The Upper Triad Material

Commentaries V

Edited by Peter Hamilton

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The Upper Triad Material

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The Full List of Upper Triad Books:

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The Upper Triad Material   3rd Edition

    Articles   3 volumes
    Commentaries   15 volumes
    Miscellany   2 volumes

The Upper Triad Material   4th Edition

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A Personal Journey   4th Edition

Through the Grace of God   1st Edition

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Third Edition

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

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

Notes

To the best of the editor's recollection, all of the material in Commentaries V was written by Upper Triad staff members.

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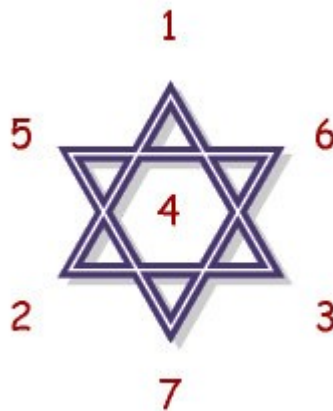
Additional Caveat

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

peter@uppertriad.org

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

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

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

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Polarization and Consciousness 1

Although consciousness is a continuum of states (levels), and although particular (focused) (individual) (group) consciousness varies in quality, intensity, character, etc., and although the (particular) level of consciousness may vary considerably, the consciousness of an individual (or group) is normally and naturally polarized or stabilized at some (general) level. That focus (consciousness) may fluctuate within (about) that general level according to circumstances and temperament (character), and will, generally, progress in its stabilized level, quality, etc., as the individual progresses (evolution is the evolution of consciousness within a greater consciousness). Thus, "polarization of consciousness" refers to the stabilized (generalized) level of consciousness that dominates an individual's experience and expression.

The "level" at which some particular consciousness is stabilized (polarized) is generally some sub-plane of consciousness, while the dynamic range of the level (focus) of consciousness may be limited to a few sub-planes (about the general focus) or it may be somewhat broader, extending over one or more planes of consciousness. A person who is physically polarized (whose consciousness is predominately physical (Lemurian)) may experience a range of consciousness into the emotional plane, but because of the physical predomination, there will be little if any mental activity. A person who is physically polarized is predominately reactive, physically and instinctually. Any feelings are normally heavily biased by the physical awareness (in such a case).

A person who is emotionally polarized (whose consciousness is predominately emotional (Atlantean)) will experience mostly on emotional levels, but may range (to some extent) (temporarily) to physical and/or (concrete) mental levels. Such a person will generally be reactive to emotional experience (external stimuli) but may or may not be personally (defensively) reactive. The emotionally polarized person generally has a wider, more dynamic (interactive) range of focus (of consciousness) and is therefore, generally, less stable than one who is physically or mentally polarized. In the case of an emotionally polarized individual (group), any physical or mental activity will (normally) be heavily biased by the emotional temperament (feelings and attachments (values)). In

such a case, the thinking processes will tend to be much less objective than is the case for a (properly) mentally polarized person.

A person who is mentally polarized (whose consciousness is predominately mental (Aryan)) will tend to view all experience biased by the mental character and temperament. Physical and emotional experience (character) (temperament) may provide some bias, but the mental character will dominate. Though a person may be polarized at some level of (physical) (emotional) (mental) consciousness, and though the focus of consciousness may have some (dynamic) range, the awareness that the focus of consciousness may embrace may extend much farther than that dynamic range or focus, particularly in the case of higher (mental) polarization. In the Lemurian and Atlantean consciousness, awareness is necessarily limited, while not necessarily so with Aryan consciousness.

With properly mentally polarized (balanced) consciousness, there is normally awareness on all (personality) levels, with the focus of consciousness properly stabilized at some (relatively high) level. This distinction (combination) (of a stable focus and awareness on multiple levels of consciousness) means that awareness can be an effective tool of stabilized consciousness, rather than the less coherent case of a wide dynamic range of focus (in which the focus is vulnerable or limited to awareness of the particular level).

† Commentary No. 402

Polarization and Consciousness 2

The human personality consists of three components (physical, emotional, and mental), and most people experience to some extent all three levels of consciousness. Except during the transition from one major level to another (repolarization), the consciousness will tend to be stabilized (polarized) at some particular level. As the individual progresses (evolves), that level will naturally progress (be refined, elevated, repolarized) through the various sub-planes and planes of consciousness. As the quality of consciousness is improved, so will the level of consciousness tend to be raised.

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The process of repolarization in consciousness is the crisis in consciousness of transferring the focus of consciousness from one level (sub-plane) (plane) to the next higher. That process is a source of considerable (necessary) (internal) experience, and is evoked naturally by the soul in response to the individual's progress. Periodic repolarization engenders flexibility and intelligent response to circumstances and opportunities in accordance with the natural law of cyclic progression (activity, assimilation, reorientation, new (progressed) activity, etc.). Though major repolarization (between planes) is a major crisis in consciousness, so is the struggle (crisis) of integration (and the subsequent, much more subtle crisis of alignment).

The major step of actually integrating the three elements (components) of the personality requires that the person be mentally polarized. A person who is physically or emotionally polarized is incapable of integrating the personality, for only the reasonably developed mind can integrate the two lesser components within the context of the third (the mind). The integrated personality is much more stable than a personality merely polarized at some level, meaning that such a personality has a greater opportunity for assimilating experience (more directly). The polarization (stabilization) of consciousness at some level is necessary for extended (necessary) experience at that level, but that experience will not normally be assimilated in real time (or near real time) unless the personality is also properly integrated (and even then not necessarily).

Though necessarily (at least) mentally polarized, an integrated personality is not necessarily well-qualified, for an integrated personality may be polarized on some concrete mental level, without (necessarily) having a balance of head qualities (mental abilities) and heart qualities (responsiveness to the higher (soul) nature). An integrated personality, though necessary for advanced experience and proper expression, is not necessarily particularly intelligent and does not necessarily have considerable (intelligent) (coherent) awareness. Ultimately however, the evolving individual will achieve the proper balance and the proper qualifications (quality of consciousness) (intelligence) (awareness) and achieve alignment (of soul and personality). From that point onward, the individual actually becomes less mentally polarized and more aware (and more stable) on higher (intuitive) (soul) levels, so that the consciousness is no longer properly described as polarized, but as synthesized and responsive to higher (soul) qualification.

In addition to the (natural) concept of polarization (stabilization) of consciousness, there is another (unrelated) sense of polarization in consciousness. That sense is the fixation of consciousness along some particular line, on physical, emotional, and/or (concrete) mental levels. This sense of polarization (fixation) relates to bias and prejudice (intransigence) (on whatever level or levels) (ultimately to be overcome) and not to the stabilization of consciousness on some level.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 403</div>

Birth

Numerous cause and effect relationships exist with respect to the birth of a human being (the emergence into incarnation of the personality manifestation of a human soul). The karmic implications of birth (conception) can be both wide ranging and considerable. In general, sexual intercourse is an open invitation for a soul (or souls) to incarnate, the principal function of sexual intercourse being to provide opportunities for incarnation.

A more advanced soul is necessarily quite selective in seeking incarnation, both in timing and parentage (the quality of environment and consciousness), and consequently the preparation for such an incarnation takes a (relatively) considerable length of time, and the subsequent birth is the result of considerable momentum. For less advanced souls, less preparation is needed and more opportunities exist, but the circumstances (timing) (parentage) (environment) are still necessarily a function of the karma (quality) of the soul. Advanced souls tend to be constrained mainly by the quality of consciousness (parentage) and quality of environment (circumstances). Less advanced souls tend to be constrained mainly by (specific) karma.

The responsibility for conception must necessarily be shared by both partners and the incoming soul(s). Every act of sexual intercourse carries with it the responsibility for the consequences of that act. Though circumstances may qualify that responsibility, there can be no evasion of responsibility (for such is the law of karma). There are no accidents: there are only consequences of activity on every level of consciousness. In any event (conception), all

participants are responsible both for that event and for any subsequent (related) consequences. The partners are responsible for providing the opportunity (invitation) for incarnation, while the incoming soul is responsible for the actual conception (which cannot occur without an inbound soul present).

Marriage is intended to provide a framework for assisting others to incarnate and adjust to the environment and circumstances of their birth and subsequent growth (experience). A healthy marriage aura (quality of consciousness) tends to attract relatively well-qualified souls. Conversely, a coarse marriage environment will tend to attract relatively coarse souls. The environment prior to conception is important in the sense that it relates to the preparation of the soul for incarnation. The marriage aura between conception and birth is particularly important, because the incoming personality is particularly responsive (vulnerable) to that environment. The environment subsequent to the actual birth (physical emergence) is obviously important to the development of the child, physically, emotionally, and mentally. Both parents are necessarily responsible for providing a suitable environment for the growth of their child, until such time as the new personality can effectively assume that responsibility.

The character (temperament) of the new personality depends largely on the experience and development previously achieved, but the new personality is limited by the quality of the atoms provided by the parents at conception and subsequent development within the marriage aura (both before and after the actual birth). As the soul progresses (recapitulates) its personality, it can actually regenerate those atoms so that the new personality has the potential for progressing beyond the inherited quality to more refined (or more coarse) states. The soul has little effect on its personality until much later (if at all). In the meantime, the personality is almost entirely dependent on the matrix from which it was created and the environment into which it has emerged.

Abortion

Conception occurs as a result of the combination of the opportunity provided by the partners to sexual intercourse and the presence of a soul preparing to incarnate. Incoming souls are either obligated to incarnate due to karmic pressures, or are obliged to incarnate by virtue of their own intention (attraction). The vast majority are obligated to incarnate periodically, by karma, for needed experience. But in both cases, the responsibility for conception must be shared (consciously or otherwise) by the participants.

Abortion is the expulsion of a human fetus, naturally or otherwise, the premature termination of the process of incarnation for some inbound soul(s). Natural (spontaneous) (non-deliberate) abortion occurs as a consequence of the karma of the incoming soul and as a consequence of the karma (temperament) (consciousness) of the parent(s). In some cases the soul is just not ready to incarnate (e.g., its personality may be too weak or simply incomplete). In other cases the mother (or parents) may be ill-prepared for one reason or another. But in any such event (natural abortion) the responsibility is shared by the incoming soul and the parents (all is a matter of consciousness and the forces (consequences) of consciousness).

Unnatural abortion (deliberate abortion or abortion as a result of carelessness) is a karmic event of considerable magnitude, both for the inbound soul and for those directly involved in the abortion process. Motives obviously qualify every action, as does the overall consciousness (and circumstances), but abortion is nonetheless a traumatic experience for the inbound soul (whose momentum to incarnate is terminated) and a karmic event with (qualified) consequences for all concerned. It is not so much a question of right or wrong as it is a question of responsibility, of maturity, of facing the consequences in form and consciousness of every action.

The rights of an individual are reasonably well-defined in a social context, to the extent that one's actions do not impose upon another (the problem being how to define the balance). The rights of a man or woman are one thing, and the rights of a pregnant woman (parents) are another, for sexual intercourse carries

responsibility, and subsequent conception carries further responsibility. Conception means that the partners have extended an invitation (consciously and deliberately or otherwise) for some soul(s) to incarnate and that some soul(s) has accepted that invitation. From that point on, the rights of the inbound soul (via its personality and fetus) balance the rights of the mother (parents). In a metaphysical context, the soul (and its personality (matrix)) is alive before, during, and after incarnation. For as long as a soul is committed to incarnation (from the decision to incarnate in specific circumstances, through conception, birth, life (manifestation as a physical personality), death, etc.), there is a life force associated with every aspect. Only when the soul withdraws is the "life" of a form (fetus) (child) (person) no longer present. Thus the presence of a fetus (almost always) means the presence of an obligated life-force (soul). Any abortion constitutes (potentially grave) interference with a life-form, with consequences for all concerned.

A person should live according to his or her beliefs, to whatever extent is practicable, but be willing to face the implications and consequences of every action or condition in consciousness. Citing karma is never an acceptable excuse; responsibility cannot be evaded; the failure to realize and accept the implications and consequences of any act necessarily results in complications and additional karma (constrained experience).

† Commentary No. 405

Changing Values

One's value system is an important aspect of spiritual life, for it is a reflection of consciousness and character. It represents the basic sense of appropriateness, and it stands for what is important and worthwhile. Since values are the principles, standards, or qualities by which one lives, they usually govern conduct or behavior. A value system is inherent (a factor of consciousness) (even if not fully expressed), and a reflection of experience (evolution). Values may be influenced (more) by the personality or soul, depending on the level and quality of consciousness. Values can be improved or transformed through spiritual effort and through soul contact, resulting in discernment (realization), discretion, and strength of character. With further refinement, values become less self-centered (personality indulgent) and more oriented toward the universal

good (soul existence). Eventually the value system becomes a reflection of the soul (group) consciousness.

Just as humanity evinces a wide range of consciousness (from totally unenlightened to highly evolved), so do its values vary greatly. The unevolved normally (completely) reflect (internalize) the values of society. This is also the case to some extent for the average individual just beginning to achieve an awareness of the soul. However, a spiritual student should be guided more by the inner (soul) awareness and the sense of inner appropriateness (in accordance with (higher) spiritual law), than the dictates of society. Of course, to be effective, the spiritual student should be aware of and respect the laws of society, even though imposed laws may (or may not) be in accord with spiritual law.

In the course of an incarnation, relatively unique circumstances (moral and ethical value context) may be confronted. What may be appropriate for one may not be true for another (at that time). There are many avenues on the path, all progressing to the same basic end. The standards and values are different (higher qualification) for those on the spiritual path, than for those who are not. The path is ever the testing ground for development in consciousness (discernment and discretion), and an opportunity for growth. Under these circumstances, all choices may be "right," but one may be "more right" than another in the sense that it is more appropriate to (be in harmony with) one's higher values. Right is relative. It is for each person to decide what values are best (most appropriate). As the student progresses, so must the values change (be refined), for values rigidly held eventually become stumbling blocks. With progress on the path, the value choices become more subtle, and the choices may appear to be more difficult (an illusion).

A lack of consistency between the level of consciousness and one's values may reflect a lack of (inner) strength of character (soul contact) (spiritual will) in acknowledging the inner awareness and values. Or it may reflect a lack of responsiveness due to mundane absorption (mundane values) and inertia.

The effectiveness of the spiritual student is conditioned by a continuous series of choices in how the values should be applied. Values need to be lived, moving beyond ideals or theory, to be a true expression. For the spiritual student in

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particular, not living up to what is known to be worthwhile can create (inner) disharmony and disappointment, as well as evoking more lessons (karma) to be learned (experienced). As lessons are learned, and consciousness and awareness grow, so will values (and determination) and outward conduct improve, as consciousness exists on a broad, ever-expanding continuum of higher-reaching quality.

✝ Commentary No. 406

The Seven Ray Ashrams

The seven (primary) ashrams which constitute the seven departments of the spiritual hierarchy of the planet correspond to the seven rays, and are referred to as the seven ray ashrams. Each of these ashrams is particularly qualified by and responsive to one of the seven rays, and is, in a sense, a manifestation of that ray. Each of the seven ray ashrams is also a framework for the evolution (qualification) of consciousness along the lines of that particular ray.

Each of the seven ray ashrams is itself hierarchical and vertical in nature. In the broadest sense, all (human) souls within the planetary scheme on a particular ray are related, directly or indirectly, to the corresponding ray ashram. Each soul is qualified by and to some extent responsive to its ray correspondence; thus each soul is at least indirectly related to the corresponding ray ashram. As a soul commits itself to the spiritual path, that soul then begins a more direct relationship to an appropriate ashram (on the level of the soul). Usually, that ashram will be one of the basic ashrams within the corresponding ray ashram. As the soul evolves, so will it naturally progress more or less vertically through the hierarchy of ashrams that constitute its ray ashram. Thus, within the hierarchy of a ray ashram are ashrams-within-ashrams, each at some level and range of consciousness, and each with some particular character (charter) (assignment) (function).

