrete mind is brought into association with the more subjective, abstract mind (of the soul), more and more of the knowledge and wisdom (and correlative mental capacity) of the soul (its quality and character and relationship to the field of knowledge) is brought to bear on the responsive lower mind. Matrix thinking and matrix analysis (as a thinking process) are thus the domain of the objective, concrete mind working in harmony with the subjective, abstract mind (and therefore require (evoke) considerable inner awareness).

Where linear thinking involves thought-forms and linear chains of related thought-forms, matrix thinking is much more inclusive (multidimensional)

(highly symbolic) and unconstrained by attachment (focus); or in other words, in matrix thinking (analysis) the focus of the mind is split into two simultaneous modes: one aspect holds the object or subject in focus (at a point of tension, without attachment), while the other aspect is a greatly expanded focus that embraces the field of knowledge, correlating that field with the principal focus (subject), thus bringing considerable insight and understanding (which is normally beyond the ability of the unaligned personality). Thus matrix thinking is multidimensional and inherently (naturally) correlative. Relationships can be easily and instantly realized that would be impossible or extremely difficult and/or time-consuming to achieve via ordinary, linear processes.

Matrix (subjective) analysis is the soul-centered source of intuitive genius and enlightenment, available in isolated cases of partial alignment of mind and soul, and to the trained and qualified disciple as a normal course of spiritual development. While linear thinking processes are easy for the concrete mind to follow, non-linear matrix processes are difficult for the concrete mind without training and without considerable (alignment) of mind and soul. Matrix (multi-path) thinking processes manifested in writing often involve symbolic logic, correlative (multidimensional) word structure, and relatively complicated sentence structure (and/or word order) (to allow the mind to correlate what might otherwise be missed). To the trained, aligned mind, correlative writing is as easy and natural to follow as linear processes are for the superficial (unaligned) mind. The problems of habits in thinking, however, makes the transition from linear thinking to correlative thinking a rather difficult one.

Some opportunities exist in the orthodox educational system for correlative mental training, but once the concrete mental habits have set, the transition to subjective, correlative thinking is virtually impossible. As a training tool, correlative (multidimensional) writing usually requires the relatively untrained mind (trained only in linear patterns) to proceed slowly and deliberately, impeding prevalent habits of superficial, linear thinking, allowing the mind to adjust to unfamiliar patterns. In time, the mind adapts to the more general form of thinking and this encourages a closer association of mind and soul.

## Ends and Means

Much within the realm of human endeavor is related to ends (objectives) (goals) and the means of their accomplishment. The evolutionary urge manifests itself on virtually every level or aspect of human experience, stimulating the human being (and collectively, humanity) to activity (expression) and progress. Even personal ends serve a purpose (individual experience), though a greater purpose is served where goals are less personal and where the means are properly chosen (and where the consequences are properly considered).

One of the interesting (philosophical) problems of ends and means is that of justification. Some (many) would suggest that the end justifies the means, that if the end is indeed a worthy (significant) goal, then the means are easily justified. Some would even suggest that the means are not in themselves particularly significant. However, the end and the means of accomplishment are very much interrelated (by energy and consciousness) (by karma). The premise of justification largely ignores the inherent relatedness of all things and tends to exaggerate the relative importance of the goal, depending on superficial reasoning. But where a more inclusive perspective is utilized, proper consideration is given to the end, the means, and the effects incurred (potentially) by the end, the means, and their interdependence.

The truly worthy goals are the more general, more inclusive objective, and the relatively less worthy goals are the more personal, more specific objectives. Spiritual students are thus more concerned with contributing toward the general (natural, evolutionary) goals of humanity (and the life/consciousness aspects), without presuming any particular objective to be particularly important. Nonetheless, particular (worthy) objectives do contribute to the accomplishment of the overall objectives). But the overall objectives (in the higher, esoteric sense) are recessive (approachable but not really attainable). Thus the concern of the spiritual student is the discernment of relative, worthy goals and the discernment of appropriate means. The intermediate goals are indeed attainable, while the greater goals provide the horizon and perspective to which the lesser goals and means are related.

Provided a particular means does indeed support a worthy objective, then consideration should be given to the merit of the means and their ethical and causal implications. As the student progresses along the evolutionary path, the means become relatively and increasingly more important relative to the intended goal. This is due, in part, to the increasing mental and spiritual potency of the individual and the concomitant potency of the effects. The ways and means of accomplishment (the motives and ethics of the causal chain) thus deserve consideration beyond the superficial, for much of the implication of activity is subtle (less obvious) (superphysical), and the appropriateness and the ethics of the means may be the proper deciding factor for success (i.e., means are also causes). If suitable (worthy) means cannot be found, it may indicate insufficient consciousness (ability) (understanding) or an inappropriate objective. Even if a suitable means can be realized, the means do not necessarily justify the end any more than the end can (reasonably) justify the means. It seems far better to consider the end and the means as a single focus.

The general goals of human evolution and the spiritual path (in its broader sense, the means of accomplishment) are so interrelated that it is hardly possible to disassociate them. In a sense, the spiritual path becomes an end in itself, as the participants and contributors become the path. But in this case, at least, the means offer considerable merit to the quality of accomplishment.

† Commentary No. 350

## The Fifth Ennead 8

The eighth tractate of Plotinus' Fifth Ennead is entitled "On the Intellectual Beauty." Considered are the substance of beauty and its ultimate conclusion in divine vision (union). Beauty (the idea) (ideal) is conceived or realized (potentially) on a far higher level than it is manifested through some work. In transference of the idea to material form the beauty is necessarily lessened relative to the integral (more complete) beauty of the concept.

The sense of beauty depends upon the quality of consciousness and the level upon which beauty can be perceived (and the ability of the individual to properly translate). Beyond the human sense of beauty, and beyond human creative

expression, is the divine beauty associated with natural, creative manifestation. There is the natural beauty of works produced by nature, but behind each is the creative thought-form; beyond even that truth (source). The human being in general is “undisciplined in discernment of the inward, knowing nothing of it, running after the outer, never understanding that it is the inner which stirs us.” So easily is the human personality-focus deceived by appearance.

The relationship of beauty in art (the idea) to beauty in material form closely parallels that of reality (realm of ideas (causes)) and illusion (realm of outer manifestation (effects)). Beauty within the form is more significant than the beauty of form. The beauty of wisdom (spiritual quality) is related to the beauty of the soul in its character and quality, the beauty of divine mind and its inclusive focus, and the beauty of the underlying unity of all life (the beauty of divine being, where each is all and the being of each is mirrored in every other). On whatever level, beauty (repose) (poise) (harmony) relates to that grand wisdom (totality) of being. All lesser forms of existence utilize derived wisdom, dimmed by translation and limitation. An example of manifested beauty (wisdom) is the representation (qualification) of philosophical concepts by symbols rather than conventional language (and its attendant limitations). Wisdom is a matter of realization rather than reasoning; thus properly qualified (more abstract) symbols more properly convey the (higher) philosophical content. “Each manifestation of knowledge and wisdom is a distinct image, an object in itself, an intermediate unity, not an aggregate of discursive reasoning.” From wisdom can come the explanation of philosophical content, a necessarily inferior discourse derived from the realization of wisdom, but potentially helpful.

The manifested universe exists as an effect of higher being, not thought out or created in a deliberate, detailed manner, but the inevitable result of the quality and subjective intention of that being. By sending forth qualified energies (under natural law), a being creates as a consequence of an implied causal chain, where the lesser, most removed levels of manifestation are the incidental details (statistical noise) of which higher and intermediate processes (consciousness and being) are the more significant (understanding this provides proper perspective on “events” in the lower worlds).

The spiritual (mental and intuitional) vision is (potentially) much superior to physical vision or astral impression, being (potentially) closer to creative

realization. The potency of spiritual vision lies in its vast inclusiveness. The reality of the great, inclusive vision is the aspect of inner, subjective, group vision on the broadest practicable scale. The process of realization of beauty (wisdom) leads through inclusive vision to the union of the individual with God. The human being possesses (true) beauty to the extent that he (she) remains true to the real (higher) (God) nature (being) within.

† Commentary No. 351

## Progress in Consciousness 1

Human evolution is essentially the evolution of human consciousness. Progress in consciousness is achieved as the consciousness is improved in quality and as the focus of consciousness is expanded (retaining the dynamic capability of concentration). Actually, human evolution (in consciousness) is more properly the expansion in quality (wisdom) of the soul, but for all practical purposes (for most of humanity) that expansion in soul consciousness is subjectively related by assimilation to the experience and development in consciousness (quality) of the personality.

Evolution in consciousness generally proceeds within a plane of consciousness, as the purity (refinement) and elevation (level) (frequency) of consciousness is improved (increased). Thus evolution (simplified) is two-dimensional in the sense that experience and development tend to improve these two basic factors until the consciousness is sufficiently qualified to undergo a phase change to the next higher sub-plane, or from the physical (emotional) (mental) plane to the emotional (mental) (intuition) plane (respectively). In human development (evolution in consciousness), improvement in consciousness is relatively multi-phasic (multidimensional), as experience leads to improved qualification simultaneously on several levels (i.e., the relative quality of consciousness of the physical body, astral body, and mind).

In essence, each aspect of the human form has intrinsic consciousness (the consciousness of the matter itself, on its own level), imposed consciousness (the consciousness induced in form by the (relatively) higher consciousness), and composite consciousness (the personality) (which may or may not be integrated)

(and if integrated, may or may not be aligned with the next higher stage in consciousness (the soul)). Thus human evolution is itself a synthesis wherein several aspects are evolving more or less interdependently. For the relatively unevolved human being, those aspects are relatively independent (not integrated or well-coupled). In the case of the relatively evolved human being, the aspects of the imposed and composite consciousness are much more obviously interdependent (cooperative) (responsive to higher consciousness).

The intrinsic consciousness includes that of physical, emotional (astral), and (concrete) mental matter (and beyond, yet the substance of matter beyond the concrete mental region is not properly considered matter). The imposed consciousness refers to that of the personality upon the several aspects of the form (matter) (body), that of the soul upon the composite personality (and to the extent that it is integrated and responsive), and that of the monad upon the soul. The personality actually consists of three aspects of induced, composite consciousness (the personality is itself composite): the physical form (body) (and its etheric double), the astral body (aura), and the concrete mind.

Significant to the development (progress) (evolution) of human consciousness are the various phase changes (and step changes) which occur as a result of positive (assimilated and responsive) or negative experience. Phase changes are crises in consciousness where the focus of consciousness is actually transferred from one plane (or sub-plane) to the next. Phase changes occur only when the personality is sufficiently qualified (for a positive phase change) (i.e., where the qualified matter within the several vehicles is sufficiently refined and where the focus of consciousness can be raised to the next higher level). During preliminary development these changes occur unconsciously and without realization in terms of frequency, phase, purity, etc.; during the later changes they occur more consciously and result from more deliberate activity (effort).

## Progress in Consciousness 2

During the early and intermediate stages of human development, the waking-consciousness (focus of the mind) (kama-manas) is largely preoccupied with physical and emotional matters, with relatively little awareness beyond the coarse, self-centered perspective, being largely reactive to external forces; while during the later stages, the lower vehicles (physical body, emotional body, and concrete mind) are properly integrated (stabilized) (less reactive) and responsive to a mentally-polarized waking-consciousness (manas) (eventually becoming highly responsive to the quality and character of the soul).

The intrinsic consciousness of each vehicle is the consciousness induced within the matter itself by its own evolutionary (elemental) life. If that consciousness is coarse, it cannot be easily maintained in composite form (there will be a large tendency toward disintegration). This is true for the mind on its level as well as the astral body and the physical (etheric) body. Thus for a relatively coarse personality, considerable (unconscious) effort is required to hold the personality together, while for a more refined (and integrated) personality, less energy is required for composition (maintenance) and more energy can be devoted to conscious evolutionary experience and expression. It is largely the consciousness imposed by the personality aspect upon the intrinsic consciousness of the three vehicles that holds them together, loosely (more or less independently) or integrated (interdependently with a single, central personality consciousness) as the case may be.

The composite consciousness of the personality may be a loose collection of the three aspects of personality, each reactive and independent (and relatively fragmented), in the case of the relatively unevolved (average) person (or one who is having difficulty overcoming the lower vehicles). Or the composite consciousness may be well-coordinated (cooperative) (responsive) (non-reactive) (well-disciplined), where each of the three aspects are integrated by the single coherent (non-fragmented) personality (or somewhere between). To achieve the intended condition (a fully integrated personality wholly responsive to the properly qualified soul), the polarization of individual consciousness must be raised to abstract mental (contemplative) and intuitional levels.

Each overall personality consciousness is polarized at some level (at some particular plane and sub-plane of the physical, emotional, or mental planes). As the individual progresses, that polarization is gradually raised (from physical to emotional to mental levels). The personality that is not properly refined and integrated, however, cannot be raised to the higher sub-planes (in terms of overall consciousness). The waking-consciousness (focus) of such a personality will move (fluctuate) quickly and frequently from one center of consciousness (on some level) to another, according to external influence and changing experience. Such a waking-consciousness is enslaved by the demands of the various elements of the three vehicles. But the progressed (cultivated) (refined) (integrated) personality (which can be raised to the higher sub-planes) will exhibit a stable (poised) (non-reactive) waking-consciousness, relatively invulnerable (responsive but not reactive) to external forces (internal forces being nicely qualified), which can flow from level to level according to higher (mental) direction (at will or according to suitable need).

The mind of such a personality is the progressed product of considerable and sustained (long-term) effort (experience and training) (evolution), and is thereby able to qualify the various aspects of the personality intelligently (at will) (constructively) for enhanced experience and expression.

† Commentary No. 353

## Awareness

Awareness is the state (condition) (quality) of having knowledge, perception, and/or realization, particularly in the sense of alertness (conscious and/or unconscious vigilance in observation), recognition, and qualified (realistic) inference from direct and indirect experience. Awareness is an aspect of consciousness and, though qualified by consciousness, the extent (character) of awareness does not necessarily correlate directly with the character or quality of consciousness. Awareness as an aspect of consciousness must be developed and qualified in addition to the development and qualification of the overall consciousness; one does not necessarily follow from the other.

Awareness may be conscious and/or unconscious, objective and/or subjective, on any or all levels of associated consciousness. Each aspect or element of consciousness has an associated extent (character) (quality) of awareness. While awareness depends to some (indirect) extent on quality of consciousness, it also depends on mental, emotional, and physical training and abilities. Awareness on some level (and some aspect) may be consciously (deliberately) programmed (cultivated) or it may be programmed unconsciously as a consequence of conscious or unconscious experience. Awareness needs to be intelligently cultivated, properly qualified, and properly integrated and aligned with the higher focus of consciousness.

Ordinary human awareness is a combination of instinctive (subconscious) awareness, unconscious outer (objective) (external) awareness (the totality of sense-impressions and their unconscious evaluation), and conscious (objective) (external) awareness. This ordinary awareness is largely a function of (and related to the quality of) the concrete mind, the aura, and the associated activities in (lower) consciousness, and is limited (distorted) by the personality (personal energy) (concrete-mindedness). Awareness (perception) is largely determined by intention and responsiveness. Most of humanity are absorbed in their own (mundane) consciousness and sense things only to the extent of their own habits in thinking and awareness. Relatively few are truly aware of their own external environment, let alone their own condition in consciousness. Most are aware only of what they have (unconsciously) trained themselves to be aware of, and therefore miss a great deal of potentially meaningful observation (perception) (knowledge) (experience).

The spiritual student is encouraged to develop this aspect of consciousness (awareness) through self-discipline and conscious application, learning to be an effective observer on all levels (higher and lower, inner and outer, conscious and unconscious) and to the extent of consciousness and its quality. The spiritual student should cultivate and qualify both a general, broad awareness (integrating numerous aspects) and the ability of focused awareness, that should enable the student to be aware of the internal and external environments, of activities, energies, forces, etc., and their implications (as a consequence of experienced awareness). This implies an increasing, qualified (stable) sensitivity and a constructive (effective) expansion in consciousness.

While consciousness is a function of vibration (quality), extent (focus), and activity (interaction), (enhanced) awareness (particularly in being aware of conditions in consciousness) is a function of the quality (and field) of consciousness, the will aspect, and the overall integration (alignment) (and degree of impersonality) of the personality. As the student properly cultivates consciousness (and awareness), the student develops an occult awareness, being able to intelligently project the focus of consciousness at will.

† Commentary No. 354

## The Fifth Ennead 9

The ninth tractate of the Fifth Ennead is entitled "The Intellectual Principle, the Ideas, and the Authentic Existence." The typical incarnated human being lives from birth mostly according to the senses rather than the mind. The individual is generally absorbed by material values and governed largely by the (personal) senses. But those who having prepared themselves have embraced (a higher) reality, are no longer bound by material, emotional, or personal values. The ascension is gradual; it begins as the student reaches a balance between the personal life and the impersonal; the power (encouragement) for ascension (progress) comes from the indwelling soul. The beauty (wisdom) of the evolving human being is related (proportionally) to the quality of mind and the clarity of the bridge between the mind and the soul.

The intellect is associated with the physical and etheric brain, indirectly related to the mind, while the intellectual principle is the principle of mind (not intellect) from which are loosely (partially) derived the human mental abilities and activities. Principles are superior to their manifestation or application, yet it is through such application that the student can usually participate in the principle. With a more abstract, contemplative ability, the mystic (occultist) can embrace the various principles more directly.

The soul is specific relative to the soul principle. It is the principle that (indirectly) induces actualization, as intermediate forces link the principle and its effective realm. First principles are self-complete and actual. All that is incomplete is subsequent to first principles, as even the soul on its level is

incomplete. The intellectual principle is actual, eternal intelligence. Intellection (mentation) is therefore a derived activity or application. The object is inseparable from its intellection (the objective world is a case of entrained illusion in which objects are apparently distinguished in a separative fashion, while in truth all that is objective takes place within consciousness, and not without, as it may appear). Separate (distinctly differentiated) powers and principles are revealed by application and perspective, yet on their own level remain a single, inclusive aspect.

The reasoning soul is the mind (the soul is beyond reasoning), concerned with objects (ideas), knowledge, etc. The knowledge embraced by the concrete (lower) (objective) mind (of the personality) is necessarily superficial. Authentic knowledge requires the abstraction of the soul and the participation of the soul in the being thus represented. "Intellection is an act upon the inner content," yet on a lower, human level, intellection appears to deal with external content. The essence of creative impulse (outgoing divine idea) lies within this concept of inner content, as the existence of a principle and a universe (field of manifestation) capable of sustaining (receiving) that principle will inevitably (spontaneously) (instantaneously) (gradually) draw into manifestation the various associated creative impulses (waves).

Human achievement (creativity) (accomplishment) in the arts and sciences (and philosophy) is largely a matter of response to impression, higher (spiritual), intermediate (intellective), or lower (sense-based) as the case may be. The fallacy of ego is self-evident to one of higher impression. Ordinary (generic) man tends to deal with particulars and specifics, while the more contemplative, being closer to the source of higher impression, tends to deal with universals and more abstract, impersonal, subjective quality (principles). The ordinary world of sense impressions is filled with (internal) (apparently external) images far removed from the archetypes of authentic existence.

## Problems and Humanity

As a collective organism, humanity is an evolutionary unit (lifewave) within this planetary (evolutionary) scheme. Evolution proceeds as a consequence of experience and expression, as the individuals and groups within humanity evolve, thereby contributing to the progress of the collective organism. Evolutionary experience in the form of crises, problems, challenges, etc. generally produces more substantial progress than casual experience (in the absence of innovation and self-generated motivation). Because of the interrelatedness of consciousness, experience in consciousness, and evolution, and because of the interrelatedness of individuals and groups within humanity, the various crises, problems, and challenges that individuals and groups experience are actually a part of a greater manifestation, experience, and progress.

Individual and group experience is determined by karmic forces inextricably related to greater evolutionary intention. Many of the crises (problems) (challenges) are engendered within humanity (the collective consciousness) as a consequence of earlier activity and are intended on some higher, collective level (albeit quite subjective and generalized). All crises (problems) are learning opportunities. As the generalized problems (conditioned energies) are sent forth (demanded by conditions in human consciousness), they are manifested in various ways, sometimes through isolated (responsive) individuals, sometimes through isolated groups, sometimes through large related segments of humanity.

Some problems may appear grave and widespread, but more often problems are manifested in subtle ways, relating more to human psychology and consciousness than to more obvious values and experience. The various personality problems (self-centeredness, concrete-mindedness, lack of integration) are meaningful both in terms of the individual concerned and in terms of group consciousness and experience. As the individual addresses his or her own problems, the individual is also contributing to the resolution of collective correspondence (the same problem in collective consciousness). Even

such problems as specific diseases are largely collective as well as individual in nature.

As an individual achieves understanding on some level (conscious or otherwise), so is the generalized (collective) understanding also improved (albeit nominally). But where that understanding is shared by some larger portion of humanity (again, more subjectively, through consciousness), so is the impact or influence on human (collective) consciousness the more considerable. This is true on several levels, for humanity as a whole, and for groups of pioneering consciousness within humanity who, by virtue of their presence (consciousness, understanding, ideas, character), influence the collective consciousness. Even though the collective consciousness is largely lacking in awareness, it responds in proper measure to all of the contributed ideas or understanding in individual or group consciousness. Where the pioneering consciousness is strong (stable), that consciousness provides a considerable (subtle) leadership (path) for humanity as a whole.

The problems of humanity are many and varied, each with its message for all who can respond to its evolutionary intention. The appearance may be misleading in purely objective terms, but with a subjective appreciation for the karmic forces involved, the appearance is easily resolved. As humanity evolves further, the various opportunities of crises and problems will be elevated from the material and emotional domains to recognizable challenges in consciousness, to be faced consciously and intelligently, cooperatively and collectively, with intrinsic (group) self-motivation replacing personal resistance.

† Commentary No. 356

## Goodwill

Ordinary goodwill, without ulterior motive and without expectation, is one of the most practical and effective means of evolutionary encouragement (service) available. Goodwill is a practical application of love energy, related to understanding and to brotherhood (the inherent unity of humanity). It draws upon the nature of good within the personality (which in turn draws upon the more subjective (general) nature of good (wisdom) (love) within the soul) (which

is to draw upon the nature of good within the higher, spiritual qualification of humanity), as the individual shares that nature or character (without depletion). Thus goodwill is an application (sharing) of kind feelings and benevolence, leading to improved (right) human relations and group progress.

Goodwill is the natural result (application) of the inner understanding of the intrinsic unity of humankind, and on a broader level, of all life. That understanding may be conscious or unconscious, and the application (goodwill) may be transient (occasional) or a continual predisposition based upon proper temperament (good energy). Transient or personal (selective) goodwill is nonetheless an indication of beginning (progress), while goodwill as a disposition is an indication of (spiritual) health that is itself a consequence of progress (experience) (understanding). Being a positive, qualified energy, goodwill tends to grow and expand by manifestation. Where goodwill is generalized (as a disposition and/or directed toward all of humanity rather than some portion) then its potency for good is enhanced.

One of the reasons for the potency of goodwill lies in the inherent human nature (which is good, albeit often masked by the complexities of personality) and the natural responsiveness of an individual to goodwill. Goodwill actually engenders responsiveness (and cooperation) and calls upon the good nature (within) that is potentially common to all. The manifestation (externalization) of goodwill is the sharing of positive (inherently non-manipulative) energy (light) (love) on more objective levels, a non-compelling encouragement for good. Goodwill (right disposition) fosters harmony and peace (ultimately reflected in a fully integrated humanity). Thus goodwill leads to constructive progress (non-threatening encouragement) on every practical level (individual and group, particularly for humanity as a whole).

The problem of goodwill lies not in the responsiveness of the human being, but rather in the natural resistance of the personality to sustained progressive energy. Though goodwill is a positive energy, easily shared, and one that is easily sustained in the case of one with understanding, for those who lack such understanding (temperament) goodwill is sub-critical (transient). Goodwill certainly encourages further sharing (with considerably more potent effect), but there really needs to be engendered the understanding that will permit continued responsiveness and the beginning of self-generated goodwill (in

addition to that which is externally induced). Self-generated goodwill is of course only another form of that greater energy, as it flows from within, but it is more significant because such an (self-generated) individual becomes an active participant.

The will-to-good is in a sense a higher correspondence to goodwill, a more general form but nonetheless practical, effective, and worthy of application. Where goodwill is a natural energy for the personality, the will-to-good is a natural energy for the soul, and is naturally reflected in the responsive personality. Like goodwill, the will-to-good is rooted in the evolutionary intention of the higher group organism (humanity as a subjective lifewave), and the recognition that one life lives (flows) through all of humanity.

† Commentary No. 357

## Rapport

Rapport is defined as a relation marked by harmony, conformity, mutual accord, and affinity. Rapport can be perceived in many ways, according to level of consciousness, extent, depth, etc. On the personality level, a simple (superficial) rapport exists where two or more personalities have some common thread or relationship which results in mutual understanding or conformity along certain lines (i.e., specific areas of knowledge or activity). This rapport may be essentially physical, emotional, or mental, or some combination. A deeper rapport exists where two personalities have a broader basis for mutual understanding, where there is a complementary relationship as well as a broad commonality. A rapport on personality levels, albeit substantial, does not necessarily (or even generally) indicate a rapport on higher (soul) levels.

A rapport between souls may exist according to the same general principles as a rapport between personalities, except that the harmony, conformity, accord, and understanding are much more refined and subjective, rather than objective. All souls experience some degree of rapport with other souls, due to the basis (intrinsic consciousness) common to all souls, but a greater (deeper) (closer) rapport exists where the character, maturity, and quality of (soul) consciousness is similar. A rapport between souls does not necessarily (or even generally)

indicate a rapport on lower (personality) levels, for personalities are not necessarily (and are not generally) in rapport with their respective souls. But where a rapport does exist between souls, and between the individual personalities and their souls, then a rapport will normally exist also between the personalities, to the extent that the personalities remain qualified.

Of considerable importance is the attainment and maintenance of the rapport (alignment) of souls and personality, that the greater rapport (energy) of the soul may be manifested through the responsive personality. One of the more significant achievements of elevated and qualified human consciousness is the realization (actual achievement) of a deep rapport with the entire spectrum of life (and consciousness and matter). Such a rapport is based upon a realization of (and conscious participation in) the underlying basis (intrinsic commonality or unity) of all life. The esoteric student learns to draw upon that intrinsic unity in establishing a rapport with life at any level, whether it be mineral, plant, animal, human, or otherwise. With such a rapport comes an understanding of how all things (regardless of level of consciousness) are essentially equal.

Such a rapport can only exist where all of the participants are responsive to the common energy (quality). Rapport (on some meaningful level) with subhuman and superhuman life-forms is generally easier to achieve than with human personalities, for rapport with human personalities is normally precluded by the illusion (arrogance) of independence, while greater (and lesser) lives are less distracted along these lines. But where the independent (and self-centered) nature of the personality is overcome, where the higher qualities are embraced and properly incorporated in consciousness, then the individual can begin to achieve a meaningful rapport with other lives.

The great beauty (joy) of an esoteric group (of souls) (on soul levels) is the complete rapport that exists between all of the participants (members) and the group, and between the group and all other lives on that level (subhuman, human, and superhuman). On lower levels, that rapport (inherent understanding) can be reflected in the participant personalities to the extent that they embrace the character and quality of the esoteric group (and the more general character and quality of the spiritual path).

## The Sixth Ennead 1

The first tractate of the Sixth Ennead is entitled "On the Kinds of Being: First Treatise." The first tractate is a collection of thirty related essays wherein Plotinus considers and ultimately dismisses two organizational schemes based upon logic and reasoning from the basic assumption of matter as reality and sense-perception as a "trustworthy guide" for discernment.

Plotinus asserts that a proper (natural) organization (of universal manifestation) can only (properly) be derived from the one (rather than the many), that the many can be derived from the one, but not vice versa. The unity of life (via universal manifestation) is "not accidental but essential and underived." From that unity, various principals and derivatives (secondaries) can be properly recognized and their relationships can be properly discerned.

Proceeding from a material (objective) basis leads to arbitrary organization of elements (and some contradiction) while proceeding in a more inclusive manner leads to the natural order of things (the self-consistent scheme of divine manifestation) (viewed however dimly). The problem (of proceeding from a material basis) is that of associating reality with the body (the objective world) (matter). All logic and rationale based upon objective experience (sense-impression) is necessarily misleading by virtue of partiality (partial (limited) vision and bias) and the illusion of substantiality. False assumptions usually lead to erroneous conclusions. Beginning with the one (inclusion), the all can be derived. The natural order of things demonstrates relatedness between all elements or components, in a hierarchical sense (secondaries derived from primaries) as well as in a categorical sense (where elements are recognizable as being of a similar order). The real key to discernment is realization rather than (necessarily fallible) reasoning.

Specifically, Plotinus considers two contemporary theories of organization; the first being an organization of being into ten "well-defined" genera or categories (a "tenfold division of the existents"): substance, quantity, relation, quality, date, location, action, passion, possession, and situation; the second being a theory of a single genus having four species: sub-states, qualities, states, and

relative states. In neither case is the organizational scheme self-consistent in view of subjective (spiritual) reality. The metaphysical reality of Plotinus begins with the one, an absolutely transcendent God, "beyond all thought and all being, ineffable and incomprehensible," prior to all existents. The one emanates while remaining self-contained and unmoved (the absolute recession), and through reflection (the world (universe) proceeds from God and remains with God (absolutely dependent) though God remains "beyond"). The one lives within, by successive reflection.

The first emanation corresponds to the world of archetypal existence, where multiplicity first appears, being eternal. The second emanation corresponds to consciousness (quality) in two aspects, the higher being transcendence (the soul), the lower being the indwelling aspect that is involved with the personality (i.e., the consciousness of the personality). In broader terms, the second emanation is the World-Soul (Christ-consciousness) from (within) which are differentiated individual souls. The soul, being real, survives the dissolution (death) of the personality, and progresses (evolves) by virtue of experience. The lower realm (below the world of the soul) is the material objective world (matter) (inertial existence). Spirit, consciousness, and matter thus constitute a major (natural) triplicity of manifestation, with all other elements being relatable to any or more of the three aspects.

† Commentary No. 359

## Energy and Cooperation

One of the more potent, yet not-so-obvious means of humanitarian cooperation (constructive endeavor) is the sharing of energy through the establishment and maintenance of energy relationships between various individuals (spiritual students), metaphysical groups and organizations, and (consequently) their contacts in the more mundane world. Part of the service role of the spiritual student (with or without group affiliations) is to encourage the evolution of human consciousness by providing qualified energy on appropriate levels.

Those energy levels may include etheric, (higher) astral, and mental sub-planes of consciousness. The energy should be largely qualified (impersonal) and a reflection of the higher consciousness attained by the spiritual student and/or

group. Students and groups receive this qualified energy via proper meditation and/or contemplative activity, to the extent and quality of their consciousness.

The qualified energy is effective to the extent that personal energy does not interfere and to the extent that the participants are responsive to the energy relationships. The sharing of the qualified energy proceeds in many ways. The energy may be properly shared through (mature) interpersonal relationships, via conversation, correspondence, or simply via two or more persons being together or working together (where a rapport exists on some level) (where personal energy does not preclude or overshadow the qualified energy). The energy may also be shared through intelligent, impersonal meditation and the mental life of the spiritual student (or group). On meditative levels, the energy is shared between higher centers of consciousness, and brought onto more objective levels via the individual consciousness. Energy shared via interpersonal relationships is shared between lower (intermediate) centers of consciousness (i.e., between the minds and hearts of the individual personalities) evoking subconscious and subjective responsiveness according to character and quality.

Similarly, qualified energy may be shared on a broader scale through appropriate practical media, such as radio and television, publications, etc. Metaphysical (theosophical) (philosophical) periodicals are particularly effective where properly qualified by (higher) group energy, even if the recipient is not particularly responsive in any conscious sense (i.e., such periodicals provide an intrinsic means of sharing energy, whether they are read and studied or not) (the more effective where read or studied, but the energy is shared without conscious study). The exchange of publications between various groups also helps to further the interrelatedness of the planetary energy network, thereby improving the effectiveness of sharing qualified energy.

The motive and intention of this sharing of qualified energy is cooperation with the evolutionary plan (to the extent understood) via the encouragement of higher consciousness. It is not the proper intention to promulgate any particular beliefs or perspective, though such may well be shared nonetheless, provided there is no imposition or expectation. The means and methods of sharing qualified energy should preclude or discourage emotional stimulation of concrete-minded reactions. The energy sharing (interaction) of qualified energy is even more effective. The sharing of proper energy is actually an expansion of

the field (reservoir) of qualified energy available to a responsive humanity on practical (etheric, astral, and mental) levels in accordance with human karma (i.e., the energy available and the associated responsiveness is limited only by the karma of humanity and its various component lives).

† Commentary No. 360

## The External Environment

The external environment is the more-or-less objective world that an incarnated individual faces in the day-to-day life. For most of humanity, the daily life is relatively self-centered (personality-centered) in the sense that the immediate (external) environment is related (through perspective) directly to the personality. Consequently, for most of humanity, it is the immediate, mundane environment which largely determines (influences) the direction and focus of consciousness. Thus most of humanity are vulnerable to external conditions and their consciousness is largely absorbed in that environment.

The external environment offers a broad spectrum of opportunity for experience (lessons to be learned) and individual growth by virtue of that experience, albeit largely an unconscious learning process. Nevertheless, the (local) external environment that an individual faces is largely a reflection or indication of that individual's consciousness or an indication of a needed interaction between the individual consciousness and the local environment (circumstances) (situations) (adversity). Karmic forces generally provide the interaction of personalities in the local environment as well as the conditions and circumstances. But the response or reaction to those conditions and circumstances is largely (entirely) the responsibility of the individual.

One of the problems associated with individuals relating to their external environment (and associated people and circumstances) is the degree of attachment experienced (or the sense of significance). Individual experience is greatly complicated where the individual becomes attached to the immediate (mundane) environment and to people or circumstances therein. The lessons to be learned are usually much more difficult to achieve where such attachment or absorption exists. Though there are lessons to be learned, and though the

experience and circumstances (and people) faced are significant, the individual (spiritual student) should not take these matters too seriously (or too casually). The student should be responsive (open-minded) to the learning opportunities, but should not be absorbed in (or attached to) that experience.

Many of the lessons of life afforded by the external environment involve relationships with other people. One of the associated lessons is the realization that an individual (spiritual student) has no business judging others or trying to change others to that individual's perspective (point of view) (values) (standards). Another lesson is the realization that an individual should be able to remain poised (reasonable) in facing other people who are different or who have different values (behavior). Problems with people can usually be properly overcome, not by changing people, but by changing oneself, by improving attitudes, by allowing others to learn whatever lessons are needed according to their perspective, without interference or judgmental energy. By learning to relax, while remaining responsive to whatever lessons are afforded, the student can induce a positive contribution to the external environment (by virtue of presence) (rather than activity or involvement).

Real freedom from external conditions comes when the student broadens the perspective from self-centered (personal) attachments to reasonably detached, relatively impersonal consideration of inclusive experience (the experience of a life wave as a life wave). Individual lessons can still be learned (indeed more easily), but the focus is no longer on individual experience (or upon closely identified groups (races) (nations) within a life wave). The final freedom comes only when the illusion of the external environment is fully realized, and the reality of internal (inclusive) consciousness is fully embraced.

## Equality

There exists within nature (the natural, universal field of evolutionary manifestation) a general principle of intrinsic equality, one life-form to another. This principle of equality recognizes each life-form as equal or identical in the measure of life (reality) (value) (essence), but not necessarily in detailed (lesser) characteristics or particular functions.

This essential equivalence means that each individual unit of life within each group (life-wave) is equal in value, measure (life), and overall potential. Differences in detailed characteristics are inevitable as each unit evolves according to particular experiences, capabilities (responsiveness), and earned opportunities. However, the essential equivalence still holds, for regardless of achieved characteristics (evolutionary attainment) and level of consciousness, each unit contributes to the reality (evolution) of the life-wave and that of the greater life. Those life-units of different consciousness or different characteristics and circumstances contribute in different ways, but each contribution is equally significant from the reference frame of the greater life. Particular individual contributions may appear more (or less) significant from the narrow perspective of individual existence, but that view fails to incorporate the whole (interrelatedness) of the evolutionary scheme.