Working through the seven ray ashrams, the spiritual hierarchy of the planet synthesizes the seven streams of ray energy as they relate to humanity (and to some extent to other lifewaves within the planetary scheme as well). The hierarchy is itself a synthesis of the seven ray ashrams. Working through the seven departments (ray ashrams), the hierarchy provides qualification in the

form of focused, subjective energies (formulations) (concepts), according to the charter of each ray ashram (properly synthesized or coordinated with all of the ray ashrams). The resulting influence is by no means a forcing function for humanity, but, rather, that influence is effective only to the extent that humanity (the mass consciousness) is properly responsive. The hierarchy (the seven ray ashrams) does not provide direction or precipitate (evoke) specific events or effects; the hierarchy can only provide intelligent encouragement. But the potency of the hierarchy is nonetheless considerable, and its influence extends in many subtle ways.

Not only does each department (ray ashram) provide ray qualification for all of humanity, for particular groups within humanity which are particularly responsive to or linked in some way to that ray, and for all souls and personalities (and their aspects) relating to that ray, but each department also qualifies each aspect of human life and activity within its charter. The charter of the fifth ray ashram, for example, includes science, education, the concrete mind, etc., while the charter of the third ray ashram includes philosophy, the abstract mind, etc. Each charter is complementary to the other six ray charters, and generally embraces all aspects of the particular ray manifestation as it affects or relates to humanity.

The hierarchy (the synthesis of the seven ray ashrams) has four generalized purposes; the development of self-consciousness in all (active) beings within the planetary scheme, the development of consciousness in the three lower (subhuman) kingdoms, the transmission of the will of the planetary logos (i.e., evolutionary adjustment and encouragement), and the qualification (encouragement) of humanity. The seven ray ashrams play various complementary roles in support of these purposes.

Imagination 1

Imagination is the power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or not otherwise wholly perceived in reality, a creation of the mind. The capability for imagination is inherent in the human constitution, but may be properly developed, or not, according to the mental and emotional development (character) (temperament) of the individual. The potency for constructive (creative) evocation (manifestation) as an intelligent consequence of imagination is quite considerable. Imagination is indeed an intended human capability, but one that should be carefully and properly applied.

The mind is the principle instrument of imagination, though effective imagination requires not only a well-developed mental ability, but it also requires a considerable heart quality. The mind is utilized as a focus to intensify the image (and project it appropriately). Consequently, if the mind is weak or not properly coherent, the imaginative abilities will be ineffective. Likewise, if the heart is weak, the imagination will likely be dull and ineffective, for the mind will have little to focus. Thus imagination is most effective where the personality is healthy and where the head and heart are reasonably balanced (complementary).

The power of imagination resides in the principle of energy following thought. The act of forming a mental image evokes energy: if that image (energy) is properly focused, intensified, and projected, then (potentially) a great deal of energy can be evoked to sustain the creative evocation (manifestation) of that image or construct. That projection may be a simple image or a self-consistent (synthetic) complex of related images. In either case, the objective is to encourage some consequence by virtue of and along the lines of the images envisioned and what they represent. The potency for good (within the context of the creative imagination) depends both on the imaginative and mental abilities and upon the overall character (quality) (motives) of the individual. Obviously, care should be taken to avoid imposition. The student should always keep in mind that he is responsible for all manifestations and projections evoked or formulated through his personality (mind) (emotions).

The power of the imagination is inherently interactive (though it can be dampened or masked), as every evocation (manifestation) (projection) (consequence) interacts with the environment, the personalities therein, and the karmic manifold thereof. The spiritual student should be particularly careful to qualify every (projectable) mental image for good, in a sufficiently general fashion. The reason for this is simple: the student cannot generally (wholly) predict all of the factors, effects, or consequences of the creative (projective) imagination. Thus, the student should be very careful with any specific attributes or characteristics of the images formulated. A general (healthy) qualification constrains the effects to good purpose and allows the flexibility of proper (albeit unforeseeable) interaction. A properly formulated creative projection will safely dissolve if the circumstances evoked are inconsistent with the intended purpose.

The creative imagination can be utilized to affect virtually any aspect of life and circumstances. The imaginative faculties can be used to condition or qualify (encourage) the personality to effect a refinement (development) (cultivation) of that personality or some ability therein. The imagination can be used to change (improve) circumstances, conditions in consciousness, future conditions, etc., on almost any scale, subject only to the power and training of the individual and the karmic constraints of the objective.

<div align="right">✝   Commentary No. 408</div>

Imagination 2

The faculties of imagination are generally developed as a natural course of human experience (evolution). Those (ordinary) (preliminary) faculties are normally sufficient to affect the individual's own life (consciousness) (circumstances) (and to some extent those in the immediate environment), incidentally (since the vast majority of humanity are largely unaware of their own abilities and consequences in consciousness, being largely absorbed by mundane (physical) experience). The real potency for creative imagination comes with more mental training than is incidental to gradual evolution. With considerable mental abilities comes the considerable potency for good or ill in the intelligent or indiscriminate use of the imagination. Up until that point, the imagination is generally coupled to the astral or emotional capabilities, and is

generally projected indiscriminately. But the mentally-polarized individual is generally immune to incidental astral or emotional energies.

The faculties of creative imagination are normally only fully and properly developed as a consequence of (formal) occult training, where the student is taught the implications and ethics of energy projection, the self-discipline and personality refinement necessary for responsible and effective (constructive) occult (humanitarian) work, and the mental and psychic adjustments necessary for group work (as all serious occult or esoteric work requires the subordination of the individual to an intelligent, group (soul) context). With the proper occult training, the individual (spiritual student) can participate meaningfully in appropriate work involving the creative imagination (which is more or less central to much of the occult work involving humanity).

One of the important lessons of occult training involves learning to discern the difference between perception and imagination, and learning to perceive things as impersonally (without bias and distortion) as practicable. There is a considerable danger of confusing perception and imagination, for if some mental image is self-generated (by the subtle mind and/or emotions) and is mistakenly attributed as perception, then the resulting conclusions, beliefs, and attitudes will tend to negatively complicate the personality-life. The greatest danger in such a situation is the resulting self-deception, which if coupled with fear or insecurity (paranoia) can be devastating. Once the imagination is allowed to rule (mask) the perceptive faculties, the individual will become less and less responsive to the way things are, and more absorbed in the way things are (erroneously) imagined to be. Such a person (self-deceived) will see and hear whatever he wants to see and hear.

The spiritual student must learn early in the occult training process to be aware of both inner and outer circumstances, by being wholly honest with oneself and overcoming all fear and personal bias. The imagination must be properly realized and qualified, in order for the student to be effective. Assumptions must not be confused with facts. What is perceived must be recognized as perception. What is imagined (deliberately or otherwise) must be recognized as imagination. And what is evoked as a consequence of imagination must be responsibly acknowledged.

Since imagination is a focusing of energy, that energy must somehow be fulfilled. The occult student is taught to properly release what is intelligently imagined (toward some meaningful purpose) and to properly dissolve (devitalize) that which is not prudent. Thus, the imagination is utilized as a worthy instrument of progress, and the spurious images of the subconscious personality are not permitted unqualified emanation.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 409</div>

The Triple Path

Though the spiritual path may be approached and perceived in many ways, there are three major aspects or dimensions of the path. Prior to making a proper commitment to the path, an individual (soul) is principally concerned with a single dimension (experience). But when the soul makes a commitment to the spiritual path, the experience evoked is increasingly qualified by the obligations of the path. And when the personality makes a conscious commitment to the path (in response to the soul's invocation), then the individual (aspirant) (spiritual student) is able to properly face the three aspects (dimensions) (obligations) of the path.

The three aspects of the path constitute a triple dharma: the dharma of the individual, the dharma of the individual in relation to the soul (and the esoteric group), and the dharma of the individual in relation to the race (humanity), and by extension (expansion), to all of life within the planetary scheme. This triple path is a balanced path, with no single aspect allowed to dominate the overall progress (evolution) (expression) of the student. Above all is the commitment to the path, with all personal, mundane, family, and professional considerations necessarily subordinated to the path.

The first aspect (the dharma of the individual) is essentially the obligation toward self-mastery, the effort leading to complete mastery of the personality. This first (central) aspect includes self-discipline, physical (emotional) (mental) purification, cultivation, and training; the proper integration of the personality; and the development and refinement of various talents and abilities needed to fulfill the other two aspects of the path. Though considerable progress in the

first dimension is necessary before the student can effectively embrace the other dimensions, the student should nonetheless be aware of the remaining obligations throughout the preliminary work. For the remaining two dimensions provide the necessary qualification of the first dimension, for no effort properly within the framework of the spiritual path is expended merely for the sake of the individual.

The second aspect (the dharma of the individual in relation to the soul and the soul's esoteric group) is essentially the obligation toward communion with that soul and, consequently, with the group life (ashram) to which the soul is obligated. This second (vertical) aspect includes refinement, adjustment, subordination, aspiration, alignment, and responsiveness to the soul (group). In a sense, all of the effort in the first dimension should be in consideration of the quality, character, and charter of the soul group to which the individual is related. In communion with the soul and its group, the individual receives qualification and guidance (training), to the extent of the rapport (responsiveness) so achieved. This second aspect also includes the dharma of the group relative to other groups and planetary (solar) aspects.

The third aspect (the dharma of the individual in relation to humanity) is essentially the obligation to serve God (the solar logos) (the planetary logos) (the Christ) (the hierarchy) (humanity) (life) (the plan) (the scheme of evolution), beyond any consideration of the student's own life (as is the dharma implied in the second aspect). The service motive (the horizontal aspect) is truly the driving force par excellence of the entire path, for the ultimate aim of the path is the perfection of all life, individual evolution meaning nothing without a corresponding progress on a meaningful group level. The third aspect is the integrating aspect for the triple path, for self-mastery, communion, and service are necessarily one in this greater context.

Peripheral Ashrams

While the seven ray ashrams provide a central focus for evolutionary qualification within the planetary scheme, each having a relatively broad charter within the hierarchical context and according to the respective ray character, there also exist a number of peripheral ashrams. The peripheral ashrams are normally attached to or related in some way to the planetary (spiritual) hierarchy, each serving a more specialized charter or more particular function(s). Though these specialized ashrams are peripheral to the central (ray) ashrams, they are (also) fully coordinated with the central hierarchy in every aspect pertinent to the planetary scheme.

The peripheral ashrams typically serve linking functions beyond the immediate scope of the central ashrams or specialized functions beyond the normal training or capability (or charter) of the ray ashrams. Some of the peripheral ashrams link to (or are linked to) other elements (lives) (centers) within the solar system; some link to energy centers (relationships) (lives) beyond the solar ring-pass-not (yet chartered by the solar logos); while some peripheral ashrams provide linking functions between various energy levels or lifewaves within the planetary scheme. In addition to one or more of the linking tasks, some of the peripheral ashrams provide (occult) (temporal) (energy) engineering services to the various ray ashrams (e.g., engineering various events or externalization of energy, within karmic bounds, by attracting, transforming, qualifying, focusing, and projecting various types of energy (forces) to bring about the intended circumstances).

While each central (ray) ashram is hierarchical (vertical) in nature (within the ray character), the component (ray) ashrams are generally horizontal in nature (covering some range (in level (quality) of consciousness)). In contrast to the many component (ray) ashrams, the (relatively few) peripheral ashrams are normally vertical in nature, and tend to be relatively small. The admittance of any soul to any (true) ashram or esoteric group depends on the level, quality, and character of consciousness achieved, and, in the case of the ray (component) ashrams, admittance is open to any qualified soul upon that respective ray. Qualified (well-developed) souls simply gravitate (magnetically) to the

appropriate ashrams. Thus it is also for the peripheral ashrams, except that peripheral ashrams are not necessarily constrained to souls of a particular ray, but they are constrained by more specific qualifications due to the more specialized functions of those (peripheral) ashrams.

Many of the peripheral ashrams were established with karmic constraints (which is generally not true for central or component (ray) ashrams). Because of the peripheral nature, these ashrams are generally not as well-integrated with respect to the mainstream of humanity, and thus, the members (souls) of such ashrams appear somewhat different (strange) relative to the character (tone) of most (human) souls. In a sense, those (advanced) (human) souls who generally do not fit into the normal scheme of things (i.e., the hierarchy of ray ashrams) are attracted to one or another of the peripheral ashrams.

There exists a remarkable interdependence between (among) all of the ashrams (esoteric groups) (not necessarily on objective levels) within the planetary scheme, so that peripheral ashrams are related as much to each other as to the various ray ashrams (and as the various ray ashrams are related one to another). Some cross-fertilization generally exists between ashrams, either on a temporary or permanent basis, wherever a particular rapport or particular functions (capabilities) are needed.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 411</div>

Vespers

In some branches of the orthodox (exoteric) Christian faith, vespers (evensong) is a song (prayer) (worship service) sung (said) (held) in the evening. The concept of vespers has its roots in the ancient mystery schools, where evening discipline (meditation) was a general rule for all accepted students, though the actual discipline (format) varied somewhat from one school (tradition) to another. In the proper esoteric fashion, the concept of vespers is still prevalent in one form or another (as it needs to be for current conditions) in the various (proper) occult schools currently chartered.

The basic (metaphysical) (occult) (mystical) concept of vespers is an informal (relatively unstructured) group meditation period held each evening. The

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meditation period generally involves a quiet time of several hours (if not the entire evening) in which each student is expected to meditate in the group form for some reasonable (moderate) period (an hour or less). Since the starting and finishing times for any individual or group of individuals are not fixed, but either unspecified or staggered, the group meditation form (place) (matrix) can remain vitalized (intensified) (invoked) for the entire evening, as the various students come and go (gently and silently).

The potency of this (occult) evensong depends on a number of factors, principal of which is the rapport achieved by each individual with the group. Each student is expected to consider the three aspects of the path, in turn, during the evening meditation. First, the individual achieves a refined state; then the student links up consciously (mentally and intuitively) (telepathically) with all of the students within the (outer) (exoteric) group (whether or not physically present) and with the overshadowing esoteric group (via the soul and its relationship); and finally, the individual links through the assembled, vitalized meditation form (matrix) (energy) to humanity, providing an appropriate encouragement or qualification (energy).

The meditation work involved in vespers may include conscious invocation and evocation of ray energies (e.g., the seven rays as they correspond to the seven days of the week), the energies of each particular lunar (solar) cycle, or more specialized energies according to the character and quality of the particular group (charter). Traditionally, the vespers format allows each student some flexibility in his approach to the meditation period, the important ingredients being consistency (humility), and linking up with the group (for as long as the student is qualified and effectively linked to the group meditation matrix, others (more qualified) can evoke the meditation energies for particular (humanitarian) (or esoteric) (hierarchical) purposes). Also, traditionally, the evening discipline has embraced (overall) keynotes of (quiet) joy, praise, thanksgiving, and dedication. The more personal meditation exercises are not appropriate to a group form, and are better left to the morning exercise or the final evening (retrospection) exercise.

Though vespers is most effective in a cloistered context (i.e., a formal occult school where students in physical incarnation remain secluded to some extent), it is also fairly effective in less cloistered environments (e.g., a small community

of students), and the tradition may hold even for those who are not in incarnation (i.e., the vespers form of meditation is an effective means for exoteric (incarnated) and esoteric (more qualified) members to work together subjectively). Even isolated (incarnated) members can meditate in the vespers format, by dedicating an evening meditation to linking up with such a group matrix.

The Karma of Accidents

An accident is commonly considered an unfortunate event resulting from carelessness, unawareness, ignorance, or unavoidable causes. No event (situation) (circumstances) is without sufficient cause or merit. For every accident there exists a causal (karmic) chain. A given causal chain may or may not be particularly significant, but it exists nonetheless to provide a cause and effect relationship (to satisfy the balance of forces). Under occult (karmic) law, each person is indeed responsible for every experience faced, though few experiences involve isolated individuals, and therefore most causal chains (and most events) are multiplex (involving more than one person and/or involving a set of causes) (resulting in shared experience) (the result of interacting karmic forces).

From a metaphysical (superphysical) perspective, an accident is an explosion of psychic force. That explosion may range from great, in the case of a major (apparent) catastrophe, to minor, in the case of an incidental accident (without major consequences). Though an accident may appear to be sharply defined in time and space, most accidents involve a gradual building up of psychic force followed by a (relatively) sudden release of that tension as the resulting accident (or accidents) is manifested. In the case of a major accident, the tension can build over quite some time, as the appropriate people are gradually attracted to the time and place of occurrence (release) (manifestation) according to their respective karma. In many cases, carelessness alone is sufficient to warrant immediate consequences.