The principle of equality is demonstrated in many ways, but largely through the impartiality of the evolutionary laws (karma) to which all lives are responsible. Though the application of karma may vary as a function of merit (experience), the general rules are self-consistent and impartial, contributing to the purposive evolution of the greater (and composite lives). Though character (consciousness) (environment) may vary considerably from one life (unit) to another, those of "higher" consciousness are not essentially superior to those of "inferior" consciousness. They may be superior in some respects (characteristics), but inevitably inferior in other respects. The whole concept of superiority (inferiority) is an illusion born of self-consciousness (individuality) and the corresponding illusion of externalization.

In reality, there is no superiority of any particular life, because only one life flows through the many forms, and the illusion of individual life and consciousness in no way precludes the overall life and consciousness from awareness on its own level. Any sense of superiority (inferiority) only compounds the problem (illusion) of ego and separateness. The esoteric student while recognizing distinction in consciousness (in accordance with evolution), nonetheless maintains a sense of balance (humility) and spiritual values (perspective) consistent with the reality of group consciousness.

The essential equivalence (generalized equality) (relativity) holds true not only for lives within a group or life-wave, but between lifewaves and between lives belonging to different lifewaves as well. A human being, for example, having a "higher" level of consciousness and a much greater degree of complexity (composition) than an animal (plant) (mineral) life, is not in fact superior in any general sense, but remains essentially equivalent in terms of reality (life essence) (which is the only truly significant measure). The contribution of the mineral (plant) (animal) life is as essential and as significant (yet different) as the human contribution, despite the vast distinction in level of consciousness. The human contribution would not even be possible without the (cooperative) (and more basic) contributions of the component lives (within the human personality) and the complementary lives within the various kingdoms which provide the environment for the evolution of the various lifewaves.

† Commentary No. 362

## The Sixth Ennead 2

The second tractate of the Sixth Ennead is entitled "On the Kinds of Being: Second Treatise." Considered are the five existents having primary generic status; being, stability, motion, identity, and difference, the four latter genera are principles of being (and referred to as the four genera). Becoming is considered inferior to being, as being is eternal. Being is not an undifferentiated unity, but is, instead, "many as well as one," a diversified (pluralistic) unity. Being (substance) is not a "predicate of any given thing." The secondary genera (plurality of existents) are derived from a unity (but not fortuitously), each genus being separable yet intrinsically bound to being.

The one is beyond existence, the transcendent source, a unity external to the genera. The body is a composite (manifold) (divisible) unity, while the soul is an unextended (pluralized) unity (single nature). The soul is one and many, one in nature, being differentiated only in the sense of self-contemplation, the being of the soul being derived "from no source external to its own essence." In the higher sense (reality) the soul (being) (substance) is an inseparable unity, but in the lower sense (of manifested existence in the lower, more objective worlds) that unity is separable into its four genera and their many species (particulars). The genera are inextricably related (mutually concomitantly), but not subordinately or super-ordinately.

Being (substance) (the higher aspect of the soul) is a unity on its level, while the soul (lower aspect) (mind) is a unity on its (lower) level. The origin (destination) of the soul is unity (goodness); i.e., there exists an irresistible tendency toward unity (equilibrium). But unity is not a genus, being beyond genera (in principle, but inherently manifested). Being (actuality) can be considered as a single genus of what is common to life (consciousness) (matter) (and energy). The genus motion is life inherent (vibration), while the genus stability is "unalterable condition" in the primary sense. The genera identity and difference arise from perspective, yet are nonetheless principal. Each genus "exists as a whole in each of the things whose genus it is," the unity of a genus being a whole-in-many. The five (four) genera (primaries) (contemporaries) constitute reality.

All other genera are posterior to the five (four) primaries and are therefore not genera in any primary sense. The posterior genera qualify or particularize, while the primaries are inherent. The posterior genera (at whatever level) are derivable, but necessarily subsequent to being. Quality, quantity, relation, situation, passivity, and possession all presuppose the primary genera and/or admit posteriority. Likewise, beauty, goodness, knowledge, intelligence, and the various virtues are all posterior (manifested) (characteristics and particulars). None of the primary genera are species predicates; all of the primaries are beyond the distinction of posteriorities.

Being (essential substance) (the monad) is the unity beyond (within) the existents (the four genera) (the complex (simplex) of consciousness) (the soul),

while existence is the unity beyond (within) all manifested experience (the mind) (the objective world) (the realm of particulars). As being looks outward, the soul (consciousness) is produced. The (subjective) activity of the soul is twofold: upward (inward) towards its source and downward (outward) towards its reflection, the lower phase (the personality) (the objective world).

“Everything exists forever, unchanging, involved by very existence in eternity. Individuals have their separate entities, but are at one in the (total) unity.” The complex (of all) is being, “holding all existence within itself.”

† Commentary No. 363

## History and Perspective

The past cannot be accurately known via personal, (merely) psychical, or (merely) rational means, due to the bias or prejudice inherent in the human mind, its personality, and the mass (human) consciousness. That bias is the bias of personal energy (opinions) (emotional distortion) (mental temperament) and the bias of limited capability (the narrow, concrete mind) (limited experience) (partiality) (limited vision). The problem is compounded by the illusion of objective reality, the tendency of generally accepted opinions to become considered as facts (i.e., limited discretion), and the naiveté of ordinary humanity (who are enchanted by mass consciousness and tend to believe whatever is presented to them without any self-realization or discretion). The means exist, however, for humanity to overcome these limitations and achieve a (relatively) unbiased perspective on the past, present, and future.

Orthodox methods of historical research are generally quite limited (though potentially useful, as threads of truth appear throughout the historical records). Historical records reflect the bias of the individual or group recording the history, as well as the bias of the prevailing mass consciousness (at least to the extent to which the recorder is enchanted by that environmental consciousness (public opinion). Human bias is largely unconscious (subconscious) and the individual (and the group) is (generally) unaware of the entrained bias. The view (perspective) on a given history tends to change in time due to the changing perspective of the individual (which may even be at variance with others) and the changing perspectives of mass consciousness.

These changes may include some improvements, but history is still considerably distorted by perspective (both in present view and in the past (recorded) view), even though it may be reasonably objective. Where the past is not judged by prevailing (current) standards (bias), and where the limitations inherent in historical records and the limitations inherent in the researchers are properly considered, then the orthodox methods can be quite useful.

Psychical methods are largely subject to the same basic limitations of more orthodox, more rational methods (e.g., personal bias and human limitations). Thus psychical methods (like the orthodox methods) are only of value where the consciousness and training of the individual is appropriate to the task. Psychic methods that rely on the (unqualified) personality are quite unreliable. But where the individual has achieved a properly qualified personality and where the individual has received the proper occult (esoteric) training, then the "memory" of nature can be viewed in a much more objective (reliable) manner than any orthodox, psychical, or rational means. But the price is impersonality and freedom from entanglement (freedom from opinions).

Where the memory of nature is properly accessed, the (unbiased) actuality of the past can be perceived to the extent that the individual can comprehend the panorama and properly relate that vision to the whole. This requires considerable training and self-discipline, and a broadening of the mind. With an esoteric posture, the past is not enchanting (neither is the present or the future) (the past may provide some insight, but the esoteric student is not dependent upon history; he is, rather, dependent on quality (consciousness)). The esoteric student tends to focus (broadly) more upon the present, (usually) relating to the "timestream" only in terms of purposive and causal (impersonal) relationships. The temporal perspective is not reliable; so the esoteric posture embraces an integral perspective which treats the past, present, and future as a single entity, being much more meaningful than any partial vision.

## Energy and Entropy 1

Universal manifestation proceeds in a teleological and developmental (progressive, cyclic) manner (according to the general plan), as the field of manifestation is created (defined) (imposed upon the void (the null universe)) and as vast amounts of qualified energy are released into (induced to appear within) that field of manifestation. The general plan is actually imprinted within the field, as an overall qualification. The field of manifestation is not in fact a closed system, but one with a single source term (general source) (discrete logoi, who serve to introduce energy into the system as a function of the progressed state (of the manifested universe)) and a single sink (depletion) term (type) (the diffusion of energy from the field and its accumulation beyond the field). For all practical purposes, the system can be considered as a steady-state, closed system, although in fact, the energy input is not constant, but increases and decreases over vast periods in accordance with the creative (logoi) pulsations (which correspond to emanations of lifewaves).

Two of the most fundamental principles relating to the energy of manifestation are the principles of conservation of energy and increasing entropy. The energy of any system (i.e., the system, its internal processes, and its relationships to the region (existence) beyond the field) is conserved in all cases; energy (life) cannot be created or destroyed, but it can be introduced (transferred from another field or system) and it can be manipulated (qualified) (progressed) (degraded) (enhanced) in many ways, changing form and character (and quality) according to intentions and circumstances. The entropy of the system (the field of universal manifestation and everything therein) is defined as a measure of the unavailable energy in the system (which is also a measure of the disorder of the system) (order being an indication of the plan) (entropy being an indication of the fulfillment of that plan).

The total energy of the universe (the system) is (for all practical purposes) fixed and determined by the energy implanted during the process of creation, but that energy is not inherently available; it must be properly adjusted and transformed into various, useful forms (by some intermediate intelligence) according to the needs of the plan. Energy introduced into the system is highly qualified (vivified

with purpose) (under considerable (occult) tension). That energy then undergoes a cascade (succession) of transformations (from one level or character or form to another) (from one state to another) (through the various levels of consciousness) and is utilized in some (meaningful) fashion at every level (state). As the energy undergoes transformation, it is no longer “available” at the preceding state, and is then considered “degraded” relative to the previous state (most processes are for all practical purposes irreversible) (in the particular sense). Energy degradation (in this natural sense) is a release of higher (qualified) tension and a natural process towards equilibrium. Left to itself (i.e., without any external or applied forces), all of the matter and energy of the universe will naturally degrade (unwind) to an ultimate state of inert uniformity (absolute chaos (in the occult sense)) (a condition in which each state is equally probable).

As a measure of the unavailable energy, entropy tends to increase to some maximum value for any given system; i.e., for a given energy level, the system will naturally assume the equilibrium state which maximizes the entropy.

All natural processes flow in a particular direction (of maximum entropy); energy is conserved, but necessarily degraded to a lower (less useful) level. Thus energy serves a purpose and is thereby expended (but not destroyed).

† Commentary No. 365

## Perfection and the Soul

The impulse (impelling force) for human evolution arises from the underlying qualification of manifestation (i.e., evolutionary purpose) and from the archetype of the soul (and its relationship to the soul and to the reflection of the soul (the personality)). The general evolutionary impulse is actually a broad wave of qualification, stimulation, and encouragement. The archetypal impulse is a response to the distinction between the archetype and the soul, serving to draw the soul to its completion in fulfillment of its archetype.

The quest for perfection for the soul as an evolutionary unit and for humanity as a lifewave is a natural response to evolutionary encouragement. The reflection

of the soul (i.e., the personality) is the means or instrument of experience leading to assimilation (wisdom). The archetype of the soul represents the intended (idealized), perfected state for the soul (i.e., the relative, intermediate perfection (completion) that is possible at this stage) (each stage is a portion (phase) of an unlimited chain of progressive states). The archetype is perfect in the sense of intended quality of consciousness (and other, general characteristics). But the archetype is only a qualified matrix (the potential of the perfected soul), not the soul itself.

The soul begins as an unfulfilled reflection of the monad, as a focus for assimilated experience and related forces of manifestation, but essentially void of experience. It incorporates (reflects) the basic quality and character of the oversoul (the essential nature of the soul), but is lacking in achievement. The perfected soul, on the other hand, has achieved all of the intended quality and character and more, for the experience leading to that (intermediate) perfected state brings with it particular (complementary) achievements that are the creative contributions of the lifewave. But for those particular achievements to be included in the soul requires that they meet the more general standards of quality and character as well. The soul's nature is to assimilate (subjectively) the integrated experience of the personality, incorporating only the positive quality and character (i.e., that meets the general standards of the soul (archetype)). Thus, the soul is gradually filled with proper quality (consciousness) and ultimately is fulfilled (completed).

The role of the personality is to learn by virtue of earned experience and gradually express more and more of the soul's character and quality. The personality does not evolve, per se, but is developed, cultivated, and utilized by the soul for evolutionary purposes (the composite lives within the personality do, however, evolve by virtue of personality experience). The personality is a reflection or indication of the soul's maturity, and the qualities and characteristics of that personality are an indication of the more refined quality and character (or lack thereof) of the soul. The soul does not incorporate any of the lesser characteristics of the personality.

The wisdom (assimilated experience) of the soul can be evoked to the extent that the personality is aligned and/or responsive. Since the soul has an intrinsic rapport (coherent relationship) with the oversoul (and the Christ or cosmic

principle), the soul can also act as an intermediary between the higher wisdom and the mind of the personality. Thus energies can be evoked (potentially) by virtue of the intrinsic nature of the soul as well as the soul's particular quality. As the soul progresses, it gradually achieves the perfection implied by the archetype, and becomes a considerable creative (intermediate) source of energy. And as even the soul is transcended, another path to "perfection" is realized and another sojourn or quest begun.

† Commentary No. 366

### The Sixth Ennead 3

The third tractate of the Sixth Ennead is entitled "On the Kinds of Being: Third Treatise." Plotinus considers the principle or domain of becoming (the sensible realm). Sensible existence embraces the manifested universe in its material aspects, subject to perception and the various limitations of personal existence, but cannot be properly considered without realization of its relationships to the higher, causal worlds. The lower, sensible realm is analogous to the higher, but only in abstractly, and certainly not identically analogous. The soul (of that higher realm) "does not enter into the structure of what is called sensible being" (i.e., the indwelling (over-shadowing) soul is not absorbed in sensible experience, but remains detached).

The sensible realm is the realm of manifestation (matter) (form) (appearance) and activity, largely a realm of effects and consequences, while the basis of the higher realm is life (spirit) (consciousness) (quality), largely a realm of interactive causes (causal forces). Primary causes are higher causes, which qualify sensible existence. Secondary causes are generated by virtue of experience and activity in the sensible realm, qualified by higher intentions (primary, evolutionary causes) (karma), and returned to the sensible realm as effects (circumstances) (karmic consequence). Orthodox classification schemes are normally either (relatively) arbitrary and/or take into consideration only the appearance of things and their (sensibly) apparent (material) relationships. But since everything in the lesser realm is related to higher, causal forces, those (intermediate) relationships must be considered in order to realize properly a natural scheme of things.

Becoming (the sensible realm) "may be divided into matter and the form imposed upon matter." Another distinction is made between essence and attributes; essential (material) being is the primary sense, while attributes are a secondary sense (descriptors) (characteristics). Nothing is accidental in the conventional sense; all is related to causal forces, some significantly, others incidentally. Form "is higher in the scale of being than matter," for in essence matter is a dim reflection of higher existence, while (imposed) form is somewhat closer to the source of lesser (sensible) existence. All substances are qualified, and that qualification provides the real basis for classification (recognizing the natural order of things).

There are a number of interdependent qualifications imposed upon things in the sensible realm (or at least a number of natural perspectives which relate sensible things with higher sources of qualification). One such distinction is that of earth, fire, air, and water. Another involves the various lifewaves and their respective kingdoms: elemental, mineral, plant, animal, human, deva, etc. Yet another involves the essential qualification of the seven rays (in particulars, cycles, planes and sub-planes of consciousness, etc.). Still another involves astrological qualification. Numerological schemes are not significant unless properly correlated with a natural scheme. Likewise, numerous schemes may be recognized based upon particular characteristics, but these will not be particularly significant unless properly correlated with an essential (natural) scheme (e.g., the seven rays).

The problem of correlation arises from the natural, multiply qualified character of any object in the sensible realm. But where the consideration begins with the natural scheme and then correlates that scheme to the particulars, the relationships become more apparent. Understanding is, of course, beyond "the province of sense-perception" and requires detachment.

## Psychic Development

A potential problem (stumbling block) for aspirants to the spiritual path is an (inordinate) interest in psychic phenomena and attempted psychic development. Phenomena distract the aspirant from the real task at hand, which is to purify and refine his character, integrate his personality, and align it with his soul in order to serve God and humanity.

Long ago in Atlantean days when the emphasis was on emotional (astral) development, psychic awareness was commonplace. But today in the Aryan Epoch, the focus for progressive man has been (and needs to be) shifted to mental development (the mental plane), and for spiritual students, soul alignment (the abstract mental and intuitive planes). Psychic (astral) sensitivities in man have generally been reduced so that man may concentrate on developing and refining the higher, mental faculties. This is a necessary step for soul alignment, intuitive awareness, and wisdom. Thus the true power of the soul (which is much higher than psychic (astral) powers) may be properly tapped.

The aspirant enamored by phenomena who attempts psychic development may be invoking a number of potential problems. Premature opening of the chakra centers can bring instability and even insanity. Part of the problem is that only with a purified personality, soul alignment, spiritual maturity, and proper training come real discretion, understanding (discernment) and control of psychic (astral) energies. The unaware and unqualified student is ill-equipped to work in a field where glamour and illusion abound, when he has little ability to discern the real from the unreal.

A similar situation applies to those who are involuntary or untrained (and unqualified) psychics and give readings. Many are sincere and well-meaning, but lack the needed discernment; they are likely to have perceptions that are distorted or untrue (astral impressions frequently are not what they seem to be, and are usually biased by the participants' own thoughts and feelings). Only someone with the necessary soul alignment and spiritual maturity can be trained to work with validity on the astral plane (if there is a need). Often

information in psychic (astral) readings or impressions tends to inflate the aspirant's ego, which if an individual is personality-centered (instead of soul-aligned), he will easily believe what is said as true as it supports his own self-glamour (self-deception).

Another factor to consider is motive. The serious spiritual student is not self-centered nor interested in developing psychic powers. He does not seek the special attention (ego gratification) that often goes with those who claim to be psychic. He knows there is no easy way (such as from a psychic) to receive answers to problems (no one is an authority with respect to another). Each student must decide for himself (after alignment with the soul) in meditation or prayer. In his desire to serve, the serious student takes the group (soul) approach without emphasis on the individual (personality). He seeks ever to identify with the greater whole (and the greater good) as he shifts his focus from a personal approach to an impersonal, more inclusive one. The serious student knows he is necessarily responsible for handling his own personality life and problems (opportunities). He realizes the purpose of higher group work is not to solve his personal problems but rather to serve all of humanity and all life. Impersonal encouraging energies are made available to all, and not just shared with group members. When the student deepens and makes a serious commitment to the spiritual path, working for the good of all becomes his goal, and the glamour of psychic phenomena holds no attraction.

† Commentary No. 368

## Energy and Entropy 2

The ordered energy of the universe corresponds to (occult) tension (qualification) within the fabric (field) of manifestation. The process of creation is the process of introducing tension into an otherwise (relatively) inert uniformity (the void). As that tension expires (as the universe under tension returns to its natural state (non-existence)), the energy is degraded and diffused. But the process of energy dissolution is actually the process by which life (consciousness) evolves, for all (life) (consciousness) (matter) within the field is conditioned or qualified in some evolutionary sense.

Of greater practical significance is the (process of) preservation of tension, or at least that of gradual relaxation (experience). Energy can be preserved at some state (level) (qualification) only by the application of some external (internal) applied force (consciousness). Most intermediate (hierarchical) processes involve the preservation and/or adjustment of energy for particular (general) (various) purposes. Qualified energy is thereby made available at some level (i.e., is not wasted by virtue of natural diffusion (dissolution)). The vast majority of energy within the field of manifestation is intelligently preserved (albeit temporarily) and distributed at various useful energy levels. But even so, every process results in an overall increase in entropy (and a corresponding degradation in energy) or involves a withdrawal of energy from some level (state) (via applied (creative) force) in order to maintain or enhance the energy at some other level (state).

Increasing entropy is either processional or configurational (or some combination which results in an overall maximum entropy). Processional entropy is the entropy increase due to the process (the transformation of energy from one form to another) (i.e., the entropy associated with an energy-spread), while configurational entropy is the entropy increase associated with the resulting state (i.e., the energy configuration resulting in a (relative) maximum entropic increase). That configuration is simply the most probable state (which is the most random state). The underlying principle which results in increasing entropy is essential to the meaningful evolution of all lives, for it provides a means of overcoming inertia, thereby permitting a dynamic field of evolution (rather than a static field which would necessarily preempt evolution). Though energy is continually being degraded, the energy is simultaneously (effectively) being replenished (refreshed) (at least to the extent that intermediate lives are available to perform the transformations and adjustments (in accordance with the plan (karma))) (and to the extent that energy is not being wasted).

In the total evolutionary scheme energy cannot be lost, but energy can become unavailable in the context of a given system (and in the context of universal manifestation) (which requires a region beyond the system where the diffused energy is accumulated) (i.e., where experience is assimilated). What is true for the greater scheme is also true for subordinate compositions (microcosms) within the greater scheme (macrocosm). Human consciousness is (potentially)

an applied, creative force which qualifies environmental matter (energy) as well as the composite material (lives) of the human personality.

In an absolute sense, equilibrium is always maintained, though contrasting forces are continuously changing. As adjustments are made in consciousness (as in the universe as a whole), that consciousness passes through a continuous succession of equilibrium states. Any deviation from the general evolutionary plan (i.e., from the qualified intention of natural evolution) results in the application of karmic forces which serve to restore the intended balance.

† Commentary No. 369

## Sensitivity and Discernment

Two important aspects of awareness are sensitivity and discernment. Sensitivity is important because it contributes directly to the quality and extent (depth and breadth) of the awareness. Discernment is important because it provides (relative) discrimination of impressions and contributes to their validation (to the extent that the validation of impressions is even possible). Without the proper sensitivity and without a proper sense of discernment, awareness is likely to be limited to the objective (superficial) realm and/or compounded by unqualified imagination. But with proper sensitivity and discretion, well-founded in character, consciousness, and temperament, awareness is likely to be highly effective, and a boon to the spiritual student.

The proper, spiritual sensitivity does not include personal or emotional sensitivity. Personal (reactive) (defensive) (self-centered) (egoistic) sensitivity is not healthy in any spiritual sense, for it greatly complicates perception and realization, and undermines the effectiveness of the spiritual student. Emotional sensitivity is similarly distractive, for the personality then tends to react in a rather unqualified fashion, being particularly vulnerable to external forces. Personal (emotional) sensitivity also encourages the unqualified imagination (which complicates the process of discernment). The spiritual student must be careful to properly overcome the (natural) tendency toward personal sensitivity, and endeavor to properly qualify the personality.

Proper spiritual sensitivity nicely complements the mental and intuitional abilities and training. Discernment is an integral part of that (proper) sensitivity and provides a dimension of intelligent insight and realization (mature responsiveness to impression (experience)). Proper sensitivity (and discernment) requires a reasonably well-disciplined (qualified) personality that is relatively mature (responsive to higher impression) (aligned with the soul). Many of the ordinary involvements (glamours) (activities) in the mundane world preclude the proper development and application of spiritual sensitivity (discretion) (awareness). Wherever a person is involved in (enchanted by) (absorbed in) mundane affairs, the proper sensitivity cannot be achieved or manifested. But with spiritual discipline (proper meditation) the student can work effectively in the mundane world while maintaining an effective awareness (sensitivity) (realization).

One of the necessary ingredients (for proper sensitivity) is the purification of the personality, transforming as much of the coarse vibrations (on every practical level) as possible to the refined character of the qualified personality. Psychic development, per se, is not required for spiritual sensitivity. Spiritual sensitivity is a great deal more than what is commonly considered psychic sensitivity (both in terms of spiritual maturity and in terms of depth and breadth of occult (objective) (subjective) (psychological) ability) (i.e., intelligent responsiveness to energies, psychological forces, etc.).

The proper spiritual sensitivity (awareness) (discretion) is a dispassionate compassion for all of life and manifestation, a guiding (non-compelling) realization and insight that moderates the life and activity of the spiritual student, and the capacity for interactive observation (as the spiritual student functions as the intelligent, sensitive observer and point-of-focus for intelligent, spiritual forces and energies). Where the occult sensitivity is properly coupled with the spiritual intuition, the spiritual student becomes a potent presence (without involvement and without imposition) for constructive qualification of the environment.

## The Sixth Ennead 4

The fourth tractate of the Sixth Ennead is entitled "On the Integral Omnipresence of the Absolute Existence: First Treatise." Plotinus considers the issue of the soul and its omnipresence. The All (being) (the one soul) is an integral, self-fulfilled totality, embracing the manifested universe at every coordinate. The identity (soul) is undistributed, not diffused, uncontained, yet omnipresent. The (subordinate) universe embraces all of time and space, yet remains less than the All (which is beyond). The Path leads not from place to place, but from place to placelessness as the All is (increasingly) realized.

Any life (consciousness) (form) which participates in the All reflects that presence (immanence) to the extent of its participation (i.e., the extent of its character and quality), yet the All "remains the quested" (meaning there is no appropriation of omnipresence). Completeness requires placelessness (timelessness). Life is the one, unfragmented vitalization of the All. Consciousness is the degree of participation in life. The various (higher) attributes are simply derived of the quality of consciousness (as that consciousness provides an interface for the higher aspects of manifestation). The All is self-abiding, universal, "immaterial and without magnitude," yet provides for dimensional stability and dynamic evolution.

The (self-gathered) All engenders. Particular souls come into being as local manifestations of the one (soul), yet such particularization is a perspective only within the objective domain (a greater reality is the oneness which embraces all souls). The differentiation of the one (soul) provides integral diversity (variety in unity) (in reality, without even spatial or temporal (individual) distinction). The greatness of the soul lies in its universal existence, imparting only a reflection of itself into the material (objective) universe. The differentiated soul that overshadows (indwells) a particular personality is linked to every other, one soul flowing simultaneously through a multiplicity of forms, yet each having some indication of individuality. Through the soul, one can participate consciously (selflessly) in that (soul) consciousness that flows through all things.

The soul admits no partibility. The soul is the universal medium of consciousness, the source of unrelenting power, imperishable relative to the personality. The soul is "at once a self-enclosed unity and a principle manifested in diversity." "Anything other than this All that may be stationed therein must have part in the All, merge into, and hold by its strength" (as non-being within being). Thus the (one) soul is the sustaining force, the preservation of life (on whatever levels of existence). Successively differentiated principles coexist; "the one principle reaches to the individual but none the less contains all souls and all intelligence." The soul exists before (and after) the cycle of successive manifestations (incarnations) (personalities). In each (incarnation), the soul remains what it is (highly qualified consciousness) (being), while the personality and an aspect of the soul are bound for the usual interval (duration) of life in the lower worlds.

The material coarseness of the human (animal) form binds that aspect of the soul to the form (that coarseness being considered a necessary evil (evil in the sense of being unresolved)). Every incarnation is a blessing (opportunity). Karma is never punishment, but ever consequence leading to enlightenment. The karma of matter finds fulfillment as the individual gradually (properly) qualifies all of the consciousness and form. The karma of consciousness finds fulfillment as the individual achieves inclusion (the All).

† Commentary No. 371

## Meditative Discussion

One of the benefits of group rapport is the proper qualification of group discussion on philosophical topics. Any such discussion or sharing of thoughts focused on a particular topic is greatly enhanced in value if the participants are in rapport as a group (with each personality reasonably aligned with the soul), rather than functioning as (self-centered) personalities.

Discussions of a philosophical nature among persons who are contributing as personalities (not as personalities responsive to group impulse (e.g., via the soul)) tend to be somewhat limited and non-productive (energy-wise). Personalities participate in discussion using a variety of approaches. There may

be preconceived ideas to which the personality is very attached. The (personality-centered) discussions may degenerate into attempts to prove, argue, and debate. There may even be blind acceptance of the thoughts of one (or more) individuals (usually the discussion leader or leaders) by the rest of the participants. Where each personality is focusing on the topic in a self-centered manner, there is little coherent energy (supportive, positive) built during the discussion. Indeed, many times such personality discussions have a negative (overall) value from the standpoint of constructive energy. The personalities may even come away from the discussion believing that much has been learned and considerable knowledge shared, but from the perspective of the soul, how much is really understood, and how much (if any) positive energy results from such discussion?

Group (meditative) discussion of philosophy (where there is some degree of (soul) alignment) is of a rather different nature. Because the personality is not creating the thought-flow, there are no attachments to ideas or perceived needs to prove any perspective as superior. Each individual approaches the group environment to learn and contribute to the group energy. The approach is the same for each group member (including the discussion moderator (if any)). As each member focuses on the topic with an open-mind (aligned with the higher self), the energy of the discussion takes on a positive quality. This group energy pattern, once established, has the further effect of creating a subtle (yet very potent) ring-pass-not which discourages any from commenting who are not aligned with the soul and in rapport with the group energy.

The individual contributions to meditative discussion have a non-linear effect energy-wise. Contributions need not be verbal (as important as anything that is stated in group discussion where there is soul rapport is the actual energy promoted by the quality of the discussion itself). So often what is learned by an individual as a result of group discussion is learned from the mere exposure to the energy, rather than anything that may have been directly stated. Furthermore, the impulse from the soul (the spiritual intuition) is often very difficult to transcribe accurately into language. Actual statements made during discussion, may therefore, be partial reflections of the original energy behind the thought. Where there is soul rapport, discussion serves as a method to focus and build group energy relative to a particular topic (seed-thought). Once this energy is established, qualified, and has gained momentum of its own, the role

of the group members becomes increasingly one of sustaining (and bathing in) the energy, rather than continuing verbalization.

Ultimately, the group discussion serves as an aid to each individual in focusing soul energy as a means to learning and, as importantly, to understanding. It also serves a creative purpose similar to meditation in contributing positive energy for higher purposes in the working out of the plan.

† Commentary No. 372

## The Zodiac

The ring-pass-not of the solar system can be described as the surface of the solar energy field. The field is a spheroid intersected by a single ecliptic plane (having some depth and some considerable extent). Both the spheroid and the ecliptic plane are centered on the sun (the central star), and all of the principal constituents of the solar system (e.g., the various major and minor planets) exist within that plane. Within the solar energy field (system) all life (consciousness) (form) is qualified by the energy of the solar logos.

Beyond the ring-pass-not of the solar system and aligned with the plane of the solar system is the zodiac. The zodiac is a band of solar logoi which because of their configuration in the greater scheme are related to the solar energy field. The various constellations of the zodiac (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces) represent sources of qualified energy and particular relationships between our solar logos and other, greater lives. Because the constellations of the zodiac exist in the plane defined by the solar energy field, a natural flow of energy results (in both directions) from that resonance. Each constellation (sign) of the zodiac acts as a lens to focus external (purposive) energies upon our solar system.

Each of the twelve signs is configured with 30 degrees of longitude (width) and approximately 18 degrees of planar depth. Energy sources beyond the zodiac (more than nine degrees from the ecliptic) may be important only in special cases (particular configurations) (relationships with the solar logos). Energy sources within the zodiac are generally qualified by their respective sign. Each

sign provides a certain character of qualified energy, utilized by the solar logos (and the various planetary logoi) in qualifying all or part of their respective manifestation. The sun sign (the sign of the zodiac in which the sun appears to be relative to the planet) is the most obvious focus of energy, as the sun acts as another lens, intensifying or qualifying the energy of the alignment. The moon sign (the sign of the zodiac in which the moon appears to be relative to the planet) is also (relatively) significant, not so much for the energy of the sign as for the energy lacking due to obscuration (and the effects thereof on other energy paths).

The relative passages of planets along the ecliptic also moderate the flow of zodiacal (astrological) energy by virtue of their own particular character and various resonance relationships. Each planet (star) (sign) is actually an (interactive) energy field (having character, consciousness, quality, potency, etc.). All of the various qualifications arising via the zodiacal band and the planetary passages are interrelated and teleological. The zodiac as a scheme (astrology) of energy qualification is merely a perspective, a way of perceiving the natural energy relationships of various logoi. The scheme of the seven rays is simply another perspective, somewhat broader and more inclusive, demonstrating somewhat different implications, yet embracing the same energies.

The astrological scheme emphasizes the cyclic nature of the energy relationships and their impelling nature, while the seven rays scheme emphasizes the ability of the individual (group) to consciously draw upon the energy sources and apply them. In neither perspective are these energies necessarily compelling. Karma may be compelling, but astrological force, per se, is merely a qualification. The spiritual student seeks to remove the vulnerabilities of the personality to external energies and to consciously (intelligently) (constructively) utilize whatever energies are needed, zodiacal or otherwise.

## Personal Values

Individual consciousness may be described in many ways, from the level or plane of consciousness (physical, emotional, mental, etc.) upon which the individual consciousness is polarized (normally and predominately oriented) (stabilized), to the relative presence of the many and particular characteristics of consciousness (e.g., in terms of abilities, tendencies, attributes, etc.). An individual's consciousness is closely related to the individual's overall character, temperament, and values. An individual's personal values serve both as an interactive reflection of consciousness and as a means of achievement (i.e., as an evoking force for experience).

As a reflection or indication of consciousness, personal values are both the result of consciousness and a causative (albeit intermediate) force within the overall consciousness. Personal values can cover a rather wide range (things, experience, ethics, principles, knowledge, character, etc.). Actual personal values are those which are actually embraced in consciousness (typically to some extent consciously, to a large extent unconsciously), and as such are fairly good indications of consciousness. But the actual personal values may be masked by the superficial aspects of consciousness (which (aspects) are also indications of the character and quality of consciousness). Personal values embraced merely intellectually (conceptually) are not very accurate indications of consciousness, for to be embraced in consciousness, a personal value must be reflected or expressed by the personality in accordance with the value.

Where a person's professed (intellectual) values are not actually embraced in consciousness, the lack of harmony between assertion and actuality is a causative force in itself. In the case of conscious, sincere intention (to embrace the value), the resulting causative force will be constructive, seeking to enfold the value in consciousness (bringing about the (relatively ideal) actuality (and thereby resolve the inconsistency)). But in the case of profession without such sincere intention, the disharmony (hypocrisy) will resolve itself in other, less constructive ways. The spiritual student should thus endeavor to live in accordance with his beliefs (personal values), thereby bringing about more effective change (progression) in consciousness.

The overall character and quality of consciousness (and the derived temperament, values, etc.) are not so much a function of particular values as they are a function of the entire collection of values, as each value is weighted appropriately by the degree that it is embraced and its relative significance. The extent to which a value is understood (realized) is also a factor, for values may be held superficially, environmentally (unconsciously), or according to various motives. Likewise the degree to which a person is absorbed in his mundane environment qualifies the personal values (and consciousness) (or vice versa).

As a means of achievement, personal values (keywords) intelligently embraced in consciousness can bring about considerable progress, leading ultimately to (relative) perfection. To be effective, such values should be wisely chosen, continually (not continuously) studied (via meditation) and consciously embraced, enfolded, and expressed (to whatever extent is appropriate). The student should never embrace values concretely or in any absolute sense, for the student must remain flexible (receptive) and relative, in order to progress, as the perspective is ever gradually broadened. Some values will ultimately be discarded, others transformed and incorporated, as the awareness and realization of the student improves.

† Commentary No. 374

## The Sixth Ennead 5

The fifth tractate of the Sixth Ennead is entitled "On the Integral Omnipresence of the Authentic Existent: Second Treatise." Plotinus continues consideration of the god in each, being one and the same in all. The principle of unity is the principle "that all things seek their good" (which is unity on a progressively broader scale). The quest for good (unity) (perfection) is the evolutionary path, which qualifies all of life and all things, being self-evident to those who are consciously responsive to the evolutionary encouragement. The movement toward reality (unity) begins with the one, passes through the domain of multiplicity (appearance) (without degrading the essential unity), and ultimately returns to the one. Those who are truly aware of the path become that movement, and actually enter into the qualification of the path (and therefore all of life). Good is "truly inherent" and cannot be found externally.

All beings are one (in life and consciousness), since all are one with the self-contained Good.

The reasoning (concrete mental) faculty is material (corporeal) (mental, albeit materially mental, not physical or emotional, yet potentially vulnerable to physical and emotional experience (bias)). As the mind becomes more broadly coherent (stable) (less personal), it gradually embraces unity (inclusiveness) (the capacity for internal correlation) and becomes less materially mental (more refined) and consequently more responsive to higher impression. As the vision (focus) (perspective) of the (enlightened) mind is ultimately broadened, all aspects of life become essentially correlated, without inherent paradox or contradiction.

The god within is ever present, but each relates to that (one) god differently, according to character, consciousness, and temperament (ability, values, etc.), and is therefore accordingly (relatively) responsive to that divine, inner presence (good). The immediate goal is for man to so forego the outer life (the self-centered, mundane personality) (in the sense of essential, relative values), that the inner, all-pervasive sun may be fully embraced. Even in the case of the human animal (i.e., coarse, wholly self-centered, and absorbed in physical and emotional sense-experience), god lives within nonetheless (albeit thoroughly masked by the outer nature). This is the basis of brotherhood, that all are one, regardless of appearances of distinction.