The circumstances of some accidents appear to be within a person's immediate or potential control, and are normally attributed to carelessness, unawareness,

or ignorance, and indeed these can be potent causes (resulting in potent lessons and karmic fulfillment). But some such accidents are actually beyond a person's immediate control and, in addition to the karma of carelessness (unawareness) (ignorance) there may be additional, more potent (intense, cumulative) karma not directly related to the immediate consciousness (temperament) and circumstances, save as an opportunity of manifestation (release) and subsequent realization on some level. But in every event, the participants are as responsible for their consequences as they are for their causes, however distant.

Though many accidents are essentially unavoidable (without a moderating change in consciousness), most accidents can be prevented by one who is reasonably aware of external and internal events (i.e., who is careful, observant, and able to qualify his own character, quality, temperament, etc.). If a person is consciously responsible and has reasonable awareness, then virtually all meaningful lessons can be learned (and appropriate adjustments made) without recourse to accidents, suffering, etc. The apparent tragedies of life carry with them major lessons for the individuals involved, and even those who are consciously responsible and reasonably aware are not necessarily immune.

Those who are accident prone are effectively creating their own accidents by virtue of their psychic and/or personal temperament. But those who are well-integrated, spiritually poised, conscientious and responsible, who live without haste (anxiety) and with goodwill toward all, are generally free from first-order accidents (accidents resulting from current conditions in consciousness) if not necessarily from second-order accidents (accidents resulting from earlier or accumulated conditions in consciousness). The karma of any accident is, as is all karma, the appropriate effect needed to balance the forces released by virtue of human activity.

Intelligence 1

Intelligence is defined as the capability or capacity to apprehend facts and propositions and their relationships and to reason about them. Intelligence implies some degree of objective awareness, common sense, and comprehension (understanding). In the human case, intelligence also implies mental capabilities (and analogously for other lifeforms). Intelligence does not imply formal education, but it does imply experience and training. The degree of intelligence is an indication (albeit not conclusive) of overall evolutionary development (but it can be masked if appropriate), but intelligence cannot be measured effectively by conventional means.

In a sense, intelligence implies a capacity or potential for learning. The extent or degree of intelligence does indicate previous development and assimilated experience. Thus intelligence is an acquired (induced) capability, but one that depends heavily on the condition, quality, and training of the current vehicle(s) (in the human case, principally, the mind). Consequently, intelligence represents both the potential for learning and the capability of comprehension. The character (quality), degree (magnitude), and extent (focus) of intelligence varies tremendously between lifewaves, and considerably within most lifewaves, but generally increases with experience and order (i.e., a preceding lifewave tends to exhibit greater intelligence (being more experienced), albeit not necessarily along the same lines).

The formula for intelligence varies from one species (lifewave) to another. For humanity, intelligence is a meaningful combination of consciousness, awareness, and mental ability. In a higher sense, intelligence is an inherent potential ability based upon the basic (external) presence (quality) of divine mind (the inherent mental aspect of the solar logos (or higher intelligence of some degree and extent)). In this sense, intelligence is the degree and extent to which a unit of consciousness (individual or group) participates in the divine (higher) intelligence. The growth of consciousness (intelligence) is thus the development of the means with which intelligence is contacted (on subtle levels) and expressed. In the human case, the principal vehicle is the mind. The entire personality nature is initially an ineffective means of reflecting (expressing)

intelligence; ultimately, with proper and balanced development, it becomes a very effective means of expression.

Thus intelligence is an induced (comprehensive) (aggregate) capability. Though much of the human nature and talents appears to be possessed, all is actually (more properly) measured as induced, as the human being participates more effectively in the greater life. In this sense, intelligence is a measure of effectiveness, as the quality of consciousness is a measure of rapport. But intelligence and quality of consciousness are not necessarily developed in a balanced manner (any more than the head-centered and heart-centered natures), but must ultimately be balanced for completion (perfection).

By definition (qualifications), the esoteric student is one who is both (relatively highly) intelligent and spiritually responsive (with relatively considerable quality of consciousness). One who is merely interested in metaphysical and spiritual matters is not necessarily particularly intelligent or spiritually responsive. Many people are highly intelligent but not spiritually responsive. Many are spiritually responsive but lack significant intelligence. To fulfill the dharma of the spiritual path, the student must eventually mask a high degree and extent of intelligence and a considerable quality and extent of consciousness.

✝ Commentary No. 414

Mindlessness

Mindlessness is defined as the state of being deficient in mind or consciousness, lacking obvious (mentally-based) intelligence, being inattentive, heedless, or unresponsive. For a human being, mindlessness is a condition that inhibits experience and impairs abilities. Since the development and perfection of the mind as a synthetic and highly qualified instrument is a principal evolutionary activity of (present) humanity, any condition of mindlessness or tendency toward mindlessness should be addressed and overcome, either during the normal course of experience in the case of evolving humanity, or during the conscious evolution of those upon the spiritual path.

The actual condition (extent) of mindlessness may be partial or substantial, intermittent or continuous, temporary or (relatively) permanent. Mindlessness can be the result of any one or a number of causes, major or minor, including lack of mental development, lack of training, an impaired or damaged mental body, absorption in some glamour or illusion, stress (fear) (worry), distraction (attachment) (desire), self-deception, lack of integration or mental connectivity, arrogance, willfulness, hypnosis, drugs, etc. The treatment for mindlessness depends to a large extent on the actual condition (extent) and the cause or causes. As in any healing activity, treating the effects cannot lead to a satisfactory solution unless there is also a realization (adjustment) in consciousness.

One of the complications of mindlessness is that the condition itself makes it difficult (if not impossible) for a person to recognize and diagnose his own condition. Another complication, at least for the spiritual student, is that the majority of humanity suffer mindlessness to a considerable extent, and therefore there is a continual encouragement toward mindlessness. This general condition is balanced by evolutionary forces which encourage mental development, increased awareness, etc. Understanding mindlessness in this general sense is relatively easy (for those who are mentally polarized) and the solution is straightforward (gradual mental development and realization resulting from human experience and increased qualification).

The mindlessness (mental sheepishness) of humanity relates principally to the prevailing emotional polarization and consequent absorption in mundane (personal) energies, and lack of mental development and training. With further experience and training, humanity will gradually overcome the current conditions, and begin thinking along more reasonable lines (being less biased by emotional, mundane, and personal energies). But the progress of humanity is necessarily slow, and the treatment is one of simple encouragement and qualification. For humanity, moderation in development is relatively important, and particularly so in the case of mental development.

In the case of an individual whose mindlessness is traceable to particular causes, the treatment is potentially much more difficult, for the simple reason that karma so manifested is not as simple as the general conditions for humanity. Such a treatment must remain general until properly diagnosed (and

causes revealed); then those processes should be treated explicitly (e.g., specific mental discipline and training, repair of the mental body, detachment, self-purification and balance, integration, etc.). In this particular case, treatment of mindlessness normally requires the cooperation of the personality. Given the realization (understanding) (adjustment in consciousness), the treatment of the causal chain is able to be successful, and the individual will be restored to whatever degree of mental abilities have been properly achieved.

✝ Commentary No. 415

Qualification 1

Almost all occult (esoteric) (spiritual) work involves qualification in one sense (extent) or another. Qualification is the process of conditioning (qualifying) (impressing) (modifying) (moderating) (characterizing) some object (matter) (form) (consciousness) (energy) (force) (personality) with some (general or particular) characteristic or endowment, or the actual substance (character) of that process. In order for any qualification (process) to be successful, the object must be responsive (i.e., the qualifying force must first overcome the natural (inertial) resistance of the object to that particular qualification).

A qualification (character) so impressed upon an object may be intentionally or unintentionally limited or constrained. A qualification may be temporary or relatively permanent, vaguely defined or relatively sharply defined, subtle or relatively intensive, casual (incidental) (careless) or relatively highly purposive. A qualification is itself inherently qualified, as every step in a qualification sequence (chain) (matrix) is at least qualified by the preceding steps, if not also by the corollaries and subsequents. For example, a qualification may utilize some internal or external trigger (catalyst) to reveal or mask the intended impression according to some purpose. In some respects qualification involves programming the object via energy impression.

Every thought and every feeling (as energy expressions) induces (results in) some (nominal) (incidental) (purposive) (deliberate) qualification. The very presence of a human being (or some consciousness) tends to qualify the immediate environment according to the quality, character and temperament of

the human being (or lifeform), and according to the quality and character of that immediate environment. Thus, if a person is mentally polarized and spiritually qualified, the person's presence will have some (potentially considerable) positive (constructive) effect on the environment (and upon any who are within that environment (aura) (characterized field) and responsive to the implied qualification). And a person who is responsive (intelligently, selectively, or incidentally) to that environment (qualification) is so qualified (to the extent and nature of the qualification (immediate source), the medium (environmental character), and the personality (or aspects thereof) so qualified).

A major work of any occult (esoteric) (spiritual) student in incarnation is the evolutionary encouragement of humanity, not by imposition or manipulation, but by qualification. Much of that qualification occurs as the student lives and works within humanity, incidentally, by virtue of the student's presence (character) (quality of consciousness). Though incidental in the sense that it occurs during the normal course of activity (and without drawing attention), it is nonetheless substantive and relatively important. Thus it is not necessarily so important what a (qualified) person says or does, so much as a person's being there with some (higher) consciousness.

In addition to the incidental qualification of presence within humanity of those who consciously tread the spiritual path (who are the path) (and who are therefore instruments of appropriate consciousness), the relatively more advanced students (disciples) (initiates) (in or out of incarnation) (who are properly trained in occult (mental) techniques (energy manipulation and qualification)) consciously and deliberately (collectively and in some particular ways) qualify humanity and various aspects of humanity (as well as other aspects of the planetary scheme) according to higher purpose (the evolutionary plan). And the higher lives qualify all of the composite lives.

Qualification 2

The actual process (qualification) properly involves the mind (in the lower sense) and the faculties of the soul (atma-buddhi-manas) (in the higher sense), as the mind (and higher faculties) focus and qualify energy in particular ways, and as that energy is then impressed upon some object on some level (physical, astral, mental). Much of the occult training proper is concerned with understanding the various energies and forces, learning to properly and effectively (intelligently and harmoniously) work with those energies and forces, and learning how to qualify objects within the evolutionary framework in general and within the charter (mission) of the student's particular group.

The entire manifested universe is highly qualified (impressed with purpose) (intricately endowed with qualification chains (matrices)), from the highest level and the One who so qualifies the very existence of a manifested universe, through every succeeding level of consciousness, to the lowest level of qualified matter (for even the basic form of elementary substance is qualified). Within every life (consciousness) (form) is inherent an evolutionary potential as a basic qualification (grace) (gift of God), and the encouragement of evolutionary force according to the natural order and scheme of things.

In every aspect of existence, there are both internal qualifications and external qualifications (impressions) (potentialities) (characteristics) (forces), all of which are related in some way to the purpose of life (evolution). Implied in the basic qualification of manifestation is the obligation of all life-forms to fulfill their evolutionary contribution, according to their respective qualifications, particular cycles, etc. Thus another sense (definition) of qualification is the process of becoming qualified by higher impression.

In this sense, it is the duty of all to so improve themselves (collectively and individually) according to the evolutionary plan, that they become increasingly (properly) qualified. All of the natural forces encourage evolution in one form or another, and the masses of humanity (like every lifewave that is not consciously cooperating with the evolutionary forces) are (somewhat) responsive to the various internal and external qualifications so that sensible progress is

inevitable albeit gradual. But those elements of spiritual students within humanity, who are conscious of their commitment to the path, are further obligated to make all of the needed adjustments (modifications) (qualifications) (cultivations) (developments) implied by the path (i.e., conscious evolution toward the perfection (completion) of the human being, well in advance of the bulk of humanity, that that progress might further qualify (encourage) humanity).

The self-qualification of the spiritual student (involving affirmation, visualization, magic, and/or more occult methods of energy manipulation) is an important aspect of conscious evolution, for in programming (qualifying) the mind and the personality nature, the student is more responsive to higher impressions, better able to develop the latent faculties and higher character, better able to learn (realize) (assimilate) the needed lessons (adjustments), better able to contribute to the encouragement of humanity, etc. In a sense it is a combination of self-qualification (impressing quality and character upon one's instruments (personality)) and becoming more qualified (more capable) (more effective) that leads the individual from the preliminaries of the path (aspiration) (probation) to the ever-increasing responsibilities (capabilities) (mission) of discipleship, and to the higher (more subtle) forms of service.

✝ Commentary No. 417

The Natural Order 1

The universe (the cosmos) (the field of teleological manifestation) is the energy field resulting from the power (potency) (presence) of some God (essence) beyond the ken of any life (consciousness) imbedded (involved) in that universe. The energy field (universal manifestation) is induced in the void, and because of the qualification of the most basic energy so induced, that field brings into existence a vast extent (range) of appropriate forces. The basic (primary) energy of the universe is the matrix which provides a natural framework for the manifestation and progressive evolution (experience) (development) of all derived forces (lives) (consciousness) (forms).

That framework is a set of interdependent forces (a force field that is sustained and qualified by the basic energy field) which provides a dynamic equilibrium for every substantive aspect of manifestation. The purpose of manifestation (evolution) requires a progressive structure (pattern of derived (secondary) forces) in order to bring about the objectives (fulfillment). That structure includes multidimensional consciousness to link (communicate) between the various aspects. That structure includes a vast (progressive) (cyclic) pattern of manifested secondaries (the coming into and passing out of manifestation of lives at every level). And that structure includes a balance of forces on every level (and between levels) so that each aspect of manifestation is complementary (contributes to the fulfillment of the purpose(s) of manifestation).

The intermediate result of manifestation is a natural order that is all-pervasive, that provides a complete balance of forces that in turn (simultaneously) provides the encouragement for evolution (at every level), a flexible means of evolution, and a dynamic momentum to keep things on track (within the established bounds). Every force is therefore balanced as well as consequential. For every force that threatens the natural balance, there will arise additional (complementary) forces, to guide that force toward some useful purpose and to therefore restore the equilibrium at that level (since the cause and effect are essentially simultaneous, there is never actually anything less than equilibrium (in the higher sense)).

Due to the dynamic (flexible) nature of the divine plan (which has overall objectives and guidelines for their achievement and the balanced forces with which to so achieve), there are generally many ways in which a given force may be manifested (diversity in unity being a prevalent evolutionary concept) (provided that that diversity is balanced (moderated), meaningful (purposive), and complementary). Due to the natural order (the qualification of forces), a natural resistance will accompany every manifestation of force, to guide (moderate) that force into a more effective balance (a preferred orientation). This is not the resistance of matter, which must eventually be transformed into greater harmony (response), but the resistance of force that guides forces into alignment with the larger (natural) channels of force.

Natural force flows from one center (intersection) (chakra) to another, along natural lines or channels. Force can be manipulated (directed) (sustained) by consciousness, consciously (deliberately) or unconsciously (incidentally), but left alone (without external qualification), each force will follow the nearest compatible (natural) channel. In a sense, the whole framework of evolution involves the progressive reordering (transformation) of forces from lower states within the natural order to other, higher (more evolved) (more natural) states within that natural order.

✝ Commentary No. 418

The Natural Order 2

Each lifeform within the manifested universe can be perceived (discerned) as one or another of two basic types: the essentially passive lifeform that is essentially wholly qualified by or in the context of the natural flow of forces (e.g., deva lives), and the essentially active lifeform that essentially qualifies the natural order by manipulating the various forces (e.g., human lives). Of course a spectrum exists between these two basic types (and all exhibit both active and passive aspects), but most lifeforms are predominately either active or passive.

A passive lifeform (one that is intended to be passive) is capable of working with the forces of manifestation (in fact, no other recourse is even possible), while an active lifeform is (potentially) capable of transforming those forces into more effective channels. Given the natural order (balance), everything (life) (consciousness) (form) has a place, and as that natural order progresses, so does the place of various aspects progress. Attempts to change a flow of forces from a natural state to an unnatural state will result in an accrual of sufficient energy (force) to produce the momentum needed to (eventually) restore things to a (more) natural state. Attempts to change a flow of forces from one natural state to another will be successful if sufficient energy is available and the effort is properly directed, particularly if the new state is preferable (in terms of the natural balance) (not merely acceptable) to the old state.

The forces of nature are quite potent relative to humanity, but the forces of nature can be manipulated effectively where the karma of all concerned permits and where the transformation or manipulation is intelligently directed. One of

the prerequisites for serious occult training is an awareness of the natural order (the place of all things) (the hierarchy of forces) and an understanding of the consequences of forces. Only with a proper respect for the natural order (reverence for life) (humility) and a sufficient (intelligent) understanding of the cause and effect relationships can a spiritual (metaphysical) (occult) (esoteric) student be trusted with the means and methods of serious occult work (which is the intelligent application of forces in harmony with the divine (evolutionary) plan).

Much of the preliminary training of a spiritual student involves developing awareness (reverence) and understanding. Everything that a spiritual student does (feels) (thinks) should be qualified by that awareness and understanding, so that the student's presence and the student's every action should be in harmony with the natural order and designed to be complementary to the evolutionary forces. Man (the generic human being) has a considerable (positive) (active) potential for contributing to the fulfillment of the evolutionary scheme, by cooperating intelligently with the natural forces (not by pursuing individual or personal goals (which is separative)) and living ever in harmony with those forces. To attempt to do this (merely) as a personality is ineffective (for the personality lacks sufficient wisdom), but with proper alignment, the qualified personality can be quite effective.

What is truly natural (related to the natural order) should not be confused with the path of least resistance for the personality, which is to sustain the inertia of the personality (which is the resistance of matter). The resistance of the personality must eventually be wholly and properly overcome, that the personality might live for the path and in harmony with higher forces (rather than with the inertial forces of the personality (matter)).

Qualifications 1

Of the entire human being, it is the soul that (eventually) makes the commitment to the spiritual path. The personality follows by making a corresponding commitment, which is, in effect, a conscious acknowledgement of the soul's commitment. But the personality can effect such a commitment to the path only where the soul has realized a certain degree of development (quality and level of consciousness) (and has therefore made its commitment and has begun to qualify the personality), and where the individual (personality) consciousness has risen sufficiently above (beyond) the mass (average) human consciousness. Initially, the personality may be resistant (reluctant) (hesitant), but the soul eventually prevails.

In essence, the personality cannot make a commitment to the path until it is sufficiently developed and qualified. In the same sense, a person cannot receive any (proper) occult training, at any particular level, until that person has sufficient preparatory experience and has met the qualifications for training at that particular level. Due to the dynamic (progressive) nature of the path (evolution), the basic qualifications at any particular level (and on any particular path) are generally increasing, as humanity as a whole progresses.

For the preliminary training, however, there are essentially no qualifications, as any who are interested can generally find a source of basic teachings. In fact, at times, the basic (metaphysical) teachings are widely available. But at some point, interest (curiosity) (glamour) is not sufficient to merit further training. For a commitment (on some level) must be made and consequently some responsibility embraced for further training to be meaningful (the preliminary training is a simple matter of exposure to principles (concepts) (ideas) and a natural selection process based on responsiveness and ability). For advanced training (at various levels), the abilities and qualifications of the student are continually tested (stressed), while for preliminary training there are no (substantive) obligations.

Besides the obvious need for responsiveness to training, a spiritual student (candidate for occult training) must be deserving (must not have any preclusive

karma), must have an obvious potential to contribute to the path (or to some particular aspect or need), and must be capable of functioning occultly (must not be absorbed in any mundane or personal sense) (must be free from personal distraction and free from any substantive inertia). Of particular concern (from an occult or esoteric point of view) are polarization of consciousness, the degree of integration (of the personality), and the degree of alignment (of the personality with the soul).

No occult (spiritual) (esoteric) (metaphysical) training is ever (properly) imparted for its own sake. It is necessarily predicated on the needs of the path, the needs of the group within the context of the path (and the needs of humanity in the context of the evolutionary scheme), and the qualifications of the student, not upon the apparent needs or interests of the student. Qualifications are necessary for a number of reasons. If a person is not properly prepared (qualified), the (occult) training will be ineffective or counterproductive. The advanced training often requires adjustments in the student's aura (adjustments in the various energy centers), which require a considerable quality (purity) and stability in order to be effective. Thus, a student's progress in character, quality, and temperament are necessary prerequisites for each succeeding stage of training and expression (service).

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 420</div>

Qualifications 2

The essential qualifications for admittance to a proper esoteric group (metaphysical (occult) (esoteric) training beyond the preliminaries) are an earnest commitment to the spiritual path (to the soul) and an appropriate quality of consciousness. A wide range of experience, developed abilities, and specific qualifications contribute to that appropriate quality of consciousness. All of humanity are potentially qualified, but few have sufficiently developed that potential. The weight (relative importance) of specific qualifications varies somewhat depending on the particular group and circumstances, but a number of factors are generally necessary prerequisites.

These include being reasonably well-educated (not necessarily formally so), being reasonably intelligent, having a polarization of consciousness above the

physical and emotional levels (a physically or emotionally polarized individual simply cannot effectively integrate the personality or achieve alignment (of personality and the soul)), having a reasonably pure (refined) (qualified) and stable (coherent) aura (and consciousness), and being reasonably strong (in the mental and spiritual sense) (in order to weather the many trials and adjustments implied (evoked) in (by) the path).

Though many specific qualifications are essential to some extent (development) or another, the list of qualifications to be fulfilled in relation to the path is virtually endless, as the specific qualifications are in effect both characteristics to achieve or abilities (capabilities) to develop, and the results of quality in consciousness. In essence, it is the quality of consciousness that matters, yet that (appropriate) quality of consciousness (and associated abilities) is virtually inseparable from the many attributes (abilities) and the potential of the student. Principal considerations include mental ability (the ability to focus the mind coherently and the ability to consciously program (qualify) the personality), mental discipline, objectivity, telepathic ability (potential), meditation ability, meditation discipline, meditation quality, a lack of personality-centeredness (self-centeredness) (ego), freedom from absorption (glamour) (illusion) (self-deception), objective awareness, subjective awareness, rapport (potential), etc.

Specific qualifications (for consideration) include the ability to communicate effectively, acceptance of responsibility, administrative ability, freedom from attachments, balance (moderation), charity (compassion) (kindness), commitment (to the group (the path) (humanity) (life)), conscientiousness (dependability), considerateness, detachment, devotion to duty, an appropriate diet, discretion (common sense) (carefulness), flexibility (adaptability) (reasonableness), gentleness (harmony), honesty (accuracy), respect for (right) human relations, humility, impersonality (in the spiritual sense), freedom from independence (an independent attitude is separative and counterproductive), neatness (cleanliness), and freedom from mundane and personal absorption.

Specific qualifications also include a healthy body (emotions) (mind), openmindedness, personal discipline, personal ethics, practical ability, problem-solving ability, freedom from professional absorption, professional ethics, freedom from reactiveness, responsiveness, scholarship and attention to detail, a sincere service motive, spiritual character and strength, spiritual poise, stability

(consistency) (coherence), freedom from glamour (illusion) (self-deception), a positive temperament, capacity for understanding (discernment), and respect for the natural order (all of life and the place of lives within the scheme of evolution) (reverence).

<div align="right">✝   Commentary No. 421</div>

Outer Government

The government of a (political) (secular) (religious) (philosophical) (cultural) (racial) group of people is a practical necessity during the vast periods of time of middle manifestation (the time of deepest descent into matter (greatest mundane absorption) (experience most remote from the creative source (on the fringe of chaos))) (where differentiation and diversity is at its greatest extent). The government of a group of people is (ideally) intended to provide appropriate guidance, organization, and services to and for the people in the context of meaningful existence (experience and expression) and the evolution of consciousness associated with or intended for that existence.

Many forms of government have been formulated, implemented, and tested over the ages, each contributing something to the people and circumstances, each having strengths and weaknesses. No one form of government is necessarily appropriate during these diverse times (although a coherent, meaningful, and uniform world government will doubtless emerge in the distant future), and it is not clear that any one (present) form of government is in the overall sense significantly better than any other form of government. What makes a government particularly good (bad) is not so much the form of government but the quality.

The quality of government determines how the form of government is implemented. With increasing quality of government, the form of government is improved accordingly to provide guidance, organization, and services reasonable and appropriate to the circumstances. But what determines the quality of government is the quality of consciousness. A government is only as good as the overall quality of consciousness of those persons forming or constituting the government. And the quality of consciousness of those persons (in the context of their position) is directly related to the overall quality of consciousness of the

people governed, whether or not that government is elected or not, legally or illegally constituted, or imposed in some fashion.

In other words, a group of people fully deserve the quality and character of their government (and should, to some extent, feel some responsibility). Karma is the principal force that determines these things (government, its quality, etc.). The only effective way to improve the quality and character of government is to improve the quality and character of the consciousness of the people for which that government is established. In improving the quality of consciousness of the people, so is the karma fulfilled and transformed to allow a more effective and more appropriate government to be manifested. Treating the effects (trying to change the government, its form, its leadership) is simply not effective, unless coincidentally the quality and character of the people is changing and improving.

As the quality of consciousness improves overall, the government naturally becomes more efficient and more effective, less burdensome and more reasonable, less provincial and more inclusive, inherently more equitable in appearance. As the quality of consciousness improves overall there is more respect for and adherence to the various laws and guidance provided by government. Working within the established system (internally within the framework, ethics, and forces of the spiritual path) (and externally within the established laws of the government), the student of conscience (the spiritual student) should ever seek to encourage the evolution of consciousness throughout humanity, by projecting and sharing a higher quality of consciousness, without imposition, that others (all) might improve their quality of consciousness and thereby the quality and significance of experience and evolution.

The Middle Ground

The middle ground between the mass absorption of humanity and the prerogative of the creator is the arena par excellence of the esoteric student. The masses of humanity are generally bound in the realm of effects, being predominately absorbed in the glamour and illusion of objective (material) (personal) existence and largely reactive to external forces (thereby having relatively little free will). The creator of this world (universe) is (relative to this world) equally absorbed, but in the realm of highest causes rather than the realm of temporal effects. The spiritual (esoteric) student, however, is one who has overcome the lower illusions to some extent, and who has entered the middle ground between the higher causes and their effects.

The spiritual student in media res as far as causes and effects are concerned is in a position to interact with things (forces) (energies) (consciousness) much more so than in either of the other two realms. The potential for significant experience, growth, understanding, and service is much higher where there is a conscious interaction with things and an awareness of subsequent effects than is the case of the simple (reactive) experience imposed by karma in the form of external forces (the bulk of humanity lack awareness or understanding of the cause and effect relationships so conveyed as circumstances and situations). Reactive experience tends toward rather slow (limited) growth in consciousness and understanding. Mature, interactive experience which is predominately mental and intuitional tends toward more substantial growth, for awareness allows more immediate near-term assimilation of experience than does reactive experience.

The principal keys to interactive experience are therefore conscious awareness and the ability to consciously embrace the entire experience. In the reactive case, the individual is largely unable to think about the experience with clarity and understanding; the perception tends to be heavily biased and absorption in mundane (personal) worldly issues tends to close the mind to understanding the cause and effect relationships. A sincere but rather pragmatic approach to experience tends to limit the conscious experience to only (the immediate) part of the causal chain. A more broad-minded and interactive approach can embrace

the alternate paths and implications (from past, parallel, and subsequent events) and allow more meaningful conclusions in consciousness.

The middle ground allows the individual to be relatively detached from the mundane, personal, and worldly forces (and relatively free from the substantial bias that those forces imply) so that true (deeper) (conscious) realization is possible. The middle ground also affords to the individual (personality) the character, quality, and guidance of the soul and that of the soul group. But in order to achieve that middle ground (place in consciousness), the student must invariably sacrifice much of his mundane, personal, and worldly values and make a substantial commitment to the path, to the soul, and to the lifewave (humanity). And, of course, the student must learn to function consciously on mental levels.

The arena of the esoteric student affords a considerable amount of free will, subject largely to the individual's consciousness (maturity) (capability) and the qualifications of the evolutionary plan of which he is a participant. Of particular significance are the places (levels) of convergence of forces and the associated mechanisms. The esoteric student, working always within a chartered group (service) context, is inherently involved in the balance (balancing) of evolutionary forces, within the relatedness of the middle ground.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 423</div>

Names and Things 1

If indeed a spiritual student is to proceed beyond the realm of self-deception, glamour, and illusion, then the student must be able to distinguish between things, the names of things, and the perception of things (including the perception of the names of things).

A thing is what it is, not what it is called or named, nor is it what it is perceived to be. A thing is real in its own sense, and can be unreal only in the sense of an incorrect attribution. A thing may be spirit, consciousness, or matter, or some composite or combination thereof (or something else entirely). The name of a

thing is also a thing, for the name is as real as the thing (if not more real), albeit not the thing for which it is a name.

In the final analysis, the spiritual student must learn to be honest, and admit that he cannot know any thing with any certainty. At best he can admit that he thinks he knows what his own perceptions are, realizing fully that those perceptions are merely indications (things) (each perception being real in itself, as a perception, but not being the object of perception). The problem of false identification of things and false attribution to things is extremely widespread (prevalent) in the lower worlds, as the vast majority of humanity, although somewhat self-conscious, are nevertheless deluded by material existence, identification with form rather than life and consciousness, etc. This is however as it needs to be, for the majority, as many are the lessons of such existence. The greatest achievement in the human sphere of activity is the realization of one's own delusion and the subsequent overcoming. Those who have achieved self-mastery have, in a sense, merely conquered this delusion (substituting some higher illusion).

The names of things provide a real basis for occult work, for in the middle ground between the delusion of objective existence (immersion) and the relative freedom of life at the monadic level, exists the realm of forces (cause and effect) (relationships) in which the occult (esoteric) (spiritual) student is expected to work. The occult student learns to work with these energies and forces, constructively, intelligently, and with proper endorsement, in order to contribute further to human evolution (albeit without imposition). Much of the higher (subtle) work involves energy and force directly, invoking and evoking appropriate (particular) (qualified) (beneficial) energies and forces. But much of the work also involves the names of things, invoking (evoking) forces and energies by virtue of the names of things.

Names are intermediaries (much superior to perceptions) and incorporate some safeguards against improper evocation. For every thing (force) (energy) (form) there are many names, some relatively weak (superficial) and some relatively potent (intimate) (more real). Some names are words and/or sounds; other names (symbols), more potent, are more subtle and can only be approached without recourse to words or sounds or visualizations of any sort. In essence, there exists for every thing a succession of names, some real and some arbitrary,

and the extent to which the student understands the name(s) and has the ability and training for proper utilization, is the extent to which the student has power over the thing(s) so named. The outer names of things are superficial and arbitrary and afford little power and influence. The inner (deeper) names of things are revealed to the esoteric student progressively to the extent of his quality of consciousness, ability, training, and need (appropriateness) (charter). Thus are the more potent names of things properly precluded from unauthorized use.

✝ Commentary No. 424

Names and Things 2

Even where certain names are discovered prematurely, a safeguard exists in the sense that the discoverer lacks the knowledge or training to discern the proper relationships, and thereby remains relatively impotent (e.g., a person who inadvertently stumbled across a rather potent name would not recognize it for what it is and would pass on to some other object of attention). Further, many names of things are masks, on various levels, with the proper associations missing. But the more subtle (real) names are quite potent, carrying with them significant correlations and associations, leading the (properly qualified) student to the truth (reality) of things and the self-realization that that truth implies.

Each name of a thing is a key to some aspect or attribute of the thing. Knowing the names of a thing conveys (with understanding) the ability to influence that thing (or aspect (attribute) thereof) and, potentially, other things to which the thing is related. The highest, most subtle name of a thing is generally the key to its existence (relative reality). A thing exists only to the extent that its highest (deepest) name exists (the name of a thing exists only to the extent that the highest (deepest) name of the name exists) (ad infinitum). Though the essence (life) behind a thing can never be destroyed, the form (consciousness) and manifestation of that essence can be created (destroyed) in the sense that as the highest name of a thing is named (conveyed) so is that thing created (destroyed) (sustained) (depending on context).