Differentiated existence (expression) is itself merely an appearance (perspective); in fact, differentiated existence is a constructive illusion, or rather, existence is a complete (integral, multidimensional) continuum. Locality also is an illusion, as is discretion in time (but nonetheless possessing practical significance). Multiplicity arises via the infinite nature of unity. It is the principle of (generic) man that enters the form and appears as a particular expression. The reality of man is his higher nature, to which he (the localized consciousness) returns as his evolutionary experience is fulfilled. The external vision, however, deceptively (naturally) ignores unity (reality), while the internal vision, properly cultivated, embraces that unity and breeds enlightenment.

Enlightenment comes in the simplicity of internally-realized atonement. It is the essential unity of the soul that allows the (individual) soul consciousness to

participate in life (consciousness) (appearance). The key to unity is identification (self-realization), as the individual consciousness identifies with the greater life (reality) and loses its sense of independence, overcoming the illusions of ego, and allowing the god within to be realized.

† Commentary No. 375

## Freedom

One of the problems in the objective world (as human personalities) is the illusion of separateness and the sense of independence that naturally grows as the personality becomes relatively potent (as the personality becomes reasonably well-integrated). One of man's major objective values is freedom, yet much within the human domain (helpfully) constrains and limits the degree of freedom to be experienced. Each individual (human) has earned a measure of freedom, depending on past experience, consciousness, karma, etc., but that measure of freedom is generally perceived without consideration or realization of the framework of evolution, subjective and superphysical (impelling) forces, the inter-relatedness of all life, consciousness and appearance, etc.

All of human experience is conditioned or qualified by evolutionary factors and group karma. All individual experience is further qualified by individual karma (the consequences of activity and consciousness (present and past)). The relatively unevolved human being, being largely absorbed in physical and/or emotional experience, has relatively little freedom. Such an individual is not generally conscious of being an active force, moderating the immediate environment and experience; such an individual is largely and unconsciously responsive to external (astral) (astrological) forces. The actions of the relatively unevolved human being are generally determined by the environmental factors (glamour and illusion) (emotional and concrete mental forces) as they relate to the character and consciousness of the individual, not by virtue of the individual's relative freedom.

In the case of the evolving human being (one who is evolving still more or less unconsciously, but who is beginning to think freely), the measure of freedom is greater (albeit limited), the influence of external forces is less, and the individual

is beginning to actively influence the immediate (and consequential) environment and subsequent experience. As the individual further evolves, that freedom increases, yet remains bounded (moderated) by evolutionary factors (e.g., the greater needs of humanity take precedence over non-constructive individual expression). As long as a personality remains ego-centered (self-centered), the freedom of the individual will be limited (albeit potentially substantial). But where the individual evolves beyond the personality, where the mind embraces the soul (humility) (wisdom) (impersonality), the human being attains freedom.

But true freedom, being unlimited, is nonetheless qualified, by the character and quality of the soul. And such qualification introduces the essential nature of freedom, the freedom to contribute to the cause (fulfillment) of planetary evolution (and potentially beyond). Such is the paradox, that the character (wisdom) of the soul is to freely choose to align itself in consciousness with the greater life, exercising freedom only to the extent that such expression contributes constructively and effectively, not in accordance with any individual view, but in accordance with the group view (the consciousness of higher, group (planetary) consciousness). The opportunity exists nonetheless for the soul to choose otherwise, and rarely, a soul does so choose (and consequently ceases to exist as a soul).

Practical freedom is largely a function of karma, an earned privilege of consciousness. Freedom is not an inherent right of consciousness, except in the sense that it is granted by higher wisdom. The properly qualified (committed) spiritual student chooses to subordinate the individual freedom to greater needs (the path and all of its qualified domain in consciousness).

## Independence

Closely related to the measure of individual freedom is the sense (illusion) of independence that the ego (mind) (personality) enjoys. Freedom is indeed possible, even probable as the human being evolves, but independence in an absolute sense is not possible, for all things are inherently related. Individual consciousness cannot exist without inherent life (which is one with every other life). Nothing is totally independent, yet relative (entirely mundane) independence (illusion) is possible.

As the strength (integrated potency) of the individual ego (mind) (personality) increases, the individual becomes a relatively active, potent force in the immediate environment, leading (potentially) to a sense of self-reliance, independence, potency, etc. That sense of independence is compounded by the illusion (appearance) of separateness (i.e., that individual objects (people) (things) are distinct and independent) and the relative ignorance of the causal (relational) forces that link every manifested element together in life and consciousness (if not appearance). The desire for independence is a natural one, for it generally comes to the evolving human being who has already progressed beyond some of the primitive (preliminary) glammers and illusions, but that desire is compounded by more advanced (subtle) glammers and the illusion of success (freedom).

Another complication is the actual need for evolving humanity to learn to think freely, without bias or predisposition, without the narrow-mindedness of the concrete mind and without the distractions of the emotions. The spiritual student must learn to think freely in order to work (serve) (progress) effectively, and this requires a measure of detachment from mundane matters and external forces. This process leads rather naturally to a state of relative independence (from lesser things and mundane forces) that the mind relates to its own relative potency. The danger (impediment) comes where the personality goes too far in its sense (and expression) of independence, to the point where the ego is relatively self-centered and relatively detached from humanity (and other lives (higher consciousness)) rather than being merely detached from the petty, mundane aspects (such detachment being necessary for further evolution).

The spiritual student, at least, needs to achieve a balance between the natural, spiritual detachment (impersonality) (freedom), the need for an enlightened relationship with humanity (awareness) (compassion), the exercise of individuality (individual freedom) (the illusion of independence), and the subordination of the ego (lower self) to the group and to the path. As the spiritual student progresses, the exercise of individuality (independence) is further subordinated to the needs and dictates of wisdom (the spiritual path); the essence and expression of individuality is transformed into the relatively particular (personal) (individual) contribution to the path (e.g., the adaptation and expression of individual character, talents, etc., to the duties of the path). But that individual contribution must (ultimately) (necessarily) be subordinated to the higher qualification of the path.

The individual contribution is only meaningful where it is tendered in context (i.e., subordinated to and responsive to the character and encouragement (qualification) of the spiritual path). The danger of an active sense of independence is increased separation and isolation in consciousness from spiritual qualification. The sense of individuality and (more importantly) the sense of independence must be transformed into intelligent (not passive) subordination, cooperation, and adherence to the dharma of the path.

† Commentary No. 377

## Thanksgiving

One of the attributes of the spiritually-oriented person is an overall attitude (toward God) of gratitude and thankfulness for all the experience and conditions of life. Esoteric students, certainly (consciously), and to some extent spiritual students, aspirants, and those upon the paths of approach (relatively unconsciously), are generally aware of the karmic laws which determine all cause and effect relationships (consequences), and, quite significantly, generally realize the divine grace that motivates the karmic forces in their application of merited consequences.

The distinction between merited consequences and grace is an important one, for all consequences are simultaneously and identically merited and the result of divine grace. To think of karma only in the personal (earned) sense is misleading, for it is the grace of God (under some grand evolutionary scheme) that makes life and experience possible. It is the grace of God that provides all consequences, all experience, all conditions, and all benefits. And all such consequences are inherently beneficial, albeit not necessarily realizable in (with) superficial consciousness. For the apparent elements of consequences are but the mask (reality), as are all things in the lesser worlds.

The attitude of gratitude and thankfulness is itself a consequence of consciousness, in some a matter of habit and superficial (religious) conditioning, in some a genuine reflection of deeper (relatively unconscious) experience (communion with the soul and thus with God). Wherever such gratitude and thankfulness is genuine and consciously realized (manifested in a broader sense), the spiritual student participates (to some extent) in a higher consciousness and thereby facilitates the passage of spiritual forces into the immediate environment. Thus, the act or process of thanksgiving becomes a meaningful ritual and an effective part of the spiritual student's contemplative (meditative) life (consciousness) (expression).

The act of thanksgiving is an expressive prayer (on some conscious and unconscious levels), an acknowledgement in consciousness of the divine goodness that is the source of all life and consciousness, which provides all evolutionary opportunities and all (genuine) encouragement. The act of thanksgiving actually conditions the aura (personality consciousness) and is an aspect of proper cultivation. The act of thanksgiving (in the proper sense of broad, generalized appreciation, not merely an appreciation of superficial or mundane conditions or circumstances) actually creates or sustains a vortex of (relatively mature) aspirational energy which tends to evoke the higher consciousness (depending as well on other aspects of the lower consciousness (character) (temperament)). The important elements of thanksgiving are humility, sincerity, and selflessness.

Thanksgiving implies appreciative recognition of all elements of life (experience) as beneficial, and an appreciative acceptance of personal consequences, as properly merited and properly faced. Proper thanksgiving leads the individual

(lower personal consciousness) from self-centeredness and self-indulgence to humility and constructive selflessness. As a daily (or otherwise frequent) ritual, sincerely motivated, the act of thanksgiving evokes transforming potencies for the spiritual student, and (simultaneously) as a meditative discipline (in consciousness), the act of thanksgiving evokes the awareness and understanding necessary to apply those transforming potencies. Indeed, thanksgiving is an element of magical tradition, and a conveyance of harmonious force.

† Commentary No. 378

## The Sixth Ennead 6

The sixth tractate of the Sixth Ennead is entitled "On Numbers." A distinction is made between number (principle) (abstraction) (reality) and numbers (symbols). The most significant number (the first or primary order) is one (not in the sense of an isolated singularity, but of unity (the whole) (completeness)). The next (secondary) order is the duality (the two extremes) of zero and infinity, each masking the essential number (one) (the median).

Of greater significance is the concept of number and the concepts of unity, duality, triplicity, etc. Multiplicity (infinity) (limitlessness) may appear (in perspective) to be a departure from unity, in the sense of the compounding nature of extension (differentiation), yet the inherent reality of multiplicity is the infinity within unity. Consciousness is the link between unity (reality) and multiplicity (illusion) (transience) (exile), the medium through which unity is manifested in diversity. Of more practical significance is the simultaneous flowing outward (toward multiplicity and manifestation) and flowing inward (toward completion (unity)), the outward movement being involution (ignorance) (evil) and the inward movement being evolution (wisdom) (goodness). Expansion in the material sense (outer expansion) serves involution (diversity), while expansion in the sense of consciousness (inner expansion) serves evolution (the urge to unity and perfection). Movement (rest), unity (multiplicity), and infinity (finiteness) are all merely perspectives.

One is a discrete singularity; monad (unity) (oneness) is an integrated whole (quality). Two (three) is a collection or composite of discrete elements; dyad

(triad) is an integrated whole (unity), having two (three) aspects. The potentiality (principle) (reality) of number precedes any manifestation (expression) (extension). The application of number conveys process; the expression of number succeeds application. Thus number precedes distinction (being) (movement) (identity). In a sense, number actually produces distinction. Natural numbers (in contrast to arbitrary numbers) are produced as consequences of creative (conceptual) manifestation (order) on each respective level. The principles (unity, duality, triplicity, etc.) are necessarily interactive and convey ordered movements within manifestation.

Number (in principle) is a causative force, each aspect inducing alignment by virtue of responsiveness to the particular (associated) (derived) character (of the particular relative significance (energy)). Numbers have significance only in principle, or in alignment (coincidence) with (relationship to) qualified (ordered) energy. Numbers do not possess inherent power; numbers exhibit potency only in their symbolic or relational sense (correspondence) (i.e., natural numbers possess significance). Only the force or energy related to has power (and consciousness is necessarily required for its evocation or manifestation).

“Unity and number are precedent.” The notion of unity precedes its expression, and cannot be taken from the object so possessing. Unity is affirmed to the extent that reality is embraced, yet unity ever precedes affirmation (or even expression). For every manifold there exists a precedence (unity). The continuous has a greater significance (in principle) than the continual or merely multiple. “Unity must precede reality and be its author.” Primal numbers (principles) (qualification) (unity, duality, triplicity) are distinctly superior to derived numbers (acting for the primals) and numbers of association or reckoning, respectively. Number represents inherence, while quantity is circumstantial or consequential.

## Compelling Karma

One of the aspects or dimensions of karma is the degree of compulsion associated with a given karmic force (consequence). Though any given karmic force is multifaceted (drawing from numerous earlier actions) and distributed in time, that force can be perceived in differentiated terms of relative compulsion. Some karmic consequences are necessarily (virtually) compelling, and for all practical purposes inevitable (unavoidable). Other karmic consequences may be relatively non-compelling, from those forces which interact strongly (dynamically) with the subject's consciousness, to those forces which are almost incidental to the individual's consciousness and experience (but are nonetheless necessary in order to achieve completeness and consistency).

Compelling karma may be further differentiated into two types: that which is clearly cumulative from earlier experience, the fulfillment of which being determined entirely by karmic processes (bounds of karmic force), and that which is selected and programmed by the soul (under whatever measure of free will that has been achieved (earned)) for a given incarnation (from the cumulative karma, according to the (subjective) discretion and needs of the soul) (imposed nonetheless upon the manifested life, experience and consciousness of the personality). Thus, the general, impelling or compelling nature of karma is determined largely by the karmic laws themselves and to some extent by the interactive soul. Karmic laws constrain the relatively unevolved soul to some considerable extent, far less so in the case of the relatively evolved soul, such a soul being in closer relationship to its personality instrument (and more able to interact with its own karmic origin).

Compelling karma is programmed into the manifested life (experience) (consciousness) of the personality via external (internal) forces (including astrological consideration) (the relatively unevolved personality being quite vulnerable and responsive to external (astrological) forces, while the relatively evolved personality is relatively free from such vulnerability). By definition, compelling karma is a set of karmic forces released into the objective world, programmed in time or programmed to trigger in some fashion relative to the

individual's experience (expression), and (relatively) irrevocable and immoderate.

In the case of relatively evolved souls (personalities), compelling karma is not generally evoked, for such souls have already (generally) fulfilled the more serious (compelling) karma and are more capable of consciously and intelligently interacting with any given circumstances or experience. But where compelling karma is evoked (always with merit), it is the necessary consequence of earlier action and not necessarily (or even generally) indicative of the current consciousness. The lessons to be learned from (via) any given karmic experience are ever lessons in consciousness, having implications for the subtle (higher) layers of human consciousness, if not obviously meaningful to the outer (superficial) (waking) consciousness. Learning (progress) is obviously facilitated to the extent and character of the individual's consciousness.

Where the implications and lessons in consciousness are not obvious or clear to the waking consciousness, the individual should simply proceed as dispassionately as possible, sincerely seeking to learn whatever lessons are afforded, without frustration, even if the lessons are afforded only to the less conscious levels. All karmic opportunity should be considered seriously (but not too seriously), for many are the lessons afforded by every compelling experience along the path.

† Commentary No. 380

## Non-Compelling Karma

Non-compelling karma is that subset of karmic consequences that is more impelling or interactive than compelling. Non-compelling karma is more of a distributed pressure, to be fulfilled according to the interactive opportunities in consciousness (i.e., dependent on the individual's free will and current condition (character) of consciousness). This impelling force is an encouragement that must ultimately be fulfilled, but not necessarily constrained to given circumstances or a given incarnation. In other words, such karma is to some extent deferrable or at least dynamic (flexible) in its relationship to the individual consciousness.

Non-compelling karma exists as much for the relatively unevolved as for the relatively highly evolved (the converse (for compelling karma) not being true), but the more evolved individuals are better able to utilize the interactive karmic forces for their own progression and service. The more intelligently responsive a person is to afforded experience and circumstances, generally the more meaningful will that experience be and generally the more progress attained (experience assimilated). This implies some discretion to recognize meaningful experience (and consequently to refuse to be absorbed by less meaningful experience) and to make the implied adjustments in consciousness. Much thus depends on the awareness, discretion, responsiveness, intuition, and initiative of the individual in relation to the afforded circumstances.

The individual presently lacking in compelling karma who fails to respond to the opportunities afforded by non-compelling karma, will subsequently experience the karmic consequences of wasted opportunity. But the individual so lacking (or otherwise) who responds intelligently (with awareness and proper consideration) may progress substantially in what would otherwise be a rather dull incarnation (from the standpoint of higher consciousness). Non-compelling karma may be as dramatic and as potentially catastrophic (from the perspective of the easily deceived personality) as compelling karma, the difference being that the personality (mind) (consciousness) is potentially able to moderate the karmic effects, either by deferring the forces or by actually fulfilling the implied energy.

The bulk of cumulative karma is non-compelling, as is the bulk of karma created by the present consciousness (consciously and otherwise), but the longer a person goes without fulfillment of major non-compelling karma, the more that karma is potentially transformed into compelling karma (and subsequently the greater is the loss of relative freedom). For the spiritual (esoteric) student living on or near the frontier of human consciousness, the karma is almost entirely created by current consciousness and group consideration, the accumulated karma having been fulfilled in order to reach the frontier of consciousness. This implies, however, that the effects of current activity are relatively more potent (compelling or otherwise) (meaning the lessons are more substantial (subtle)).

Like compelling karma, non-compelling karma may involve karma released (available) by virtue of earlier experience and karmic law alone, or by virtue of the soul's power of evocation. Particularly in the case of relatively evolved

souls, the soul will subjectively evoke non-compelling karma in response to the character and quality of current consciousness and the circumstances created by (for) that consciousness as a matter of course. The interactive aspects of consciousness (karma) are considerably more potent (potentially) than the compelling aspects.

† Commentary No. 381

## Creation and Evolution

Creation is defined as the act or process of bringing the world (universe) into existence (manifestation). Evolution is defined as the process of continuous change (development) (advancement) (growth) from some relatively lower state or condition to another, relatively higher state or condition. An act of creation implies the existence of a creative being having some intention or purpose. Evolution implies some manifested life which is subject to some evolutionary qualification. In the broader sense, evolution is the process in which the whole universe is a progression of interrelated phenomena, embracing life, consciousness and appearance (form).

Cosmogogenesis (the coming into being of the cosmos (universe)) and all analogous processes (such as anthropogenesis) are simultaneously and inseparably processes of creation and evolution; creation in the sense of a continuing outpouring of cyclical, purposive energy, and evolution in the sense that the creative forces purposely stimulate and guide a continuing development of all lives (at all levels) toward progressively higher states. By virtue of the creative outpouring, the cosmos is inherently orderly, harmonious, and systematic. The creator of any cosmic manifestation is a cosmic logos. The creator on a systemic level is a solar logos (and on the level of a planetary scheme, a planetary logos). Each logos, on its level is an element or aspect of a greater life (logos), yet effectively God for all of its own manifestation (yet even so, subject to higher qualification).