The entire manifested universe is held in fact by virtue of its deepest name being sounded (not verbally, but conveyed in being). For example, as that sounding (the Word) is completed, so will the fabric of the universe dissolve and all of its constituents return appropriately to the void (chaos). Similarly, the lifewave (humanity) exists in the higher sense as its name being conveyed; thus the sound (name) of humanity will eventually be fulfilled, and humanity (as a construct) will be dissolved. Likewise, the soul (personality) exists only to the extent that the monad (soul) sustains the name thereof.

For each (named) thing (life) (consciousness) (form), there is an interface between the existence (manifestation) of the thing and the domain external to that existence. Relative to the highest (deepest) name of the thing, the external realm is chaos. If the manifestation of the deepest name (of a thing) is relatively pure, the interaction between the thing and its environment will be meaningful. If the manifestation at the edge (interface) is relatively coarse, then the manifestation will not be true to the name (inherent vibration or quality) and distortion will result. In the extreme case, such coarseness results in rogue consciousness and subsequent premature dissolution.

The esoteric student endeavors to study things, their names, their relationships, etc. in order to understand how to better fulfill his service. As a rapport is developed with the soul, and through the soul, all aspects of manifested life, the deeper aspects of a thing (the deeper names) are progressively revealed, allowing the student to influence things appropriately, in accordance with the plan. Much of the preparatory work involves studying ideas and concepts, for ideas and concepts are potent things, with subtle implications in terms of cause and effect, the qualification of manifestation, etc. But ideas should not be confused with the names of ideas or with the things and names of things to which the ideas are related or represent. In discernment (honesty) (humility) comes advanced training, further realization, and a greater capacity for meaningful service.

Obligation

The vast majority of metaphysical and theosophical students who think of themselves as being committed to the spiritual path are actually merely approaching the path and have made no formal (proper) commitment. Though many are merely attracted through various glamours, there are also many who are sincere and proceeding gradually toward a proper commitment. But that proper commitment comes only when the basic resistance of the personality is overcome, where the personality is no longer principally absorbed in the mundane and personal (personality) matters of the lower (outer) world, and where a true obligation has been incurred. This can only occur where there exists a considerable and sufficient understanding of the basic philosophy of the path.

The distinction between perceived commitment and a true commitment (obligation) is an important one, for the basic vibration and qualification of the obligated student is changed, and the rate of karmic qualification (fulfillment) (evocation) is accelerated. A student (aspirant) can only become an obligated student when the basic work of the probationary period is fulfilled and when the guardians of the path recognize the individual as being both qualified and willing to undergo the rigors of the spiritual path. Then and only then can a student make a proper commitment and be accepted within the formal context of the spiritual path. Until that time, the motives and intentions of the student provide the necessary momentum.

The guardians of the path are not active in the outer or lower worlds, nor can any true commitment to the path be made in the external world or through any external (manifested) organization. It can only be made by a mind and soul together, on the (lowest) level of the soul (i.e., the mental plane). The actual obligation is twofold: the student is obligated to the path and all of the qualification (rules) of the path, and the path (through those who are the path) is obligated to the (obligated) student. The obligation of the path to the individual is one primarily of further qualification and training and opportunity for service. All must nonetheless be earned by the individual, for naught can be that is not merited.

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The demands of the student at any level are ignored, for demands are the noise of the personality and not the love or quality (significance) of the heart (mind) (soul) of the student. Demands serve only to undermine an individual's own effort. The proper demeanor is one of humility, intelligent subordination, cooperation, responsiveness, and thanksgiving. Progress comes through increasing rapport with the soul, the esoteric group (on soul levels), and the path. And that rapport comes when and to the extent that the ego of the personality is overcome. The ego is the principal impediment to the path (proper), for it is the ego that is deceived by external appearances (the grand illusion) and it is the ego that actually deceives the personality as a whole.

The price of obligation is considerable (at least from the worldly perspective and that of the personality). Not only does obligation include the subordination of all personality values and activities to the path, and an acceleration of karma, but it also includes a subtle burden relative to humanity. For the obligated student is also one to whom the karma of humanity can be applied in considerable measure. Thus an obligated student must not only so love humanity, but be willing and able to bear the pressures associated with karma on the level and breadth of the lifewave itself (humanity). Serving humanity is no simple task, for many are the subtle implications of obligated service, and great is the (inner) joy of one who is so obligated.

✝ Commentary No. 426

The Formal Path 1

In general, the spiritual path of conscious, accelerated evolution in consciousness and dedicated service to God and humanity can be divided into several significant stages: (1) the paths of approach, (2) the path of aspiration and the probationary path, (3) the path of discipleship, and (4) the path of initiation, including both minor and major initiations (i.e., for initiations, both minor and major, sanctioned by the Bodhisattva and/or the appropriate logos). In the sense of the formal paths, each of the various stages and grades are rather well-defined in terms of the quality of consciousness and the degree of self-mastery required of the student (candidate).

An individual is naturally attracted to the spiritual path when as a consequence of considerable human experience and development of consciousness, the quality of consciousness is sufficiently refined and the personality development is sufficiently accomplished for the individual to begin to respond to the call of the path and the subtle urging of the soul. There are many (informal) paths through which candidates might approach the spiritual path, but all naturally lead the student onto the path of aspiration (which may be predominantly head-centered or predominantly heart-centered). An individual becomes an aspirant as soon as there are a conscious interest in the spiritual path and an interest in the conscious development needed in order to make (and receive) a formal commitment. Those who are motivated primarily through ego and/or glamour are not considered aspirants.

By virtue of quality of consciousness, the aspirant is noticed by the guardians of the path, but no resources (energy, forces, attention, and guidance) are devoted until the aspirant has made considerable progress. When the aspirant actually understands the basic principles of the path (the esoteric philosophy) and has progressed to the point where no major obstructions or impediments (major weaknesses) exist within the karma and consciousness of the aspirant, then the aspirant becomes a probationary student, and then (and only then) are resources devoted to encourage and guide the candidate further.

That resources are devoted indicates only that an aspirant (probationary student) has sufficient potential for making a proper commitment to the path. At this stage (probationary student) the attention (guidance) is rather general (an overall qualification and testing) (personal attention is not appropriate within the context of the spiritual path, but the qualification received becomes more and more specialized as the student progresses (specialized in the sense of particular energies and forces and training, not in the sense of personal attention)).

As the paths of approach lead naturally to the path of aspiration, so does the path of aspiration lead naturally to the probationary path. The probationary path begins (informally) when the candidate (aspirant) becomes (also) the probationary student (one who begins the probationary training and discipline (largely self-directed)). The formal path begins as the aspirant (probationary

student) becomes the probationary disciple. The difference between a probationary student and a probationary disciple is largely one of meeting (some) formal requirements and qualifications (quality of consciousness, degree of self-mastery, etc.) and being able to make (and making) a formal commitment or obligation to the path. The aspirant is largely concerned with his or her own progress. The disciple is concerned much more with the spiritual work (service), though progress is still an essential ingredient.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 427</div>

The Formal Path 2

Having made a proper commitment (on the level of the soul and with the support of the personality), the probationary disciple is further tested and qualified until additional requirements (qualifications) are met.

Then the probationary period is considered formally complete and the student becomes an accepted disciple. The accepted disciple is (simultaneously) one who is formally accepted into an esoteric group context and assigned various duties appropriate to the talents and abilities (qualities) of the disciple and the particular needs or charter (responsibility) of the group. When a candidate is finally accepted, it means that the group has made a commitment to and accepts some responsibility for the candidate. Thus the accepted disciple is bound to (by) the group, while a probationary disciple is not.

The last stage of discipleship (proper) is that of obligated discipleship, as the accepted disciple becomes the obligated disciple. The distinction is one of further progress and deeper commitment. Obligated discipleship is the first stage in which the status of the student (disciple) is formally counted (measured) with respect to humanity, in the sense that the obligation of the esoteric group is related to the karma of the lifewave and planetary scheme. Obligated discipleship also means an acceptance at levels (extent) beyond the esoteric group (although the qualifications for the various grades are essentially the same (standardized) for all esoteric groups within a planetary scheme). As the student progresses through the various stages (grades), the rapport with the sponsoring (soul) esoteric group is deepened and broadened, the commitment (obligation) is strengthened, and effectively the student loses the entire

personality (as an independent, self-centered entity) in the unity of the group and the unity of all life.

The path of discipleship leads inevitably (eventually) to the path of initiation. In the context of the (formal) spiritual path (proper), initiation refers to the formal acknowledgement and vivification of consciousness that follows and marks the achievement in consciousness of the (formal) final qualifications for human (relative) perfection (successively, there being a finite number of initiations leading the obligated disciple to perfection in the human sense). Initiation (in this particular, formal sense) comes without seeking, comes only within the esoteric group context (at some level), comes only with the blessing of the Spiritual Hierarchy (the Christ) and the Planetary Logos (or some higher authorities, depending on the degree), and comes only in that higher context (on soul levels). No outer organization is able to conduct initiations (in this higher sense). All so-called initiations of outer organizations are merely ceremonial and/or preliminary to the formal path (at best) and not necessary (and therefore should not be confused with the initiations of the formal (spiritual) path).

Thus are numerous grades extant upon the one (formal) path, from the aspirant to the probationary student, to the probationary disciple, to the accepted disciple, to the obligated disciple, and on through the various grades of initiations (both within and beyond the strictly human evolution). The higher is ever inclusive in the sense that the initiate is also a disciple and a disciple is also an aspirant (and all are still human, albeit increasingly without the ordinary limitations and weaknesses of humanity) (until the initiate passes beyond the human domain entirely (effectively providing a link to the next higher lifewave)). The distinction of grade is a practical one, with no sense or implication of (personal) superiority (inferiority).

The Formal Path 3

For every human being in incarnation (and particularly for those who are (formally) upon the spiritual path), there are two associated grades that are measures of achievement (progress). One grade is the highest degree or grade (quality and character of consciousness) achieved by a soul in its various incarnations; the other is the degree or grade currently being manifested (through the current personality).

Both grades are significant, but it is the current grade that matters in all practical considerations. The quality and character of consciousness being manifested by a soul (via the personality) is limited by the quality and character of the personality. As the personality progresses in any given incarnation, it first (ordinarily) recapitulates earlier development and refinement, and gradually reaches the point (stage) (degree) of development and refinement (quality and character of consciousness) that is the highest yet achieved by that human being in any lifetime (which is generally the highest level achieved in the previous lifetime). For most that level is far short of alignment with the soul, but for the spiritual student, that level should involve some degree of alignment.

That a student will in the current experience (incarnation) reach the point of consciousness previously achieved is not assured, for each successive personality must be reconquered in turn (developed and refined) and that is a trial in itself (circumstances and opportunities vary considerably from one incarnation to another). However, once that point has been reached, then the real experience and development and service of the spiritual student actually begin (anew). Beyond that point of achievement, the progress of the individual in incarnation contributes directly to the progress of the soul (which is the real unit of human evolution).

In the context of the formal path, it is the degree or grade (level and quality of consciousness) currently being manifested that determines an individual's status upon the path (although on subtle (soul) levels there is consideration for the highest degree achieved by the soul, for it is that achievement that is actually incorporated in the soul). In a sense, every time a soul incarnates as a

personality, it forgoes the status already achieved and risks absorption in the lower worlds in order to serve humanity and further the development of the group. However, the potency of a soul that has taken initiation, for example, is considerable and (normally) gradually forces the refinement and subordination of the new personality. It is the potency (quality and intensity) of the soul that (indirectly) qualifies the personality throughout the incarnation. When alignment (of soul and personality) is actually achieved, then that potency (character) can flow unimpeded and directly qualify the entire lower (personality) consciousness.

For example, an individual who has achieved some degree (of discipleship or initiation) in a previous incarnation, who subsequently incarnates, recapitulates the progress that has led to that degree. In general, a student in incarnation is likely to be living at a level and quality of consciousness lower than that achieved previously, until the current progress is sufficient to fully overcome the personality (again) and allow the energy and quality of the soul to be properly manifested. Thus the important degree (grade) is the one currently being manifested, for it is the current consciousness that principally determines the extent of the energies and forces and opportunities (trust) permitted.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 429</div>

Glamour and the Path

The large majority of people who are attracted to the path in its public context are not attracted naturally but, rather, are attracted through glamour. The natural attraction is based upon progressed intelligence, quality of consciousness, and a natural affinity for the higher qualities of the soul. The attraction through glamour is based on purely personal considerations (ego, personalities, exclusivity, mystique, etc.), while the natural attraction is based upon generally impersonal considerations (the call of the soul, love of humanity, devotion to God, natural evolution of consciousness, etc.).

The publicity associated with the path is largely personality-oriented and therefore misleading and misrepresentative. Public information is generally provided by unqualified persons, for the qualified groups and their personnel

tend mostly toward non-public activities. The public organizations do provide a service in the sense of interpreting the path in terms that more people can understand. The public domain may be attractive to the personality, but it is not at all attractive to the soul. Consequently, the real work of the path occurs not in the public domain but on more subtle levels and in more subtle ways. The public (personality-centered) context compounds the potential of glamour and makes it difficult for even a sincere personality to recognize truth. But it is just this difficulty that provides a means of distinction, for one who faces these glamours (the various personal glamours and the glamour of the path) and (eventually) overcomes them has achieved a great deal.

The path can be viewed as a continuous, progressive test (and resulting transformations) of the student's ability to perceive the truth in the face of adversity (glamour) (personality distraction) (absorption). The student must recognize the basic principles of the path and distinguish them from a vast amount of misleading information. The student must recognize the self-deception potential of the mind (personality) (ego) and become more and more humble (which is necessary in order to overcome the more subtle glamours). The student must become relatively impersonal, in order to see through the vast miasma of personal energies, glamours, distractions, absorption, etc. And the student must become free to progress intelligently, without the imposition of mass consciousness (which means the student must learn to discriminate external pressures from the truth (reality) of higher (inner) consciousness).

The student must also recognize the relativity of things (even subtle glamours) and achieve the poise and confidence to face the greater (eternal) challenge. Thus the student must learn to discriminate fairly and objectively (eventually intuitively) and honestly appraise matters knowing that in progress comes greater truth and a letting go of that once held in truth (meaning that all truth is relative and tentative).

The problem of self-assessment is also compounded by glamour. The ego will naturally lead the gullible personality to believe he is much further evolved than is the case, providing superficial proofs to support the inflated assessment. Thus the majority of people who think they are on the path (who are not) also think of themselves as much farther along than they really are. The truly humble student (e.g., the accepted disciple or initiate) thinks of himself merely

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as a disciple (or generically, as a spiritual student). The place of a person relative to the path cannot be hidden from its guardians, but more importantly, the place of a person is not important; what is important is the overall quality of consciousness and the attitude of subordinating personality interests to the obligations (requirements) of the path.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 430</div>

Reactiveness

One of the most formidable and serious obstacles for the evolving individual to overcome is the reactiveness of the personality (ego). This reactiveness is inherent in the material nature of the personality (i.e., coarse matter is reactive, while refined matter is intelligently responsive) and further enhanced and/or strengthened by emotional and mental conditioning (i.e., the conditioning of the personality by external (mundane) (personal) forces and habits).

The distinction between reactiveness and responsiveness is an important one. A personality reaction is an unintelligent response to some stimulus, born of the coarse nature of the material personality (such coarse nature including the emotional and mental bodies). An unintelligent response is generally one that is rapid, defensive, separative, and without the conscious self-control of a properly integrated, refined personality. Some reactions are positive, such as the deeply programmed natural resistance to disease on a microscopic level. But most reactions on a macro-personality level (i.e., the personality as a whole rather than some small aspect of the personality) are negative (separative). An intelligent response is a more reasonable, thoughtful (considerate), and constructive response by the refined and well-integrated personality (where emotional reactions are properly discouraged by a balanced, healthy, poised, mentally polarized (or better) (higher) personality).

Taking exception to something or taking offense to someone or something are examples of (separative) personality reactions. Such reactiveness (negative conditioning) must be fully overcome if the student is to properly progress beyond the personality-centered (personality-indulgent) stage. Such reactiveness implies some degree of coarseness in the personality, some degree of ego (for only the ego is defensive and only the ego can feel a sense of

insecurity), and a lack of self-control and spiritual poise. A more proper demeanor (internally and externally) is not taking offense at anything (taking offense is personal; being concerned is more impersonal and therefore more constructive), not allowing the ego (imagination) to distort the perception along personal lines, and not allowing other people or circumstances to dominate (or trigger) one's responses. One should be able to interact intelligently and moderately with all people and all circumstances, not passively, reactively or personally, but more properly.

The way to overcome the reactiveness of the personality is to properly qualify and refine the nature of the entire personality, becoming mentally polarized (or better) and balanced between the head-centered nature and the heart-centered nature, to deliberately condition (qualify) (program) the personality to be (intelligently) responsive, to think before acting, to refuse to be offended, and to respect others' beliefs and activities (respect does not imply acceptance, but it does allow a less separative, more inclusive relationship).

One whose personality is reactive cannot properly be trusted, for such a person is not properly stable or sufficiently cultivated (qualified) (refined). Extreme reactiveness is spiritually fatal (e.g., an emotionally polarized but (concretely) mentally well-developed person who is essentially reactive is potentially very potent personally but utterly ineffective spiritually, being highly separative if not destructive). But one who is honest, humble, reasonable, open-minded, intelligent, and responsible (rather than reactive) is not only closer to self-mastery but also has the potential to be a constructive influence in the environment of humanity.

Learning 1

Though every incarnation is dedicated in one way or another to the evolution of consciousness, the two principal activities within incarnation might properly be called learning (experience) and service (expression). The relatively unevolved are almost entirely concerned with experience (albeit not necessarily consciously), while the relatively evolved of humanity are much more concerned with service (constructive evolutionary expression (encouragement)). But even though a spiritual student is concerned primarily with service, continued learning is still an important part of the student's life, for evolution (and learning) is an unending process of expansion of consciousness based upon the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge (understanding).

There are essentially two reasons for learning. The real reason is to live in accordance with evolutionary law (to live otherwise to any extent proceeds from folly (illusion) (ego)). The superficial reason is to become more effective in consciousness (i.e., to grow), to be able to contribute (serve) more effectively to (in) group (human) consciousness, through purification, experience, and assimilation, leading to understanding, wisdom, discretion, and improved quality (and capacity) of consciousness. The superficial reason, albeit not as real, is still significant and worthy of consideration.

Learning is defined as the process of gaining knowledge or understanding or skill by study, instruction, or experience. Since learning is such an inherent part of evolution, the opportunity for learning is quite considerable, encompassing (potentially) every moment of incarnation. The opportunity for learning is essentially boundless, but effective learning is limited by a person's ability or capacity for learning, a person's disposition or attitude toward learning (receptivity), a person's character, temperament, and quality of consciousness, and a person's natural personality inertia (the resistance of the material aspect of the personality).

Some souls progress (learn) (evolve) much more rapidly than others, not due to greater inherent opportunity (although the evolved soul is more able to take advantage of the learning opportunities and therefore progress progressively

more expeditiously), but due to a better (different) fabric (texture) (quality) (tenor) of consciousness (better in the sense of being able to learn more effectively, not better in any absolute sense, for those who do not progress as rapidly also contribute, albeit in different ways (being an essential part of a necessary, overall balance)). The fabric of the soul necessarily contributes to the corresponding fabric of the soul's personality, as the nature of the soul qualifies the personality to the extent that it is responsive (the responsiveness of the personality being related to the progressed quality of the soul and the consequent (concomitant) earned (developed) (induced) (progressed) quality of the personality (the soul being a higher quality of consciousness, but there being a correspondence between the quality of one and the relative quality of the other)).

Even though the fabric of the soul may be more or less conducive to learning, that texture can and does change (improve) in the normal course of evolution, and, more importantly, the individual in incarnation can consciously (or otherwise) qualify the personality to actually improve the capacity for learning and overcome many of the limitations of the personality which impede learning. In essence, part of the charter of the spiritual student is to progressively improve the capacity for learning, to learn and grow (and refine the consciousness) continuously, and to ever serve more effectively.

† Commentary No. 432

Learning 2

One of the basic differences between the relatively unevolved human being and the relatively evolved human being, is that the latter has learned how to learn effectively and has cultivated a proper attitude and disposition toward learning. The spiritual student is (properly) one who also seeks intelligently (and consciously) to learn and understand in order to improve consciousness and contribute (participate) more effectively in dharma. All who are either upon the spiritual path (at any level) or approaching the path are properly considered students (of the esoteric philosophy (life) (wisdom)) and servants of humanity (God) (the path) (vice aspirants, probationers, disciples, initiates, and masters (although the term "disciple" connotes the student/servant balance and suffices for all succeeding grades)).

Besides the innate ability relating to the fabric of individual consciousness, of central significance to learning is the student's attitude toward learning. The person who looks at every experience and activity as a potential learning experience (opportunity), who seeks to discern the significance of the experience (and therefore minimize unworthy or absorbing experiences) will more likely learn from experience as not. One who is absorbed on personality levels (being self-indulgent) will learn indirectly, over the course of many repeated experiences (opportunities). One who is not absorbed in mundane (trivial) (personality) matters (details) who actually welcomes learning, is more likely to learn directly (more effectively) from the initial experience or from observation, and therefore progress more readily.

The attitude of the spiritual student toward learning is quite positive; the attitude of the esoteric scholar is even more deliberate. The scholar specializes in learning and contributes to the progress of humanity by establishing the learning patterns, understanding, and resulting wisdom within the immediate potential of humanity. To a larger, broader extent, the spiritual path plays this role, with the true scholar acquiring, correlating, assessing, and providing (sharing) knowledge and (understanding) within the context of the path. Knowledge is never sufficient for true progress; there must also be the correlation of knowledge (discerning the relatedness of things and their correspondences) leading to assimilation and understanding.

In addition to the inherent intelligence (capacity for learning) and the proper attitudes, a student must also cultivate a balanced receptivity and responsiveness to learning and experience (the resistance and bias of the ego must be properly overcome) in order to be effective. The student should be receptive to the potential for learning implied in every experience, observation, activity, communication, etc. To be open-minded and receptive to the potential for learning is one matter (inherently positive); to be reactive, passive, or accepting indiscriminately is another matter altogether (and inherently negative and not conducive to proper learning). Thus the spiritual student must exercise discretion in the consideration of all experience. There should not be any blind or passive acceptance, but intelligent (thoughtful or intuitive) acceptance where merited, or a deferral of that which is not yet properly discernable.

A final and perhaps most significant contributing (positive) factor in learning is humility, for the ego tends to distort the truth in self-accommodation and to absorb the whole personality in more personal energies. But with proper, spiritual (balanced) humility, the student is free to learn and grow and share, most effectively.

<p style="text-align: right">✝ Commentary No. 433</p>

Good and Evil 1

The entire concept (duality) of good and evil exits only in the minds of men, for beyond merely human levels there is no such obvious duality and evil (goodness) exists only analogously and on such an abstract level as to have no implications for life on earth. But in the lower worlds (of human activity) good and evil are practical matters and a necessary consideration for self-mastery.

There is much that is widely called or considered evil that is not inherently evil. Misfortune, per se, has naught to do with evil and should not be confused with the (practical) reality of evil. Misfortune is merely a consequence of former or current activity and being merited through karma (cause and effect) is essentially good (in the sense of fulfillment, learning opportunity, etc.) (as a consequence, never as an intention). Misfortune as an intention is indeed malefic and related to evil. Conditions, effects, circumstances, etc. are all inherently not malefic.

What is evil (coarseness) falls into three types: (1) that which is inherently evil (the evil of ignorance), (2) the evil inherent in matter (form) (in the practical sense of separateness), and (3) the cosmic evil inherent in matter (which is the unresolved tension of a much earlier evolution and should not concern humanity) (which has no practical significance). By virtue of the fact of incarnation (and the soul's impersonal and abstract intentions) and by virtue of karmic laws, the human being (personality) is responsible for and accountable for all of its activities (and consequences incurred) in the lower worlds, even though much of that activity is inherently qualified by ignorance (the illusion of self-consciousness (separation)) and the nature of matter (coarseness) (which is evil in the sense of being essentially separative).

Within every human being there is a balance between good and evil. Some, more experienced and better qualified, are essentially good, in the sense that much of the inherent evil (coarseness) has been transformed and refined to allow the inherent goodness (the God within) (the true human potential) to be manifested. Others, less experienced and less well-qualified, are essentially coarse, in the sense that matter (coarseness) (selfishness) predominates, effectively masking the truth (God) (the soul) that lives within. But those who are essentially good are not without coarseness, however deeply buried, and those who are essentially coarse are not without good, however deeply masked. The many, of course, are essentially indifferent, being neither essentially good nor evil, but asleep to either as a predominating influence.

Human development proceeds from individualization (the process of imparting self-consciousness) to self-mastery through many cycles and stages. In the beginning (the long period following individualization), the human being is essentially coarse only in the passive sense of being wholly ignorant and wholly absorbed in matter (form). That period might better be called indifference, but subsequently, as the human being develops, the individual becomes essentially self-centered and selfish, which might more properly be called essentially not good (reserving the connotation of practical evil for those whose selfishness (ignorance) (attachment to matter) is extreme and assertive (imposing)). As the human being evolves further, the indifference gradually gives way to goodness, as more and more of the divine potential is cultivated and realized, and as more and more of the essential (subtle) evil is mastered. Ultimately, the human being evolves beyond good and evil as the entire being is synthesized and as the whole (grand) illusion of separation from God is fully overcome.

Good and Evil 2

The evil inherent in matter (form) has two aspects: normal and abnormal. Normal evil (inherent in matter) is that which is faced in the normal (and accelerated) course of evolution, the passive evil of separateness born of the nature of matter. Abnormal (true) evil is the evil inherent in matter consciously and deliberately evoked as a means of selfish indulgence (black magic) and associated imposition.

Normal evil (coarseness) (inherent in matter) is not necessarily but potentially malefic. Matter is the extreme form of energy opposing (balancing) spirit. The quest (objective) of humanity being self-mastery, each human being is initially wholly immersed in matter and evolves (achieves) (progresses) toward that goal only to the extent that matter (form) is conquered. Thus the evil inherent in matter provides the basic opportunity (the circumstances of immersion) for the evolution of higher consciousness, and, more importantly, the very act (process) of liberation from matter implies a transformation of that matter (inherent evil) into a higher, more progressive (refined) form (i.e., the elementary lifewave associated with matter evolves as a consequence of human evolution).

Normal evil can be malefic, as selfishness and ignorance conspire to lead the individual to impose upon others (the individual (malefactor) being nonetheless responsible). But where an individual carries selfishness to an extreme, the person can become irretrievably lost in (the evil of) matter and fail the current course (human evolution). Even more so, where an individual is well-developed mentally (and therefore potent) and extremely selfish (misguided) as well, there is the danger of true (abnormal) evil, where the forces of matter are deliberately and unnaturally evoked and bent to personal ends, ultimately corrupting the individual beyond recall (beyond hope of rejoining humanity).

The nature of matter (form) (crystallized energy) (evil) (in this context) is resistance, inertia, independence (illusion), coarseness, separateness, etc., leading the personality (form) to resist evolution, sustain self-indulgence, be absorbed in personal energy, be selfish, etc. The problem is vastly compounded by the inherent evil of ignorance, for the human being begins the quest wholly

ignorant of his true nature (the soul and its relation to God) and thus wholly blind to anything (the reality) beyond the grand illusion of separate (objective) existence. The problem is compounded further by the fact that for aeons prior to individualization, the consciousness that there (then) became human has been wholly identified with matter (i.e., during the vast involutionary period). Thus the task faced from individualization is enormous, and generally many, many lifetimes of experience and struggle between the opposing forces (good and evil) (spirit and matter) (soul and personality) (consciousness and form) (truth (reality) and illusion) are needed in order to achieve self-mastery. Most will succeed. Relatively few will succeed as pioneers upon the spiritual path well in advance of the bulk of humanity, and relatively few will fail, falling far behind the bulk of humanity.

The stage (matter) (form) (immersion therein) provides the means of the great quest and affords the individual the opportunity of unfolding the divine potential in ways not otherwise possible. In spite of the difficulties, the inherent goodness within the human being ultimately prevails, as the resistance of matter (form) (personality) is overcome, as ignorance is transformed into knowledge and understanding (wisdom), and as the illusion of independent (objective) (separative) existence is fully dispelled.

<div align="right">✝   Commentary No. 435</div>

Occult Safeguards 1

There are two basic, complementary safeguards (precautionary measures (techniques)) that must be mastered by the spiritual student before the student can be trusted to participate in any serious occult (spiritual) (esoteric) (group) work. The first is qualification and the second is warding; both are particular (specialized) to the subtle defenses necessary for the safety of all concerned with (or potentially effected by) the occult work. Basic occult training therefore assumes considerable mental abilities and begins with specific techniques to effect qualification and warding.

Safeguards are necessary for two reasons, both relating to the energy association of occult work and both relating to the responsibilities implied by

world service (as all true, occult work involves service to humanity or some aspect thereof (or some greater purpose)). The first reason is to prevent the misguided release or direction of energy, and the second reason is to prevent interference to the work undertaken by reaction to (unfortunate) external energies. Energy follows thought. In fact, any activity of thinking or feeling results in some associated energies or forces, being directed (released) or contained as the case may be. Proper occult work involves the careful and deliberate and intelligent focusing of forces and their direction to some worthy objective, the transference or transformation of energy from one form or place to another, or the qualification of forces and associated energies.

Since energy follows every thought and every feeling, and since the occult student being particularly well-developed is mentally potent, the student must be very careful to guard against unfortunate, careless, or unworthy thoughts and feelings (for the student is wholly responsible for his thoughts and feelings and their consequences). Thus a great deal of the preliminary training involves the refinement of the personality (purification, self-qualification, self-discipline) so that the coarse forces normally latent (or active) in the personality are transformed and refined into controllable and qualified forces. The personality, being matter (form), is inherently material (resistive) (coarse) (selfish) but must become a willing and obedient and trustworthy servant of the soul and its higher purposes. The emotions must be refined and wholly disciplined (brought under the control of the qualified mind). And the mind must be refined and become wholly responsive to the soul.

The effects of unworthy (negative) thoughts and feelings are potentially serious, particularly where the mind is potent or the emotions intense and undisciplined. Anger, bitterness, hatred, jealousy, resentment, and rudeness are all coarse (negative) emotions that are essentially destructive in nature, both in the sense that in projection these emotions tend to weaken those who are responsive or vulnerable and in the sense that even constrained these emotions are internally destructive. The occult student who is given to any of these (negative) feelings or critical (negative) thoughts cannot be trusted in any spiritual sense (i.e., until he has fully mastered such coarseness).

Everyone in incarnation, even the refined spiritual master, has potential for unfortunate release of energy through provoked coarseness, carelessness, or lack

of spiritual strength (poise), for the personality masks basic human coarseness. The difference between one who has achieved self-mastery and one who has not is essentially that one has control of his lesser self, that the coarseness is a distant, rather nominal threat (that the personality is refined and moderated), while the other has no such control or refinement and the coarseness predominates (or at least stands ready to manifest).

† Commentary No. 436

Occult Safeguards 2

The occult student must not only be refined and qualified but must also be spiritually strong, so poised and stable that he cannot be provoked into an unworthy display of force (indeliberate release of mental or emotional energies). Thus the character and temperament of the occult student are closely guarded by the ever-vigilant waking-consciousness. The student is trained ever to qualify the personality with light and love, to monitor the personality continually to make adjustments as needed to properly face every situation in the outer world (and every recognized subtlety of the ego).

The effect of unconstrained (negative) emotions (and thoughts) can be quite considerable. The nominal range varies from a few feet to tens of feet, while the effective range is unlimited in the case of an etheric, emotional, or mental link between two parties. Wherever a person is vulnerable, either personally (particularly) due to some relationship or simply due to a resonance with the character (coarseness) of the afforded energy, the projected (deliberate or otherwise) forces (kama-manas) can be unsettling if not destructive (and even potentially fatal). So the occult student must so qualify himself to prevent any such unfortunate release of energy and guard against any response to such energies projected by others, sincerely or otherwise.