The creative being (God) evokes a creative force or impulse which is sustained and qualified by some intention or purpose (i.e., a continuing outpouring of qualified energy). That divine qualification in turn evokes (creates) some meaningful structure (cosmic, karmic, and evolutionary laws) (in order to

ultimately (gradually) bring about the intended conditions). The cyclical patterns correlate (in some fashion) with the seven rays, as the seven ray energies are evoked as part of the qualification process. The seven days of creation portrayed in the Old Testament effectively symbolize seven great cycles of evolutionary achievement, each particularly qualified in various ways by the ray energies and their relationships.

Evolution is the process through which intended conditions or achievements are fulfilled. The creator first evokes an archetype that embraces the evolutionary plan; then based upon that archetypal existence, the creative (qualified) energies are evoked (released) cyclically (progressively). The plan is sufficiently detailed to bound manifestation and guide it toward fulfillment, yet sufficiently general to (normally) permit considerable freedom (variation) (dynamic adaptation and modification) for the lives so contained (sustained). The consequences of major creative processes are somewhat probabilistic, in the sense that some general intention is achieved, but the specifics are not necessarily or usually predictable. The whole of evolution is interactive, as all lives (subordinate to God) are interdependent. The relative freedom conveyed by the creative process provides a measure of experimental qualification (individual and species expression). Since major lives within a logos are themselves quite intelligent and inherently creative, a measure of epigenesis persists throughout each evolutionary manifestation.

Evolutionary laws are the direct results of divine qualification (yet not necessarily or normally deliberately specified). Karma is a principal evolutionary force, a significant and essential aspect of the creative process. Creation and evolution are two aspects of one universal principle embracing all.

## The Sixth Ennead 7

The seventh tractate of the Sixth Ennead is entitled "How the Multiplicity of the Ideal-Forms came into Being; and on The Good." In sending "souls to their birth," God provides various forms and senses and powers. This providence is precedent, in the sense that all development and provision on manifested (lower) levels is embraced at least generally (conceptually) by the divine (evolutionary) plan. "The alone and one and utterly simplex" does not plan or reason in the human sense, for the truly creative act is necessarily complete in itself, a realization (conception) and evocation. For the creator, on its level, succession (cyclic manifestation) pre-exists in the totality of creation.

Cause and effect are inseparable. The idea ultimately reveals the inherent cause. The higher the realm, the greater the degree of inherence. Manifested works are the consequences of archetypal existence. The personality is simply an (inferior) activity of the soul. It is the soul which holds the pattern (matrix) of the human form (personality). And it is the soul which illuminates the form (mind) (person) to the extent of the soul quality and the extent of the personality response.

Since life (reality) is an inclusive continuum, an entire spectrum of life (consciousness) (form) is manifested. Lives (forms) are greater or lesser not in any absolute sense, but only in the relative sense of position (development) (precedence) (character) within the spectrum (scheme). Each distinction contributes significance to the whole. Under natural law, archetypal existence (the only real existence) necessarily evokes reproduction (reflection) (manifestation) (fulfillment), for (creative) self-concentration necessarily produces an outflow of energy. The manifold (manifested universe), being a succession, requires each precedent to exist simultaneously (in some form) with each succeeding lifewave (kingdom).

The distinction of self-consciousness (reasoning) exists between the third (animal) and fourth (human) kingdoms (of the Earth scheme), just as other distinctions exist between each of the various kingdoms. Intelligence is (potentially) vastly broader than simply reasoning in the human sense.

Variations in intelligence exist in (at least) several dimensions (e.g., there exists intelligence vastly superior to the human, yet wholly without the ability to reason). The manifold consists “of things progressively differing,” yet essentially one (in the higher context). All lives (kingdoms) and elements (air) (water) (fire) (earth) are ensouled and exist in consciousness as a higher (greater) reality than in their objective form, albeit vastly different in appearance (e.g., symbolic rather than literal correspondence). Everything in the lower sphere exists in higher correspondence.

Once life (love) (light) (unity) (reality) (the one) (the good) (truth) (the all-inclusive) is actually embraced, all else is recognized as darkness (ignorance) (ego) (illusion) (the petty, mundane world and its values). The power of the good embraces all; the good can be found (potentially) in all things, however masked by appearance. The inherent good (light) (love) (life) tends to stir the lesser (outer) being to the greater (source) (God). The divine glow within the form, albeit masked by (coarse) matter, “gathers strength, awakens, and spreads” in the natural course of evolution toward the good. Pleasure is inadequate, transient (illusion). The good is eternal (real) and ever worthy. The quest of the soul is the good. Once embraced, the radiance of the one draws (impels) (compels) the lesser onward and upward. And thus all distinctions are released in “the august repose” of the supreme.

† Commentary No. 383

## Full Moon Meditation

Full moon meditation is a particular form of qualified meditation at the point (time) of the full moon, or at least within the several days of the full moon period. Full moon meditation is relatively important because it involves a planetary alignment (in consciousness) at a time when particular energies are available via the solar lens. The particular energy (theme) embraced varies from month to month according to the lunar cycle, with the first three full moon periods of the solar year being relatively more significant.

Full moon meditation is an essentially second ray activity. It involves the soul, the second ray aspect of the human being (even though each particular soul is qualified by any one of the seven rays). It involves the Christ as an

intermediary, linking together the various planetary centers (including humanity). And it involves the solar logos who is a second ray logos. Ordinary (personal) meditation involves the personality and (potentially) the alignment of the personality with the soul. Full moon meditation, to be effective, requires a wholly subdued personality, properly aligned with the soul, and alignment of that soul with the Christ (and the hierarchy). Full moon meditation is consequently less personal than ordinary meditation. The overshadowing theme of full moon meditation is light and love via the Christ.

Full moon meditation historically (ideally) involves a deliberate withdrawal from ordinary life (mundane experience) for the period of the full moon and a measure of fasting to help effect that withdrawal and improve the responsiveness of the individual to the available energies. Also, historically (ideally), full moon meditation complements the serious individual meditation of the spiritual student. Indeed, without effective daily spiritual (impersonal) meditation (or meditative discipline), the individual participation in the full moon meditation will be relatively ineffective. Without an effective daily spiritual discipline, the spiritual student simply cannot contribute effectively or effectively respond to the full moon experience, because the student would carry too much of the mundane (personal) energy to the meditation.

Three approaches to full moon meditation are generally (potentially) effective: (1) Individual approach, in the case of physically isolated spiritual students who are able to link up effectively with the Christ (Hierarchy) (with or without some group alignment) during meditation, effectively subordinating both the personality and individuality to the planetary alignment. (2) Public group approach, in the case of publicly held full moon meditations, intelligently moderated, where the informal group is loosely integrated and aligned with the full moon experience. (3) Private group approach, in the case of formal group integration and alignment with the full moon energies. To be effective, of course, both group approaches must involve individual qualification, effective integration, subordination, and alignment.

The principal advantage of the public group approach is the more direct relationship with humanity, on its (semi-conscious) level, which facilitates the transfer of the full moon energies into human consciousness. The principal disadvantage of the public group approach is the effect of unqualified

(ineffective) participants. The principal advantage of private (formal) group approach is the (potentially) greatly improved character and quality of meditation (participation in the full moon alignment) that results from a true group rapport, where each participant is effectively integrated and aligned in group formation. But there is a need for each of the three (complementary) approaches to full moon meditation.

† Commentary No. 384

## Kingdoms and Lifewaves

Life is an attribute and conveyance of the Solar Logos, in the sense that all lives within the ring-pass-not of the solar system are wholly dependent upon the solar logos for their existence, and more properly, actually comprise that solar life. The basic unit of life is the monad, a spark of the solar life that knows no differentiation. As monadic life is reflected into consciousness (and further, into matter), that (reflected) monadic life is composed of a number (continuum) of lifewaves, each having some sense or attribute of distinction (discreteness).

From the outpouring of the logos, the stream of lifewaves flows through the various conditions or aspects of manifestation. Each lifewave is a mass consciousness, related to the monadic life, to the preceding (succeeding) (parallel) lifewaves, and to the manifestation through which it must pass for experience, expression, and evolution. Each lifewave may be differentiated into relatively distinct lives (souls) and (various) groups of lives, the degree of distinction depending on the level of evolved consciousness and the character or quality of the lifewave. Individual lives (souls), group lives, and lifewaves all evolve interdependently according to the evolutionary plan and the available qualification (conditions, guidance, and stimulation).

Elementary (basic) lifewaves tend to be reflected further into matter than secondary (advanced) lifewaves which remain largely in consciousness (with the potential illusion of their own reflection into matter). Elementary lives form the actual conditions in matter and consciousness, in the sense that they are composite lives that are manifested as (in) material forms. The physical plane, for example, is composed of a vast number of elementary lives (and numerous groups of lives) which form the physical conditions (environment) for their own

experience and for the manifestation of higher lives (e.g., plant, animal, human). A kingdom is that manifested environment through which a lifewave experiences. The animal (third) kingdom, for example, is the environment (conditions) (qualifications) through which the animal lifewave evolves. That kingdom is composed of elementary lives (forms) on physical, etheric, and astral levels. Both kingdoms and lifewaves are qualified in various ways by the seven rays and the various ordered cycles of manifestation.

In a sense, there is simultaneously a succession of lifewaves and a succession of kingdoms. The various kingdoms evolve as the composite (elementary) lives evolve and as the secondary lives provide the stimulation of their passage. The various lifewaves evolve by virtue of their experience in each succeeding kingdom (domain). The various lifewaves (kingdoms) evolve in various (particular) ways and at various rates. Lifewaves evolve relatively fast compared to the respective kingdoms. The lifewave which is now human (i.e., the lifewave presently inhabiting the human kingdom) will eventually evolve beyond the human kingdom, to the next (fifth) kingdom.

Some passage is possible (albeit limited) (for the individual lives) between the various parallel and successive lifewaves. Advanced lives (pioneers) may be permitted to evolve into the next higher kingdom in advance of their lifewave, thereby effecting transition into the preceding lifewave. Likewise, those who are unable to evolve at the same overall rate as the other members of their lifewave (i.e., stragglers) may effectively pass into the succeeding lifewave (not to the preceding kingdom). As a general rule, however, advanced lives remain within their respective lifewaves, though evolving at the respective leading edge (which effectively broadens the lifewave).

## Heart Quality and the Emotions

Several significant distinctions exist between heart quality and the emotions. Emotions (feelings) are expressions of the personality utilizing astral matter (the material substance of the astral or emotional plane). The vast majority of humanity are emotionally-polarized; their personality consciousness is largely reactive to internal and external astral (emotional) (desire) forces (glamour). The astral (emotional) plane is a plane of (lower) consciousness. Heart quality, on the other hand, is a qualification in consciousness (effectively spanning several planes of consciousness) and is neither a level of consciousness nor a construct in consciousness.

The astral plane of consciousness is the field of emotions, literally filled with emotional substance, the forms of desires, feelings, etc. The human astral or emotional body is actually submerged in the astral plane and tends to be highly reactive to conditions in the astral plane (feelings that exist in the emotional environment), because the astral body is typically not an integrated part of the personality (though it typically dominates the personality unless the personality is indeed properly integrated) and because the astral plane is relatively chaotic (dynamic) (fluidic) and inherently unstable. The prevailing qualification of the astral plane is glamour, the residue (mixture) of unconstrained emotional (personal) energies.

The primary distinction between emotion and heart quality is that the former is inherently personal, while the latter is inherently impersonal. Personal energy (astral matter) is relatively coarse and highly reactive. The emotions, per se, are (normally) dynamically attractive and repulsive. However, when the emotions (individual astral body) are disciplined (qualified) (refined) (stabilized and uplifted) by the mind and made a part of an integrated personality, then the individual can not only control the emotions (remain poised), but can refine them and qualify them (with heart quality). But until then the individual is typically the victim of his own desires, emotions, feelings, and glammers, and highly vulnerable to external forces.

The unqualified and unrefined emotions tend to form attachments via the astral plane. The properly qualified, highly refined, and disciplined emotions are non-reactive and can be used as a means of relating effectively with a humanity unable to respond intelligently or properly to higher impression (e.g., intuitional (buddhic) or higher mental levels). Thus, the spiritually poised individual of considerable heart quality (being qualified by the soul rather than the personality or the mind) is an instrument of impersonal love, compassion, and goodwill, who can achieve an intelligent rapport with humanity while remaining poised and detached (without being involved with or enchanted by the more typical human (personal) energies).

The heart quality itself is a reflection of the character of the soul (humility and impersonal love) via the heart center (a major psychic center) which bridges between the levels of the soul (atma-buddhic-manas) and the levels of the personality (physical, emotional, and mental). Where the heart center is properly unfolded, the higher character (of the soul) flows into and qualifies the responsive (integrated) (aligned) (refined and cultivated) (disciplined) personality. The rapport of the soul is never emotional (or physical or mental); the rapport of the soul is inherently buddhic. But the emotions can nonetheless be an effective (albeit limited) means of relationship and encouragement. However, the real tool of the enlightened student is heart quality, manifested on every practicable level of consciousness.

† Commentary No. 386

## The Sixth Ennead 8

The eighth tractate of the Sixth Ennead is entitled "On Free Will and the Will of the One." Freedom absolute is possessed only by God (the One), being beyond even will. God is; all else follows. The One is "self-existing always, needs no containing, no participating." All else participates to some extent in the One. "The Supreme is everywhere and yet nowhere." The One does not will; the will of the One follows by induction. The (induced) plan embraces all that is manifested, effectively bounding and qualifying all of manifestation. By providence, the manifested universe is as it is intended to be, though the particulars (specifics) (variety) are merely bounded.

Nothing is as it happens so to be. Everything is consequential, not necessarily significantly so, but nonetheless consequential. The causes are a combination of qualified higher intention and the relational interactiveness of the manifested constituency (forms (matter), consciousness, and spirit). Nothing is wholly accidental, for all follows from cause and effect relationships. Yet a measure of freedom exists, to the extent that intelligence (consciousness) is not absorbed by (in) the manifested environment and/or the lower (psychological) nature. True freedom is beyond opportunity, beyond the realm of conditions (external and internal constraints) and actions.

Freedom is therefore relative, and, for all practical purposes, is possessed only by those who live according to higher reason (the soul) and are thereby free from the demands of the unqualified (reactive) lower nature. Thus desirelessness (freedom from glamour) is a prerequisite of voluntary action. Wherever an individual (group) is enslaved by experience (which is nonetheless necessary for evolutionary consideration), there is little if any freedom, for actions (reactions) (interactions) are determined by (earned) environmental forces (conditions) and the individual's (group's) own character and temperament (lower nature). Freedom follows the extent of self-mastery and alignment with the soul (yet freedom applies ever to volition, not ever to imposition).

Practical (relative) freedom is measured by the extent to which voluntary action is possible, without compulsion, without need of circumstances or conditions, without the bias of desire, glamour, or other aspects of the lower nature. Relative freedom is the extent of self-disposal, based upon will (atma) (which is not the "will" of the lower nature), which is in turn based upon (right) reasoning, knowledge, and realization. The "presentment of fancy is not a matter of our will and choice," but is merely the demand of the lower nature. The presentment of fancy arises "from conditions of the body" (i.e., physical, emotional, and/or concrete mental conditions), and has naught to do with self-disposal or voluntary action. "Self-disposal belongs to those who live above the states of the body." "To desire is still to be drawn," thus, "act rising from desire" cannot be voluntary.

Freedom is thus diluted (masked) (constrained) by embodiment and immersion (in the objective world). Freedom in the context of external conditions, albeit limited or bounded by karmic forces, is conveyed also to the extent of alignment

with the (evolutionary) path. Progression in the direction of greater consciousness conveys some degree of freedom; attempted movement contrary to that direction conveys restriction and further bounding (karma) leading inevitably to realignment. Or in other words, "effort is free once it is towards a fully recognized good." However, in the final analysis, "freedom of act, our self-disposal, must be referred not to the doing, not to the external thing done but to the inner activity."

† Commentary No. 387

## Meditation Prelude

One of the important keys to effective meditation is proper preparation, including a deliberate prelude to meditation. A pattern of meditation (consistency in time, place and temperament) should be established such that the habit of effective meditation becomes a qualification in itself. The will or predetermination to meditate seriously each day is quite essential, for energy follows thought, and thus energy (to properly qualify the meditation and to properly qualify the personality) follows that (thoughtful) predetermination, particularly where reinforced (refreshed) by consistency.

The conscious predetermination should reinforce the pattern of meditation, by mentally anticipating each (daily) (particular) meditation period. In the case of an early morning meditation pattern, the spiritual student should meditate before becoming involved in any other activity, for any non-meditative activity is a distraction to some extent. In the case of a meditation pattern other than morning, the student should effect a meditation prelude of conscious withdrawal from external activities, involvements, or other distractions. All concerns should be wholly released, save the predisposition for meaningful, spiritual meditation. Even in the case of an early morning meditation rhythm, some prelude should precede the actual meditation.

Eating within the hour prior to the meditation period is discouraged, for it will generally impede effective meditation. Occasional (moderate) fasting is potentially quite helpful to meditation (and personality cultivation). No meditation should be held under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (unless deemed medically necessary). Wherever possible, the meditation surroundings

should be quiet and peaceful, and preferably so maintained continuously, for the place (environment) (sanctuary) of meditation is as easily overcome by mundane or objective energies as the personality (temperament).

The prelude is actually a quiet time of (temporary) withdrawal (relaxation) (disentanglement) from the (ordinary) mundane (non-meditative) life, precedent to proper meditation. Wherever possible, a prelude of twenty minutes or more should be achieved, though the withdrawal from activity may be a longer, more gradual process (e.g., sixty minutes) (a gradual withdrawal followed by a more formal prelude). Any meditation shortly following predominantly physical or mundane (involved) activity will likely be thereby impaired (though it is ultimately possible for a spiritual student to be physically active without being absorbed or distracted by such activity) (such overall detachment from physical (emotional) (intellectual) (mundane) (objective) (personal) (personality-centered) matters being a worthy goal in its own right).