For the occult student, it is not enough merely to contain or constrain unfortunate energies (since they are then internally destructive or at least stressing) or to bury them deep within; the student must face up to every unfortunate energy and to the potential for such energy, and resolve it properly by transformation to impersonal, refined, and qualified energies (and through

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qualification to prevent potential coarseness). Never mind that a person afflicted by unfortunate forces is (in his karmic reference frame) deserving such affliction and wholly responsible therefore, the person who through coarseness or carelessness releases such (unfortunate) energies is also responsible for their release and must face the consequences thereof in his own life. As a general rule, people who are karmically bound or lacking self-control to the extent of karmic implication are not acceptable as occult students. But those who are relatively free and who have some measure of self-control (and some degree of personality refinement) can learn the proper occult safeguards and therefore be trusted.

Thus vulnerabilities either by (overall) karma or by some resonance are minimized for occult workers. But even so, some work is of such subtle nature that additional precautions must be taken (and by virtue of the threat of deliberate interference as part of some greater karma). Two techniques are available: the direct qualification of some occult workers by another particularly well-qualified and trained as a monitor, and an overall warding of the occult work by building etheric (astral) (mental) force fields. Esoteric work does not resort to mantric defenses which call on external and unqualified forces for assistance, but does rely on the direct qualification and manipulation of etheric (astral) (manasic) matter.

Explicit safeguarding requires energy diverted from that which would otherwise be available for service, so it is used only where necessary. The best, most essential safeguard is the character and quality of the occult (spiritual) (esoteric) students (workers) themselves (a highly refined quality of consciousness is simply (and normally) not vulnerable to lesser forces or coarse consciousness) and the character and quality (and noble purpose) of the work undertaken or assigned.

The Christ

In the context of humanity, the Christ is that person (soul) who fills the office of bodhisattva within the spiritual hierarchy of the planet. The name of the Christ as a particular or historical personage is not important; what is important is the role of the Christ with respect to humanity (and all life within the planetary scheme) and the relationships of the Christ to the planetary logos, the hierarchy, and the Christ principle.

The role of the Christ is to embody the cosmic Christ principle and relate that principle to all within the scope or field of evolution for which the planetary (spiritual) hierarchy is responsible. The Christ principle is the cosmic principle (second ray) of love and wisdom (and all that that implies). The Christ principle is preeminently the principle of higher consciousness, and consciousness per se. In embodying that principle, the Christ is a channel (focus) for (cosmic) (solar) (planetary) love, wisdom, and consciousness, to stimulate the evolution of consciousness and afford all lives within the domain the opportunity of higher (greater) consciousness.

The Christ does not and cannot work alone or beyond planetary (group) (individual) karma. The Christ is the leader and focus of the spiritual hierarchy but remains accountable to and responsive to higher authorities (e.g., the solar logos and the planetary logos). The members of the hierarchy are all highly qualified souls of considerable evolutionary achievement (all having fully mastered the human phase of evolution), who support the Christ and his role in this planetary (human) context. Thus the Christ works largely within the Hierarchy, in invoking and evoking proper energies for humanity and distributing (sharing) those energies of evolutionary encouragement. Though the Christ is an extremely potent soul, the Christ is necessarily limited in his work in two ways: (1) by the evolutionary plan, for it is the plan that provides guidance even to the Christ for its fulfillment, and (2) by karma on all levels, for none can override karma in any absolute sense.

The soul who is presently the Christ is simply the best qualified and most appropriate to that position. The time will come when that soul must pass

beyond this scheme of evolution and another must take his place in succession. The person of the Christ should not be embraced; it is the principle (energy) (qualification) (love) (wisdom) (consciousness) of the Christ that should be embraced, without regard to religious preference (for the Christ is common to all major (proper) religions, though the name afforded varies, the principle and context is essentially (albeit symbolically) the same). It is not the Christ who saves souls, nor is it by faith alone that souls are saved, but it is by virtue of the afforded Christ principle (higher consciousness, potential within all lives) and the embracing of that principle by each individual that the individual is saved (being saved meaning simply becoming one with the higher or Christ (soul) consciousness, completing the human phase of evolution, and passing on into a higher, more challenging field of evolution).

The return of the Christ symbolizes and indicates not the physical reincarnation of the Christ, but the return (upliftment) of the mass consciousness in embracing the Christ principle intelligently. As more of humanity turn to the higher (inner) consciousness for guidance (qualification), so can the energies and qualification of the Christ (through the Hierarchy) pour through more broadly to all who are responsive. The Christ and the Hierarchy of masters stand ever to encourage the evolution of consciousness by sharing whatever energies are needed and merited (allowed by karma).

✝ Commentary No. 438

The Karma Paradox

The karma paradox is simply the (apparent) paradox of responsibility for karmic consequences in which a person (first party) contributes to the experience (suffering) (blessing) of another person (second party) or group of persons. The two parties may or may not share relational karma, in the sense that their paths (karma) may have crossed previously (in the present or prior incarnation(s)) or that by virtue of contributing to the current consequences their paths (karma) may be subsequently relatable. If the two parties do share relational karma, then the situation is simply more complicated than would otherwise be the case, but the basic karma remains simple in principle.

A person (second party) who experiences some effect(s) (karmic consequences) (situation) (circumstances) (suffering) (blessing) is (in terms of the karma of that person (second party)) wholly responsible for those consequences, by virtue of prior or present (or future) actions. The fact that some other person or persons (first party) have played a role in the fate of the second party in no way changes the fact of responsibility of the second party for his (her) (their) own consequences. Had the first party not played that role in the first place, then the circumstances (time, place, situation) of the second party may have been different, but ultimately, the essential (earned) (deserved) (merited) consequences would have to be faced (by that second party). Some other first party might then be involved or natural forces might play a sufficient role, but the proper consequences would occur nonetheless and would be wholly appropriate to the lessons (experience) needed (deserved) by the second party.

A person (first party) who contributes to the fate of some second party by playing an intermediate (causal) role is wholly responsible (and accountable) for the role that is played and the circumstances thereto (e.g., motives, quality of consciousness, etc.). The fact that the second party wholly deserved the consequences afforded in no way reduces the responsibility of the first party for playing that role. If the first party is careless then he (she) (they) must suffer (experience) the consequences (karma) of carelessness. If the first party was willfully kind (malicious) (or imposing), then he (she) (they) must suffer (experience) the consequences (karma) of kindness (or harmfulness) (or imposition). Those consequences need not be in kind, but will be appropriate to the circumstances of the first party.

Thus are there two or three distinct karmic arenas in this context: (1) that of the first party independent of the karma of the second party but with consideration for the suffering (blessing) afforded the second party, (2) that of the second party independent of who contributed to the circumstances faced, and (3) that of the possible (albeit not necessary) relationship between the two parties. The first party simply plays the role of a catalyst. That role may be good, in the sense that it is motivated in kindness, without imposition, and results in a learning experience for the second party. Or that role may be unfortunate (not in the sense that it is unfortunate for the second party, unfortunate though the circumstances of the second party may appear (nothing is unfortunate)) (but in the sense that it is not properly motivated or in the sense of carelessness, and

results in some (apparent) harm to the second party). The important aspect for the first party is sincerity, consideration, motives, etc. But in every activity there are lessons for all so involved.

It is for the spiritual student to be helpful in serving humanity, carefully to maintain an overshadowing harmlessness, and carefully to prevent any unnecessary karmic involvement (personal energy) (complications).

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 439</div>

Reality 1

The problem of reality is understanding the distinction between what is and what appears to be. The problem is compounded by a number of factors, including individual and common perception, the nature (illusion) of objective existence, and the lack of objectivity in subjective existence. Reality is defined simply enough, as the quality or state of being real, the totality of real things and events, something that is neither derivative nor dependent but exists necessarily. What is real refers to what is not artificial, fraudulent, illusory, or apparent; what is genuine, occurring in fact, necessarily existent, having no imaginary part; what is fundamental or essential. Reality implies agreement between what a thing seems to be and what it is, while truth implies conformity to what is real. In a higher sense, truth means actuality, a transcendent fundamental, spiritual reality.

A more proper definition of reality (in the context of esoteric philosophy) allows for the differentiation (relativeness) of reality, so that lesser realities can be derivative, dependent, and not necessarily existent, for much that is commonly accepted as real is indeed unreal relative to some intrinsic reality. The world illusion (of objective reality) complicates matters very much, for the manifested universe is inherently deceptive, and all who incarnate or manifest themselves therein immerse themselves in that massive illusion. The potency of that illusion is considerable, for it is essentially complete and self-consistent, albeit necessarily superficially so, but in a deeper sense, it is as insufficient as all things are short of embracing some totality.

All things in the lesser objective domain (physical, emotional, and mental worlds) exist necessarily as derivative and dependent things. Everything in the lesser domain is merely transient and temporary. The problem of proof requires that all facts be merely accepted as facts (or not as the case may be), with no fact being provable (beyond some level of belief or consensus). In the relative sense, even that which is imagined consciously to be is real on its level (i.e., what is imagined exists as an imagined existence). But the fact of imagined existence should not be confused with existence free of imagination (except in the sense that all that exists exists only as imagined existence).

The range of realities can be grouped into three aspects: personal reality, common reality, and the underlying or intrinsic reality. All are complicated by perception but none more so than personal reality. Personal reality refers to the sense of what is real (what is perceived to be real) by an individual. An individual sense of reality is determined by that individual's experience, character, consciousness, beliefs, emotional bias, mental bias, conditioning, degree of acceptance of some common reality, etc. The premise that "any given thing is to one such as it appears to be to that one, and is to another such as it appears to be to that other" asserts the (relative) reality of personal perception, but that (personal) reality depends as much or more on the filtering function of perception and the common reality of mass consciousness as it does (if at all) on any intrinsic reality.

Due to individual differences, the range of personal realities is vast, with varying degrees and types of bias, varying degrees and balance of objective and subjective factors, varying degrees of breadth and depth of perception and understanding. All are real on their own terms, albeit not necessarily or generally real in any greater sense. But who can say in truth that any one personal reality is any more or less real than another, for each serves a purpose within the grand illusion and evolutionary scheme.

Reality 2

And who can say verily that any personal reality is any more or less real than some common reality, for the common reality is necessarily as much a part of the grand illusion of material and psychological existence as any personal reality is likely to be. A common reality, being somewhat objective and somewhat subjective, is simply the intersection set of personal realities for some group or species. That some (or all) things may appear different to different observers and/or different from different vantage points (e.g., microscopic reality versus macroscopic reality) should be as obvious as that some (other) things may appear the same to all observers in a particular group (i.e., those who share the same common reality (by choice or incidentally by virtue of absorption in that common reality)).

What is real for one (some) is not necessarily real for another (others), the entire domain of personal reality being as a whole, less real than some intrinsic reality and no more nor less real than some common reality. "For every putatively veridical perception there is a possible corresponding illusory one." One simply cannot discern in any absolute sense between a particular object and the illusion of that object's existence and character, since neither perception nor reasoning is absolute or infallible (reasoning invariably requires assumptions). It is essentially wrong (misleading) to assert what something is (or has); it is more proper to assert what something appears to be (or have). All observations (mentally and otherwise) merely evoke (personal) evidence that is inconclusive (albeit possibly compelling).

Knowledge is in this sense therefore not real. One cannot know anything with any absolute certainty. One can only perceive and/or realize some relative truth within the context of some personal and/or common reality. Many observables (attributes) of things are both relative and incidental rather than intrinsic. What intrinsic properties may exist cannot be discerned as such in any absolute sense. So even intrinsic reality, albeit more real than any personal or common reality, is necessarily relative (if only in its appearance).

Intrinsic reality is by definition all-inclusive (i.e., consistent with all things microscopic through macroscopic to macrocosmic) and therefore of much greater dimensionality than any being in consciousness is capable. Intrinsic reality embraces the illusion of all that appears to be real in consciousness, the important thing being that there exists an intrinsic reality of which all of the manifested universe and the domain of human consciousness is merely an imagined (presumed) reality. Of course that intrinsic reality is unknowable (and inherently unprovable), but it is approachable, by degrees, to the extent that personal and common reality (illusion) is overcome.

If one accepts the senses and their products for what they are (relatively) (rather than what they appear to be) (i.e., for senses and sense-impressions, necessarily inconclusive and heavily biased and therefore of only limited utility), and if one accepts reasoning for what it is (relatively) (also biased and inherently inconclusive), and if one recognizes the illusory nature of personal and common reality (the great deception of substantial existence, separateness, etc.), then one can begin to free oneself from these limitations, utilizing them only in the practical context, turning to the higher consciousness (greater reality) of the soul, and gradually embracing (intuitively and yet still necessarily inconclusively) higher and greater levels (degrees) (extent) of intrinsic reality. Though the absolute is unattainable, the challenge of approach remains the noble quest.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 441</div>

The Basis of Belief

The human lifeform is somewhat unique in this planetary scheme in the sense that of all the (few) self-conscious species, only the human being has not achieved self-realization and must therefore depend on lesser means of cognition. Lesser species depend on instinct and other forms of unconscious direction, while greater (and some parallel) species depend on more direct realization. But for the human being there must be some recourse to believing, either through some sense of faith, reasoning, and/or proper intuition.

Because of the complications of perception and reasoning, the problem of illusion (glamour) (maya), and the problem of proof (i.e., that nothing is

provable) (i.e., that every belief however compelling or convincing cannot be proven one to another but only to oneself), every human being must necessarily develop a personal (relatively unique) body of beliefs, conscious and unconscious, that tend to influence the human activity (motivation, thinking, feeling, action). Though specific beliefs may be significant in themselves, the basis of belief (for any particular individual) is essentially more significant, because the basis determines to some extent the quality and relative credibility of the belief system and indicates the next stage of evolutionary development and qualification.

For all practical purposes, physically polarized people have no significant basis of belief; they still act largely on an instinctive basis and are largely dominated by external forces. Emotionally polarized people depend to some extent on faith and to some extent on reasoning (depending on mental development) as a basis for belief and are generally largely influenced by external forces (e.g., mass consciousness and the beliefs inherent therein) (which are partially emotionally based and partially mentally based). Mentally polarized people depend primarily on reasoning as a basis of belief and are generally somewhat influenced by mass consciousness (world opinion) (prevailing illusion). Intuitively polarized people depend primarily on the proper (spiritual) intuition as a basis for belief, but normally also to some extent upon qualified reasoning, and are largely free from external influences.

Most people are somewhere between an emotional polarization and a mental polarization and subject to faith and reasoning, while some (few) are somewhere between a mental polarization and an intuitive polarization, and subject to reasoning and intuition. For each basis (faith, reasoning, intuition) (kama, kama-manas, manas, manas-buddhi, and buddhi) there are problems (limitations) that determine the effectiveness of the basis for any individual belief system. These problems include the degree or extent of knowledge and understanding implied (and the nature of knowledge (i.e., one cannot really know anything, one can only believe, through some basis)), the degree or extent to which that knowledge is first-hand (and the degree of passivity implied), the relative strength of the belief (e.g., being rigidly held, moderately held, or loosely (tentatively) held (and the stability thereof)) and the degree of adaptability, consistency, broadness, relativity, and coherence (objectivity (subjectivity)), and the degree of truth (reality) embraced.

Due to the relative nature of truth and reality, one of the most important considerations is the potential of an individual (given his basis of belief and attributes thereof) to progress both his beliefs and his belief basis. It is only as one's beliefs are allowed to broaden (become generalized) (become more inclusive) and as one becomes more and more devoted to (and responsive to) truth that a person can truly deepen and grow.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 442</div>

Faith and Reasoning

Those who are unable to reason clearly for themselves are necessarily dependent on faith as a basis of belief. In a sense, faith is superior to reasoning since it is so much less complicated by ego and the self-deception potential of the ego, but in most respects, faith is less satisfactory than reasoning and must ultimately be sacrificed (as reasoning must in its turn be sacrificed in favor of buddhi and self-realization).

Faith implies belief in things for which there is no proof (so in a sense even reasoning and intuition imply some faith, and the overwhelming devotion to God necessary to self-realization is a faith based upon higher, inner guidance, but never validated by proof in any sense other than personal), or confidence "even where there is no evidence of proof."