The prelude (of minimal activity) may involve soft (unemotional) classical music (which may even serve as background music for the meditation) and/or appropriate reading (material of philosophical or spiritual value). In any event, the student should simply relax quietly while turning (leading) the mind from the lower self (and its values) to the higher. The prelude should be a time of informal alignment and may also be a time of informal reflection or retrospection. The prelude is the time during which the meditation atmosphere is created (activated) (evoked) (confirmed). During the prelude, the student can learn to ignore distraction and to eliminate curiosity, to assure an uninterrupted meditation. Toward the end of the prelude (quiet time), the meditation posture (back aligned vertically and the body positioned to afford the ease of no movement) should be assumed. The body should thus remain still throughout the actual meditation period.

## Pioneers

Each lifewave within the scheme of planetary evolution contains some diversity of lives (units of consciousness) and a corresponding diversity of forms, all essentially equal (generic), yet each having its own character, temperament, experience, abilities, and tendencies, according to the degree of variety intended for the lifewave (as a consequence of overall objectives) and according to the actual experience embraced. Quite naturally, some lives will progress more rapidly or more directly than others, and the lifewave will consequently broaden to accommodate three generalized groups: those who have evolved in advance of the bulk of the lifewave, those who are evolving more or less at the intended rate for the lifewave, and those who are not able to keep up the pace of the lifewave or who fail to meet the intended standards.

The pioneers of each lifewave are those who have progressed in advance of the intended standards for the lifewave. The pioneers are themselves intended, to some extent, as the pioneers generally provide the (subtle) leadership for the lifewave (in consciousness) and in a sense create or sustain an evolutionary path for the lifewave. To some extent, the lessons learned by the pioneers (and the energies and consciousness achieved) are passed on to those who follow, in a form that is somewhat easier to assimilate. Thus (quite significantly), the pioneers provide continuity from the leading edge of the lifewave to the bulk of the lifewave. By definition, the pioneers are more responsive to evolutionary forces (encouragement) (qualification), and thereby form the vanguard (waveguides) of the lifewave (race).

The pioneers of any lifewave are the harbingers (forerunners) (pathfinders), who (quietly) (unobtrusively) develop abilities, character, and consciousness which are later (sometimes much later) developed by the bulk of the lifewave. Since the entire evolutionary process is progressive and cyclical, the pioneers are those who have made sufficient progress to be considered advanced by up to several major cycles. The path of the pioneers is the path of initiation, which is more directly guided and qualified by the higher lives than is the case for the bulk of the lifewave (which receives much more attention (in consciousness) yet is guided and qualified indirectly).

The pioneers reside on (or near) the leading edge of the lifewave. The leading edge is the region in consciousness of greatest evolutionary pressure (tension) (while the trailing edge is the region of least evolutionary pressure). For humanity, the spiritual path leads from the bulk of the lifewave to the leading edge, through the paths of approach, aspiration (probation), discipleship, and initiation, with steadily increasing (occult) tension. Those upon the path (pioneers) receive the most difficult (subtle) assignments (in consciousness) and labor under the most difficult of evolutionary pressures, yet necessarily so. No dilettante could embrace those pressures; only those souls who consciously commit themselves embark upon the path of perfection.

The price of (accelerated) progress is considerable, yet many (relatively few) respond to the higher calling and form a steady stream of increasingly intelligent life. Those who evolve so far as to pass beyond the leading edge (which necessarily (generally) bounds the lifewave) do so in transition to the preceding lifewave (or are otherwise removed from their hitherto customary association). This is necessary in order to maintain the proper intended balance for each lifewave and to provide improved continuity (in relating the energies and consciousness of advanced lifewaves back to those who ultimately follow (albeit on a higher turn of the spiral and under different conditions)).

† Commentary No. 389

## The Sixth Ennead 9

The ninth tractate of the Sixth Ennead, being the last tractate of the last of Plotinus' Enneads, is entitled "On the Good, or the One." The Good (the One) (the Soul) (Unity) is the most essential principle, after the life principle, for any existence (manifested being or expression). "It is in virtue of unity that beings are beings." There exists a greater (absolute) unity that embraces all things, all consciousness, all life. There is a lesser, relative unity that can describe any form, focus of consciousness, or life (monad) that embraces the greater unity, and to the extent that unity is embraced and manifested. That having greater unity is able to bestow upon the lesser (derivative) (reflection), some extent of that unity.

The soul is a unifying aspect that draws the (integrated) personality into greater (higher) unity (alignment). The integrated personality is a unifying aspect that draws the elements of the personality together into coherence. Each element of the personality, in turn, is (potentially) a unifying aspect for the (corresponding) form. But it is the soul, for all practical (higher) purposes that is the aspect of unity for any manifested being. Yet all things (consciousness) (life) are merely participants in some greater unity (the One). In collective existence, all things are embraced by the One. The being of any aspect or element (form, focus of consciousness, monad, etc.) is one with every other, regardless of order, in the highest conceivable sense. That human vision should be turned outward to the illusion of externalized manifestation in no way lessens the essential unity of all life.

Intermediate unities embrace unified elements and reflect the extent of participation in the (respective) higher unity. Any unity is not merely a totality; it is more, for unity is a relational inherence, utilizing a single, coherent force to qualify all of its elements, a oneness that goes beyond collection or coordination. The way of unity is not the way of the senses, for unity is an internal experience (realization) (since the senses are naturally deluded by the external appearance of the manifold). While being has "the shape of its reality," unity lies beyond even being. The vision of unity leads beyond knowledge, beyond even realization, to absorption in unity. To be merely aware of the Light is to fall short of the One, for one must rather be that One, in transcending all that constitutes a masking of the One.

Yet to be, falls short of that One; to be One is not to be. The greatest embraceable unity is merely symbolic of the One. The human being is a manifold, yes even the monad, the utter oneness of human being. But the path (higher, inner vision) leads to awareness of unity, as the consciousness is transcended by being and all that is transient (personal) is left behind. The movement of the soul is toward the center, yet toward that center moves every soul. Only One reaches that center, the One of all. Everything that lacks awareness of that center suffers the (relative) illusion of separation, the "otherness" of differentiated existence.

It is for human consciousness to seek the One (God) within, to attend to that calling and the necessary (prerequisite) qualifications. It is for human consciousness to evolve beyond the world of shadows, for the lower phase of the soul to be uplifted to the higher, for the higher phase of the soul to return to its source, completed and fulfilled. For the One (the Good) (God) calls softly and gently over the aeons of manifested existence (evolution), calling the essence of God within each, persistently onward and upward, closer and closer, forever and ever.

† Commentary No. 390

## Personality Transformation 1

The early years of each incarnation are generally spent developing the three aspects (vehicles) of the personality: the physical body and its etheric double, the emotional or astral body, and the mind. Roughly seven to ten years are spent developing (forming) each vehicle, though no fixed rule applies. This development is actually a redevelopment or recapitulation, at least for the physical and emotional vehicles, while the development (redevelopment) (formulation) of the mind may take a few years in the case of advanced recapitulation, or many years (or several lifetimes) in the case of the relatively unevolved who have (relatively) little mental focus (development).

Advanced development (rapid recapitulation), followed by considerable enhancement as the mind consolidates or integrates the personality allows simultaneous redevelopment and refinement of the physical, emotional, and mental abilities. While the relatively unevolved spend lifetimes gradually developing and refining the personality aspects, the spiritual student is expected to achieve some considerable control (integration) of the personality, relatively early in the incarnation, so that effort may then be concentrated on alignment (refinement and subordination of the personality) with the soul and on the application of the higher (deeper) temperament (service).

An integrated personality is required for alignment, but the mere achievement of an integrated personality does not indicate the ability or suitability for alignment, for considerable refinement (qualification) of the personality is necessary before alignment is even possible. But where such integration and

alignment is a recapitulation, the achievement may follow (relatively) quickly, depending on ability, circumstances (opportunity), and current qualification. Thus alignment (relatively conscious awareness of the soul via a responsive, wholly subordinated personality) may or may not follow effective integration, but that integration (and subsequent refinement) is nonetheless a necessary prelude to the next major, evolutionary step (the transition from personality consciousness to soul consciousness).

Those who are not yet on the spiritual path generally spend many lifetimes of experience leading to integration, followed by many lifetimes of further (more effective) experience via integrated personalities. Those who are on the path simply experience an accelerated, more conscious development and expression. Each major stage of development (experience) consists of phases or cycles, with an effective transition between each phase (cycle) (major stage) to provide continuity (assimilation) (reconfiguration) and to provide for adaptation to new (greater) challenges (further experience). Once any level or sub-level of consciousness (or aspect of experience) is effectively incorporated, it is time to go forward, to the next phase (cycle).

For the personality, generally, each transition or transformation is an unappreciated change, for the personality is quite naturally reactive (defensive), and generally seeks to retain the status quo (i.e., the personality has inertia). Thus the personality is normally easily attached to circumstances which afford apparent security, particularly where those circumstances are also entertaining (enchanted) or stimulating or inflationary (ego-centered), even though such experience (distraction) may not be productive as far as progress in consciousness is concerned. One of the problems for the spiritual student during the process of effectively integrating the personality and again during the process of soul alignment is to guide the personality onward, remaining adaptable and flexible (and coherent (stable)).

## Personality Transformation 2

The resistance of the elements of the personality and of the personality itself (when integrated) to change are particularly evident during the effort to integrate those elements and during the subsequent refinement and elevation leading to soul alignment. This resistance (inertia) is an inherent property of matter (coarse vibration) and can be effectively overcome only by transformation (qualification). The personality resistance is a reflection of the natural independence (separativeness) of matter. The integration of the personality means the effective subordination of the ((apparently) relatively independent) elements of the personality to a central personality energy (the concrete mind). For the subordinated elements, this implies loss of self-control and acceptance of a secondary, albeit qualified position. The same is true for the integrated personality relative to the soul during the effort toward alignment, i.e., natural resistance, ultimately overcome and qualified, as the personality is transformed. For the soul, of course, these major changes are the culmination of lifetimes of patient qualification and guidance.

Transformation (leading to alignment) can create a real dilemma for the personality of the spiritual student. On one hand it is the time of life where everything is going reasonably well for the personality; the personality is effectively integrated and the potential experience is considerable. On the other hand, the inner nature is gradually making its presence and character felt, so that the outer (mundane) affairs of the personality seem to lack any “real” meaning or long-term goals. The integrated personality may be self-indulgent (or at least so accustomed) or dissatisfied with the inertial plateau (the oversimplification that much has already been achieved, leaving little more to do (superficially)). This dissatisfaction is enhanced by any conscious or unconscious insights into the possibilities of the soul-world (the world or domain of soul consciousness), which suggest a great deal more yet to achieve (albeit difficult and threatening to the personality nature).

In attempting this transformation from personality to soul-control, the spiritual student is faced with a major hurdle that can result in considerable psychological tension. The personality is pulling one way, but has nothing to

offer save self-indulgence (which is increasingly unsatisfying), its direction being counter to the forward (progressive) intent of the plan, while the soul is gently and patiently guiding the student forward toward that which is intended (destined) (the Light of the Soul), in concert with the plan.

Yet the psychological implications of the dilemma have considerable (meaningful) (beneficial) implications. When science (orthodox psychology) accepts the soul and its relationship to the personality as valid, necessary topics of consideration, then it (science) will be more meaningfully able to help individuals prepare for the crisis. In the meantime, much of the esoteric psychology is devoted to these problems of transition and continued progression (continuous transformation).

Until the soul's presence is consciously felt by the personality and accepted as a superior, beneficent influence, the integrated personality is likely to continue its self-created difficulties, whether those difficulties are inertial in the sense of being absorbed or distracted in a rather confining fashion (as far as the soul is concerned) or whether those difficulties are more active (dynamically psychological). Those difficulties involving stress (personality tension or pressure) are actually potent lessons leading (ultimately) to new and greater awareness.

† Commentary No. 392

### Personality Transformation 3

Often during the process of evolution (transformation) great (apparent) difficulties and/or subtle stresses must be faced in order to free the personality from its self-centeredness (inertia) (absorption) (enchantment). Interludes may be challenging or apparently uneventful, yet the evolutionary pressure remains, on some level, to stimulate progress.

Progress is implied not so much by uneventful experience, as by changing difficulties, for lessons are learned (however consciously or unconsciously) and new challenges are evoked. The personality tends to take these difficulties personally, exaggerating the experience and the implications; but in fact, an impersonal approach, taking matters conscientiously and sensibly but not too

seriously, leads to more meaningful conclusions. Each experience (interlude) (transition) leads to new (increased) awareness (on some level). A major transition (like integration, alignment or repolarization (transformation) from one level of consciousness to the next higher) leads to a reorientation in consciousness that further stimulates the progress and effectiveness of the student.

From the soul's point of view, life begins when the integrated personality becomes aware of the soul and begins to respond to that soul influence. A proper response to the soul's calling will lead the personality away from the mundane distractions and the psychological complexities of personality-centered consciousness to a more meaningful round of difficulties and progress, with increased (constructive) effectiveness as far as the environment (humanity) is concerned. In this way the lesser energies of the personality are gradually refined and transformed to serve more meaningful, (collectively) purposive ends.

The practical distinction between those who are not upon the path and those who are upon the path, is the way that experience (difficulties) (work) is approached. The spiritual student, to the extent that he is responsive to the inner, higher nature, responds to experience more intelligently (patiently, effectively, without reaction or personality-indulgence). Difficulties are viewed as transient, specialized experience for some realized or unrealized purpose. Thus the attitude toward experience is distinctly different (more effective) and therefore the student is more likely to succeed (realize the needed lesson) while remaining spiritually poised and with proper perspective. Furthermore, the spiritually intelligent student (of at least some preliminary occult training) is likely to be aware of the existence and purpose of occult tension, and therefore be able to draw upon the higher forces for appropriate application (e.g., conscious transformation). But perhaps more significantly, the intelligent spiritual student is not so easily deceived by the ego (personal glamour) or by the external illusions and deceptions (world glamour) and is therefore able to work much more effectively.

The real transformation of the personality (from the highly reactive (personal) or self-centered state to the fully integrated (refined) (qualified) and aligned state) is relatively gradual, even for the spiritual student (albeit rapid relative to the casual student), being a series of accomplishments and increasing achievements

with a framework of continuous experience and/or constructive expression. Everything in the universe, regardless of any appearance to the contrary, is in a state of flux (on some level). The spiritual student remains in dynamic (intelligently interactive) and progressive equilibrium (dynamic stability and coherence), as the God within shines ever brighter and brighter.

† Commentary No. 393

## Consistency

One of the features or characteristics of the underlying unity that pervades all of manifestation is the self-consistency that operates at every level of manifestation. That self-consistency is itself the result of qualification, and in turn qualifies the elements within its purview. Wherever intention is impressed upon some field of manifestation, there will necessarily be an integrating force that relates all of the various aspects and elements together on some level.

This pervasive, consisting force provides a number of further characteristics: an overall coherence, adherence or conformity to the plan (purpose) (underlying unity), a harmony of parts one to another (and to the whole), resistance to separation (disintegration) (diffusion), some responsiveness to higher impression, a firmness of character (reflecting to some extent the impression of character from the (higher) qualifying force). Each of the elements or aspects of some, self-consistent field (construct) (expression) (manifestation) are compatible one to another, without contradiction. A self-consistent field (expression) is a balanced, integrated field, and within that field there will usually be manifested coincident, balanced forces (i.e., contrasting forces which provide some (meaningful) (purposive) tension).

All-in-all, there are no significant anomalies, anywhere within (universal) manifestation. Even apparent anomalies are consistent with both the imposed qualification and underlying balance (unity). Karma (on every level and for every application (life)) further (inseparably) contributes to the consistency of every field (element) of manifestation, from cosmic (solar) (planetary) levels to microcosmic (human) (elemental) levels. In a sense, karma is the consisting force, for in the final analysis, all of manifestation (and all of its qualification) is

a karmic consequence (including karmic force) of macrocosmic intention (causation) (purposive creation). Even without significant anomalies, there are still varying degrees of coherence within a self-consistent field (element).

The further removed an element is in character and consciousness (and differentiation) from its major source, the less consistent will it be relative to that source. It will still be wholly consistent with the overall balance of forces, and may remain wholly self-consistent (on its level), but not necessarily wholly consistent with the source. In a sense, this means that there is a practical (effective) limit to every qualifying force (field). Anything manifested at or near the edge of that field will be affected to some extent by the proximity of the ring-pass-not (a considerable tension) and the (chaos) beyond. This is particularly true of the limits of differentiated existence (e.g., the physical plane of consciousness compared to soul levels).

In a sense, successive differentiation implies a degradation in character, consciousness, and consistency. The overall balance (consistency) persists, but karmic (restoring) forces are increasingly active at the edge of any manifestation. Of course, the realm of experience at the edge of manifestation provides considerable and diverse opportunities for progress, and that experience is potentially assimilated in turn by the precursive (higher) life (which engendered the successively differentiated life (consciousness) in the first place). One of the obligations of conscious life at the limits of manifestation is to seek a greater rapport with its higher correspondence, so that experience and expression are more meaningful (qualified) and more relatable to the higher consciousness.

## Loneliness

Spiritual students (aspirants) (probationary disciples) tend to be particularly vulnerable to loneliness, at least periodically, during the early stages of the path, where many potent lessons are afforded in the apparent isolation of the individual from the inner encouragement of the higher consciousness (and associated group consciousness). Loneliness is entirely a personality experience (illusion), a personality response (reaction) to particular circumstances and perceptions. And overcoming the sense of loneliness is indeed a particularly meaningful experience (achievement) for the personality, provided the solution is real.

The real (true) solution to loneliness is the full realization in consciousness and full acceptance of the entire, integrated personality, of the inherent unity of all life and the sustaining power of the inner life (the soul) (and the fellowship of the path (God) (life) engendered by meaningful inner experience). The imaginary (unreal) (false) (easy) (self-deceptive) (superficial) (temporary) solution to loneliness is the creation and maintenance of facade, which is never really satisfying, and which only further complicates the personality life. Even meaningful companionship is no real solution to loneliness, for the loneliness of the spiritual student is deeper than merely being alone. For the spiritual student at least, the sense of loneliness needs to be fully overcome before any real (meaningful) companionship (fellowship) is possible. Once loneliness is properly overcome, there is no need of companionship (subsequent fellowship can simply be accepted as a matter of experience and opportunity, not as a fulfillment of any need) (for in fact, the spiritual student must ultimately realize that all needs are already fulfilled (i.e., there are no needs), under law).

The periodic loneliness of the spiritual student can be encountered in a number of ways and on a number of levels, each with a lesson or more to be learned. In a sense, the feeling of loneliness is a flag, a way of gaining the attention of the waking-consciousness, of drawing the mind and emotions away from the ordinary, mundane absorptions, to focus upon a more meaningful object or concept (usually the spiritual path or some aspect thereof).

But that flag (the sense of loneliness) itself may be a distraction, particularly for the relatively personality-centered individual (how can a person who is not to some extent personality-centered (self-centered) experience loneliness in the first place?). The problem of loneliness is compounded wherever the individual enhances the sense of loneliness (i.e., self-indulgent feelings of loneliness) by desire or other feelings, for that effort actually strengthens the sense of loneliness by creating in astral matter within the aura a mechanism for feeling the sense of loneliness. In the extreme, it even opens the individual to external astral impressions of a similar (depressing) nature.

The more proper sense of loneliness is an inner, conscious realization of the particular qualification of the spiritual student, leading to stronger spiritual discipline, greater self-reliance (reliance upon the soul (the path) (God) rather than external conditions), and a certain (special) (detached) compassion for all of humanity (without mundane (personality) absorption (glamour)). A higher correspondence to loneliness is called the dark night of the soul, involving a much more subtle, deeper conditioning (and subsequently more subtle lessons). But whatever the level or application, the sense of loneliness should be recognized for the flag that it is, and the newfound freedom that it represents should be realized and properly developed.

† Commentary No. 395

## Meditation Posture

During meditation, the posture of the physical body (emotional body) (mind) is important only in the sense that it facilitates effective meditation. Improper (casual) posture generally impedes or hinders effective meditation by distracting the focus of consciousness. Thus consideration should be given to developing the habit of good posture for meditation, and once that habit is well-established, then attention should be withdrawn from that consideration, and focused in the meditation state proper.

The meditation posture should be achieved during the meditation prelude. Good meditation posture begins with physical posture, the arrangement, position, and bearing of the physical body. The back should be aligned vertically and the body should be positioned comfortably and in such a manner

that physical movement is inhibited. Any movement during meditation will generally degrade the focus of consciousness. If movement is necessary, it should be minimal, very gradual, and quite deliberate. This will minimize the degradation and allow a timely recovery to the meditation state. The arms and/or legs may be crossed during meditation, but any crossing action during meditation is a distraction. Any position (posture) of crossed arms or legs impedes (dampens) the flow of energy during meditation. Normally, the meditator would not want to dampen the flow, but if the personality is under any form of (personality) tension, the crossed arms or legs may be appropriate, for relaxation.

In any event, it is (relatively) quite important to inhibit any physical movement during meditation. The indubitable stillness of the physical body is essential to allow the mind (focus of consciousness) to wholly qualify the etheric body (and consequently, the physical body) without being distracted by physical consciousness (awareness). The etheric qualification is important for purification, self-discipline, proper integration, and subsequent alignment. After the physical body is properly situated and the etheric body properly qualified, then the emotional (astral) body should be qualified (stabilized). The posture (condition) of the astral body for meditation should also be still (quiet, placid, and completely detached from the external environment), to eliminate astral distraction, yet permit the astral body to function accurately (effectively) as an instrument of peripheral awareness.

Since the purpose of meditation (spiritual discipline) relates to effective alignment (of soul and personality) (with or without an esoteric Group context) and energy qualification (evocation) (transformation) (distribution), it should not be distracted by etheric or astral (psychic) phenomena, but rather be focused on higher, mental or intuitional levels. Thus what is generally true of physical and emotional posture is also true of mental posture. The frame of mind should be one of cooperation with and subordination to the soul and the purposes of meditation. The mind should be relaxed, poised, detached from all personal or mundane consideration, and properly focused at a point of tension within the meditation context. That may involve an objective or subjective point of focus or simply the holding of the mind steady within the light (at an occult point), without consideration.

The overall meditation posture can be characterized by stillness, steadiness, and detachment. There should be no passive aspect to the meditation posture (or to the meditation proper), for proper, spiritual meditation should be an active (albeit subdued) experience, with the mind (personality) receptive and responsive, yet controlled entirely by the higher nature (or at least the qualified mind) (rather than the lower nature or external impressions).

† Commentary No. 396

## Stragglers

A self-consistent system of checks and balances exists for every unit of consciousness, every lifewave (collective consciousness), and every scheme of evolution (on planetary, solar and cosmic levels). As the various lives evolve (within a given lifewave), the pioneers contribute leadership, qualification, and momentum, while the stragglers provide resistance to progress, which effectively balances or bounds the progress of the lifewave, to prevent unqualified developments (i.e., to permit qualification of the lifewave). Were the lifewave to progress unhindered, it would be difficult to qualify the evolutionary experience of the lifewave, for the lifewave would not be so responsive to higher influence (guidance).

Every lifewave should have a net positive momentum, sufficient to permit the intended qualification and achievements. As individuals and groups within the lifewave evolve, some (pioneers) naturally pass on into the preceding lifewave (via the higher initiations), while some (stragglers) pass into the succeeding lifewave. This occurs periodically, as various doors between lifewaves open and close to permit passage. The leading edge of the lifewave may or may not be in contact with the next lifewave, depending on the respective consciousness and conditions. There is always a flow of energy between lifewaves, but not (generally) necessarily a flow of lives between lifewaves. Individual transition is quite rare, but sometimes necessary.

Periodically, those individual lives which are not able to keep up the pace of the lifewave or which fail to meet intended standards, are removed from their lifewave and held in abeyance until the next (succeeding) lifewave has evolved

into the appropriate kingdom (conditions) to afford meaningful evolution. These stragglers from one lifewave may or may not become pioneers in their new lifewave, depending on the particular conditions and the responsiveness (or lack of responsiveness) of the individual to the new qualification. Thus an individual may be (potentially) a straggler in every succeeding lifewave because he (she) (it) may be generally unresponsive. Other individuals might be stragglers in one lifewave but (potentially) pioneers in another, because they are inherently responsive to a particular qualification and inherently unresponsive to another particular qualification. Experience is obtained nonetheless, and the overall progress (for an individual or group) is positive, in spite of one or more failures.

The vast majority of any lifewave remain with their lifewave, neither advancing much beyond the mean consciousness, nor falling much behind that mean. From time to time (aeons apart), there are major tests of consciousness for all lives within a group or lifewave. Those who fail these major tests are held en masse in abeyance for the next lifewave. Thus major adjustments or realignments are possible between lifewaves. Two key factors influence the outcome of these tests (individually, or en masse). One factor is adaptability, for to progress with any lifewave, the individual (group) must adapt to meet the changing conditions, improving (intended) consciousness, etc., and respond to the progressing qualification of the lifewave. The other factor is simply the quality and character of consciousness achieved, and whether or not it is sufficiently close to the intended quality and character of consciousness.

Of course individual expression (character) is also important, as the individual contributes (potentially) considerably to the group consciousness, but that individual expression is important only to the extent that it supports and not hinders the overall group intention.

## Chakras 1

For every manifestation on every level, there exist related energies (causes) and lines of force linking each cause and effect within that (localized) (broad) field of manifestation. On gross (dense) physical levels, the lines of force remain invisible, yet are nonetheless necessary to every action and consequence. As a general rule, the lines of force associated with manifestation (experience) (expression) (situation) (condition) (activity) on some level, exist on the next highest (more subtle) level, so that only the effects of forces can be perceived on the (lower) level of manifestation. This is true for the entire spectrum of scale, from the smallest conceivable microcosm to the greatest perceivable (conceptual) macrocosm.

The physical world is for all practical purposes a realm entirely of effects (meaning the (dense) physical plane is more illusion than reality), with all forces acting on etheric, astral, and/or concrete mental levels, affecting the lower levels in turn according to the causative (karmic) processes (balance). The etheric domain is more a realm of forces than material consequences and the dense physical. Similarly, the concrete mental (astral) plane is more a realm of forces (causes) (intermediates) than the astral (etheric), respectively. Beyond the mental plane there are relatively few terminal effects, only intermediates and secondary (interactive) (stimulated) (indirect) causes. Though each of the seven planes of consciousness may be viewed (perceived) distinctly, they are definitely related (interactively) by chakras (centers of force) and the lines of force which pass through the various chakras.

The chakras form an absolutely necessary (vital) link between the planes of consciousness, for without the chakras, energy could not flow from one level or form to another, and subsequent levels of consciousness (manifestation) could not exist. For example, the dense physical plane is the lowest level of manifestation because no chakras exist which can link to some (conceptually) lower level. As manifestation is withdrawn from the lower levels, the chakras will gradually cease to function on those levels (meaning those levels will cease to exist) (because, in the ultimate limit, every atom is a chakra, imposing or

drawing energy upon or from some dimension, and what is real (?) is the induced effect (the appearance of substantiality being an illusion)).

In a sense, all of manifestation is composed of elementary (atomic) chakras, but of more practical significance are the larger chakras and the great centers of force which feed the lesser chakras (i.e., chakras exist on every conceivable scale). The most distinctive characteristic of a chakra is that it does not exist on any level or dimension of consciousness; rather, each chakra exists between (two or more) levels or dimensions of consciousness (meaning that all levels of consciousness are effects). Elementary chakras exist between two sub-planes; minor chakras exist between two or more sub-planes; while major chakras link between planes of consciousness. Chakras exist in the context of individual lives (e.g., chakras within the human constitution) and in much greater terms (e.g., planetary or solar chakras).

Each chakra is an intersection of two or more lines of force. Where many lines of force intersect coherently, larger (major) chakras exist (meaning that more energy can flow through the chakra (vortex) and be transformed). Chakras exist to transform energy from one level or dimension or form to another. Chakras have a number of attributes or characteristics, including character (ray association), quality, type, degree of activity, polarization, and context (scale). All chakras are part of the unified, evolutionary framework.

† Commentary No. 398

## Meditation Postlude

Not only is it the responsibility of the spiritual student to meditate effectively each day, but it is also to effectively channel the energy and experience of meditation (spiritual discipline), releasing the accumulated energies, incorporating the (higher) character and quality achieved in meditation effectively into the individual consciousness, and continuing to serve as an instrument of that quality (energy) beyond the time of the actual meditations.

Near the end of each meditation period, there should be a conscious release of the accumulated energies, a sharing of those energies with humanity (at least to

afford humanity an opportunity to respond) for constructive (general) (overall) purposes, and to generally encourage humanity through the continued intelligent qualification of the environment (through which an impersonal rapport with humanity is achieved). Though the quality (character of consciousness) achieved in meaningful meditation can and should be retained in the aura and consciousness of the student, the accumulated intensity (energy) must be properly released. If that intensity is not released, it will lead to psychic congestion and assorted problems in (personality) consciousness. The important matter (in this context) is to facilitate a continuous flow of energy (i.e., by cooperating with the purpose of the qualified energy, not by unilaterally diverting or impeding, or otherwise constraining the proper fulfillment of that energy).

Generally, however, the flow of energy achieved during and subsequent to meditation will be relatable to the responsiveness (quality) (facility) of the student. In other words, as the student becomes more adept in responding to that energy, so will that flow be enhanced. Conversely, if the student impedes the flow of energy, through selfishness (lack of refinement or understanding) or absorption (in personal and mundane matters), the energy will flow in other ways. The role, then, of the student is to achieve a smooth transition from the meditation proper to the interval between meditations, such that the meditative disposition (responsiveness) continues to some meaningful extent, while carefully avoiding absorption (involvement in personal energy, mundane matters, glamour, etc., which serve only to distract (by entertaining the personality)).

Thus the meditation postlude affords the opportunity for such a transition, with likelihood for longer-term (constructive) effects. The postlude is simply a quiet time following formal meditation, in which the student withdraws from the meditation posture gradually, while bathing in the presence (or atmosphere) created or sustained (renewed) by the meditation (and the soul or group context). The postlude (properly adhered to) affords an extension of the meditative disposition to every aspect of the daily life, and in particular, to relationships with humanity.

At the same time, the postlude affords a gradual reorientation to the objective realm, without losing the essential quality achieved (which more properly

qualifies the objective experience and expression). A fast withdrawal typically leads to absorption and an unqualified diffusion of the meditative energies, rather than the qualified, intelligent sharing through awareness, character, consciousness, temperament, values, etc. With a proper meditation postlude coupled with affective meditation and continued dedication (spiritual focus while living or working in some more mundane context), that meditation becomes a process of renewal and rededication (enhancement) (refinement), facilitating a continuous flow of meaningful energy.

† Commentary No. 399

## The Personality Presence 1

In the lower (personality) sense, presence is defined as the bearing, carriage, manifestation, or aura (auric projection) of a person, particularly as that bearing (aura) relates to the immediate vicinity (environment) (since the personality presence is likely to affect that environment).

In the higher sense (soul), presence is defined as the (overall) quality of the personality that is refined enough to facilitate rapport with the soul (i.e., the character (poise) consciousness, and temperament (effectiveness) that enables the spiritual student to achieve an intimate (close) (impersonal) (pure) relationship (rapport) with the soul and within a group context). Presence in the higher sense also refers to the character and quality (consciousness) of the soul, as manifested through an aligned (qualified) personality. Thus in the higher sense, the distinction of soul and personality is not essential.

But in the lower sense, the presence (projection) of the personality is an important consideration for the spiritual student, for the student (person) in incarnation must live (interact) as a personality while simultaneously being (hopefully) (eventually) completely (continuously) qualified by the soul (i.e., wholly responsive to the character and consciousness of the soul, without impediment by the personality (personal energy)). Thus, one of the more considerable challenges (opportunities) for the spiritual student is to be aware of and eventually learn to control that personality presence. Prior to the time that the personality becomes aware of the spiritual path, and for some time after that

beginning awareness, the personality naturally (appropriately) develops along experiential (personality-centered) (self-centered) lines (of least resistance to the personality), becoming relatively loud (dynamic) (outgoing) (interactive) (intrusive) as the personality grows in strength. That loudness is evident on all levels of personality existence, to the extent that the personality is active on each level.

The basic problem of the personality, in this context, is the lack of discipline (refinement) of the personality resulting in an unconscious expulsion (radiation) (projection) of force (energy) (noise) on subtle levels (etheric, astral, mental), which in turn affects the immediate environment. If the personality presence is particularly loud (on whatever level) or particularly focused, then the effects are not necessarily limited to the immediate environment, but may be (relatively) far-reaching or pointed. The loudness (noise) of the personality (i.e., the coarse presence (nature) of the (unaligned) (unrefined) personality) effectively undermines any attempts of the personality toward alignment with the soul, so the student must properly dampen the (ordinary) personality nature and refine its nature in order to successfully approach the soul and establish a conscious (meaningful) link (relative alignment) with that soul.

The soul (inner (higher) self) exists as the “voice of the silence” and can only be approached in a gentle (humble) (quiet) (peaceful) (unobtrusive) (impersonal) manner. Compared to the considerably refined (purified) (qualified) nature of the soul, the typical (ordinary) (educated) (refined) (well-developed) (potent) (intelligent) personality is quite coarse (loud) (to some extent, even violent, on subtle levels). A reactive personality is (potentially) particularly violent, on astral and concrete mental levels (even if the physical reaction appears to be well-in-hand). An integrated personality, of course, tends to be less reactive, particularly where qualified or refined by sustained conscious effort.

## The Personality Presence 2

Where the personality is properly integrated and aligned, the personality vehicles act in unison, responsive to the mind and to the soul. But prior to proper integration, where the personality is strong (self-indulgent) (loud), the personality expression (presence) on each level is relatively independent (yet reactive). The transition (reformation) of the personality from the personality-centered stage to the soul-qualified stage is a time when the spiritual student must properly and carefully assess the character (impact) of each of the vehicles (levels of expression) in turn, and in each circumstance, in order to understand and effect the needed adjustments (qualifications) (refinements). This transition period is necessary for the student to become reasonably successful (effectively qualified) on each level.

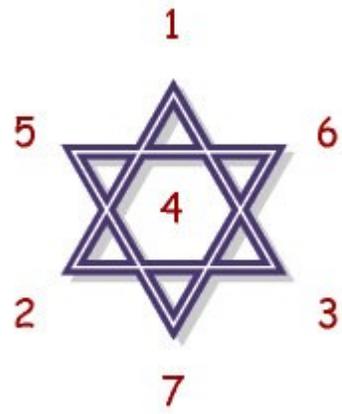
For a personality absorbed in the day to day aspects of (mundane) life, the presence (loudness) of the personality is not really a problem (for the spiritual student, however, being absorbed so would be a problem), but during the transition from personality qualification to soul qualification, it becomes more and more necessary for the student to quiet (dampen) the personality on each level. In a (passive) (inactive) sense the soul is always present within a living personality, but the presence of the soul will not (cannot) manifest through a loud (coarse) (unresponsive) (unrefined) personality. The loud personality presence (nature) forces the soul to remain aloof and essentially indifferent to the particulars of personality experience.

Thus the student finds himself in the position of having to give up personality attributes (strengths) eons in achieving. However, it is not so much a matter of giving up as it is a matter of refinement and redirection, of qualification, of adapting and adjusting the personality for more refined (and more worthy) applications. For as long as the personality is loud, rapprochement (rapport) in any higher (real) sense is not possible; and yet, there exists (ever present) an inner (subtle) tension (encouragement) for the personality to strive toward harmony (rapport) with the soul, so as to achieve both an inner (meaningful) contact and alignment with the soul's group. Once the approach is relatively complete, and relative peace (quiet) (harmlessness) (humility) (awareness) is the

guiding rule, then the duality of identity (the distinction of soul and personality) will cease (it never really existed).

An additional responsibility of the spiritual student that accrues in making the transition to soul control involves the recognition of how much (and in what ways) the personality presence affects the consciousness (atmosphere) (environment) around it. It is the unending obligation of the spiritual student to guard against excesses (unqualified release of energy) that would create anything less than a gentle, unobtrusive bearing (presence). Initially, this control (awareness) (self-discipline) is incorporated consciously, but later it is effected automatically (by continued qualification incidental to the increasingly refined nature). The stronger the personality, the greater is the potential for good or ill, depending on the character, quality, and temperament. Where the personality is wholly subordinated and responsive to the soul presence, then that strength is only a positive potential.

The real problem of the spiritual student is learning to live in the (mundane) world without being (literally) engrossed in it (absorbed by mundane or personal energy). In advancing upon the path, each (all) must be (become) aware of and in control of the etheric, auric, and mental projections (and aware of and responsive to the essence (subtle presence) of the real self (soul)).



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