Where faith is based on instinct or feelings (kama) it is generally sufficient for one who is physically or emotionally polarized but nonetheless relatively blind compared to reasoning. Faith is typically a recourse to external forces, unconsciously in the sense of the mass-consciousness (world glamour), more consciously in the sense of acceptance of beliefs (tenets) (truth) imposed or asserted by some supposed external authority.

The problem of faith is, therefore, largely the problem of an inability to think for oneself and arrive at reasonable conclusions (beliefs). Recourse to external authorities may be fine for one otherwise unable to reason and evaluate concepts, ideas, principles, etc. on their own merits, but is wholly unsatisfactory for the spiritual student (in which case the basis of belief is as important or more

so than what is actually believed). There are no external authorities; the only acceptable authority is the God-within, necessarily the soul, its quality, and the self-realization implied therein. External sources may provide useful information, but simple acceptance based upon some supposed credibility is unwarranted. What is warranted is a careful consideration of all experience and all inputs, evaluated in light of inner wisdom (at best) or at least qualified reasoning. Faith based upon kama or kama-manas is one thing (inadequate for the spiritual student); faith (knowledge) (understanding) based upon manas or manas-buddhi is another thing, for such faith (born of reason and/or proper intuition) is far more likely to be closer to truth (reality) and far more likely to help in personality development and progression (the evolution of consciousness) than the faith based upon external means.

Reasoning (manas) has its own problems and albeit superior to faith (kama) in many respects, reasoning is still not entirely sufficient for the spiritual (esoteric) student. Proper reasoning depends on the quality, character, discipline, experience, and training of the mind (i.e., the objective and subjective (concrete and abstract) mental abilities). Reasoning can be heavily biased or prejudiced by feelings (kama) (personal energy). Reasoning is generally subject to the intentions of the ego, whether or not consciously recognized. The ego can (and will tend to) dominate the reasoning processes (logic, correlation, assessment, etc.) to result in what it (the ego) wants to obtain (i.e., a person believes what he wants to, regardless of evidence to the contrary). The ego, like the astral body, seeks to sustain its own level of domination (self-justification). One can improve the reasoning process (i.e., improve the objectivity and impartiality) only by purifying and qualifying and training the entire (integrated) personality, developing an impersonal approach to the consideration of all experience and developing an (almost) overwhelming love of truth and a willingness to adhere to the truth thus perceived.

Reasoning and Intuition

While the problem of reasoning for the emotionally polarized is the degree and extent of the bias due to kama (desire) (astral vulnerability), the problem of reasoning for the mentally polarized is the degree and extent to which the mind (ego) is allowed to exert its independence (domination). Though potentially a tremendous instrument of experience, the mind is inherently self-deceptive in its natural (undisciplined and unqualified) state. Reasoning is to some extent a necessary basis of belief for most spiritual students; the mind (mental abilities) can be improved with discipline, qualification, and training, but there are some basic limitations (e.g., the material or separative nature) that are virtually impossible to overcome completely.

Therefore the recourse of the spiritual student is to gradually develop the spiritual intuition (buddhi) in order to provide a basis of self-realization and validation of truth. Unfortunately (in the superficial sense, fortunately in the sense of challenge, difficulties, and potential for progress), no truth is absolute in the practical or operational sense and no means of testing for truth is absolute or infallible. But with the proper development of the spiritual intuition (through purification, integration, and elevation of the waking-consciousness), it is possible to irradiate the mind such that a deeper sense of knowledge and understanding results.

One of the necessary ingredients for effective buddhi-manas is a properly and well-developed sense of discernment, for every mental impression must properly be tested, challenged, and weighed according to the degree of alignment (of personality and soul) achieved and the corresponding degree of impersonality (quality of consciousness) embraced. Without an integrated (purified) (aligned) personality, even well-developed discernment is insufficient. Besides discernment, impersonality is (absolutely) essential, for the presence of personal energy will invariably distort any impression of (from) higher consciousness. The potential for self-deception is considerable, particularly where the student lacks impersonality and a highly objective sense of discernment.

While reasoning is generally considered an objective process, and intuition a more subjective one, the proper (qualified) alignment results in highly objective impressions (necessarily impersonal or otherwise highly suspect) (e.g., intuitional telepathy is inherently objective, even though subjective energies are encountered and abstract concepts embraced). The student must always be on guard for personal energy (desire) (bias) (distortion thereto) and egoic deception (the mind masquerading as the intuition). The student must also discern between astral impressions, mental impressions, and intuitive impressions (or at least be able to discern sufficiently the quality of every impression). Many people wrongly attribute feelings (astral or emotional impressions) to the intuition thereby gaining false confidence (credence).

In the final analysis, whether by qualified reasoning or intuition, all impressions and conclusions must be considered tentative in all respects. To the extent that they are discerned as qualified they can be considered less tentative, but the nature of the path (evolution) is such that tentativeness and relativity are necessary ingredients. There are effectively no absolutes. One can have reasonable confidence but not infallibility. With self-realization comes considerable ability (e.g., higher forms of discernment and correlative insight), but the self-realized student still remains necessarily the final arbiter of his basis of belief and beliefs thereof.

† Commentary No. 444

Responsiveness

The principal objective of the preliminary work of the spiritual (probationary) student is the cultivation (discipline) (purification) (qualification) (training) of the personality such that the personality becomes intelligently responsive to the soul and thereby a much more effective instrument of service. That responsiveness is more properly three-fold: to the soul (the God within), the spiritual path (and all that that implies), and truth (reality). Service to humanity (and all life) is implied in all three respects: the soul of the individual is more in fact one with all souls, the spiritual path embraces all of humanity in the broadest evolutionary sense, and truth (reality) embraces all aspects of manifestation as well as the unmanifest.

In order to be intelligently responsive, the student must overcome both the passive aspect and the separative nature of the personality. The student must be able to properly discern between relative truth and that which is self-centered or personality-centered or otherwise bound by the great objective illusion (glamour) (maya). The student must be relatively free from personal bias (desire) and attachments (opinions). The beliefs of the spiritual student should be moderately (tentatively) held, without attachment or superficiality. Thus the student should be free to expand (broaden) the beliefs to be more relative (relevant) (inclusive) (universal).

In order to be properly and intelligently responsive, the spiritual student must adhere to the preliminary (probationary) discipline (at least), for otherwise the student would be burdened by personality coarseness and lack of discipline sufficient to block the spiritual intuition and prevent an intelligent (meaningful) interpretation of higher impressions. The spiritual student must also be committed both to the soul and the path as well as to truth. And the student must be ever willing to face the truth. Without these commitments and willingness, the student would be half-hearted and sufficiently resistant to prevent self-realization (the personality generally seeks to maintain its status (relative importance) and prevent or undermine any revelation that would threaten its significance (the status quo) or interests).

In short, the responsive student is one who is committed, dedicated, disciplined, purified, qualified, trained, and relatively without fear, having an integrated personality and some measure of alignment of soul and personality, being an active thinker (vice passive) and intelligently disposed to challenge, test, and evaluate all experience and impressions (yet sufficiently qualified to discern and accept the relative truth). In a higher sense, the responsive student (disciple) is one who can hold the mind steady in the light, who recognizes the value of the silence and is able to conform to that energy and quality. Any (substantive) personality-centeredness or self-centeredness prevents responsiveness by separating the individual from the source of truth (wisdom) (the soul) (in practice, not in the greater sense).

To be responsive to the soul (the path) (truth) means that the student is relatively free from external forces. The student may very well seem to conform to most (but not all) of the world's expectations, but such conformation is

deliberate and not passive, and the student conforms even more so to the dictates of the soul (the path) (truth), even where such conformity is not in accordance with worldly expectations. Responsiveness is ultimately the antithesis of reactiveness, for a reactive (exceptive) (separative) personality is neither objective nor impersonal, and therefore unable to be inclusive and unable to achieve the necessary rapport.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 445</div>

Sacrifice

In the orthodox (conventional) sense, sacrifice means to give up or renounce something for some ideal, belief, or purpose (end). It can also mean the offering or devotion of one's life in dedication to some (presumed noble) task. Much of the preliminary discipline and endeavors of the spiritual path involves sacrifice in various ways, and generally in the sense of dedication to the path and its nature. But this sacrifice in the context of the spiritual path should not have the popular connotation of giving up or losing something that is worth something, for in fact, what is "sacrificed" is precisely that which is not worth keeping, in the context of the soul, the spiritual path, and evolution.

Of course it is the self-centered, self-indulgent ego that does indeed value (superficially) that which the spiritual student is expected to forego. The attachments of the ego (personality-centeredness) tend to be many and varied, and potentially strong. But to the spiritual student (and in the context of the path) those attachments and indulgences are limitations that prevent or limit the deepening and expanding of the quality of consciousness. The inertia (resistance) of the ego (personality) may be quite considerable. That resistance is born of habit (attachment) directly, or indirectly in the sense of fear (i.e., the ego's fear of loss of independence and centrality). That fear is well-grounded, for the independence and centrality of the personality (ego) is indeed "sacrificed" by the successful spiritual student, yet the new (reformed) (refined) personality rejoices in newfound qualification and purpose. The spiritual student has then won the cooperation intended.

It is the nature of the personality, being material (relatively gross), to react, directly or indirectly. The glamour of sacrifice is also a potential problem for the

spiritual student. Sacrifice in the context of the path is simply necessary and expected. One cannot progress and contribute sufficiently while bound by personality attachments and poor, counterproductive (from the perspective of the soul) habits. The spiritual student should simply do that which is appropriate to do. And this means adherence to the preliminary discipline and preliminary endeavors, not for reason of glamour, not on the basis of some authority, but by reason of appropriateness.

The standards for (of) the bulk of humanity are distinctly different than those for (of) the spiritual path. For ordinary humanity there is no particular need for the discipline and endeavors of the path. For aspirants and disciples however it is a different matter altogether (i.e., the spiritual student should not judge others by spiritual standards (or yet judge others at all), but, rather, should evaluate himself by the standards appropriate to his place upon the path). That which the spiritual student is called upon (by the path) to do is appropriate; the same calling for others within humanity (who are not responsive to the path (as souls)) is not appropriate.

The dharma of the spiritual student should be clear: the sacrificing of all of those things within the personality nature (habits) (attachments) that are inappropriate to the path (which limit or constrain spiritual progress) (excepting those which are necessary to worthy obligations or practical necessity). But the spiritual student in this endeavor must remain wary of the cowardice and subtlety of the ego and personality nature. The personality may resist by many and varied means, fabricating reasons and excuses to resist and delay the inevitable progress. But with proper dedication and upliftment of the waking-consciousness in the light of the path, all of these lesser things and matters are overcome, and the personality is properly transformed and refined.

Variable Analysis

In the study of truth and in the presentation of a number of concepts within the esoteric philosophy, it is often helpful to consider a subject from various (different but interrelated) aspects or perspectives in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the whole by means of constituent relationships. The study of some aspect or some variable (quality) (characteristic) within some aspect is necessarily a consideration of a limited or partial truth, as all things (perspectives) are necessarily partial and relative, yet in the subsequent study of relationships and in the integrated realization of some aspect (subject), these fractional contributions may well be considerable.

Variable analysis is the study (consideration) of some variable within some subject, to evaluate the significance of the various states or values of that variable. A simple variable is one-dimensional, having two extreme values and some spectrum or spread of values in between. An oversimplification is the consideration of some such variable in binary or dualistic terms, i.e., constraining the variable to only its extreme values where in fact most variables are continuous and not binary (or even discrete).

Nothing is really one-dimensional, but some consideration of one-dimensional variables may be helpful, particularly where relationships are indicated with other variables or aspects. Most concepts are multi-dimensional, but are more easily studied first from the perspective of partials (parts) (aspects) (constituents), then from the perspective of relationships between partials, and finally from the perspective of the whole (subject). This analysis may be performed to some extent utilizing mental resources, but it is more properly (more effectively) performed utilizing the (proper) intuition (buddhi or buddhi-manas rather than manas).

Variable analysis is simply the consideration of some subject through the perspective or focus of a particular variable or aspect, in the context of that subject. The study of the seven rays is a major example of a subject (all that exists) considered from the natural perspective of the seven constituent energies or forces and their relationships. The study of one of the rays in a particular

context, with consideration for variation in quality, is an example of variable analysis. The real significance of variable analysis lies in the contribution of some aspect (variable) to the whole, since every whole is the integrated sum (overall quality) of its constituent elements or aspects. The fact that the objective world (illusion of substantial reality) is necessarily a realm of partials (and not normally or easily perceived as a whole) lends further significance to variable analysis, since, in fact, most aspects or subjects in the human domain (with human resources) can only be considered from the standpoint of partial perspectives. But the partial should not be mistaken for the whole.

With expanded and refined consciousness and concomitant abilities, the student can eventually do more than simply relate the products of variable analysis or the study of partials and their relationships; the student of higher (intuitional) (soul) consciousness can embrace whole subjects and achieve considerable realization and understanding, but even such will normally result in an understanding of the aspects and constituents (variables) and relationships, due to the relative significance of their respective contributions and since, in the final analysis, the spiritual student is as concerned with the application of wisdom (understanding) as he (she) is in the consideration of universal life and the more abstract truths.

† Commentary No. 447

The Island Universal 1

Humanity and human consciousness may be considered from the perspective of the degree, extent, and quality of rapport, and the relative degree and extent of manifested separateness (separativeness). The human evolution includes a crisis of separateness in which the human being achieves self-consciousness (the illusion of independent (separate) or individual existence), progressively develops the ego (the sense of individual distinction), and eventually overcomes that ego, assimilating the accumulated experience and achieving a considerable rapport with the soul and to some extent with life universal, as the sense of separateness and individual distinction is fully transformed.

The first stage of this process is the stage (world) of mass consciousness, in which the self-conscious human being is fully immersed (engrossed) (absorbed)

in the mass consciousness of humanity and largely responsive (instinctively reactive) to the mass instinctive nature (peer pressure, maya, glamour, etc.). This stage may last for many, many cycles (incarnations), even well into the mentally-polarized experience. As the individual develops through this stage, the individual gradually develops through the individuality and gradually achieves a degree of freedom from that mass consciousness. During the later cycles of this first stage, the individual begins to think for himself but is still largely qualified by the mass characteristics. Because of the alignment of the individual with the (lower) group (mass) consciousness, during this stage, a considerable (mundane) (superficial) rapport with others (within the bulk of humanity) is generally the case.

The second stage of this process is the stage of isolation or independence, in which the individual breaks loose from the confines and expectations (conformity) of the mass consciousness and lives primarily without any real rapport with others or any great absorption in mass consciousness, though such an individual would still likely be self-centered and worldly. This second stage follows a transition period of increasing independence or sense of separateness (strangeness) (estrangement). During this second stage, the individual is essentially (privately or publicly) somewhat radical (not in accordance with cultural expectations) in thinking, feeling, and behavior. The individual becomes, in essence, an island within humanity.

From this islandic stage, the individual may proceed in any one of several directions: (1) The individual (the majority) may return to a different aspect of mass consciousness, e.g., instead of playing a passive role the individual may now play an active role in which the developed ego dominates (i.e., mass consciousness includes two factions, those who are relatively undeveloped and passive, and those who are relatively (ego) developed and active). (2) The individual (relatively few) may instead proceed to an extreme position of isolated (rogue) consciousness, living only for himself and having no potential rapport with the bulk of humanity. This is the case for the truly strange (abnormal) (independent) (wholly unresponsive) personality. (3) The individual (relatively few) may, rather, proceed to the fine line between a rapport with humanity (on the lower level (of human mass consciousness)) and a rapport with the universal life (the higher level), and (eventually) on to the third stage, the stage of the island universal.

In this third and (for humanity) final stage, the individual (spiritual student) becomes largely free from the dictates of mass consciousness, yet nonetheless remains in rapport with the deeper aspects of humanity, and, at the same time, with the universal life (the soul of all that lives).

† Commentary No. 448

The Island Universal 2

The second stage (isolation) is generally brief for those who simply allow the ego to emerge dominant and return to the mass consciousness in a more active role (joining the rapport of those who are also ego-centered (within the mass consciousness) (in contrast to the unconscious (collective) rapport of those whose egos are not yet fully developed)). Those who follow this path will eventually come again to the second stage and eventually pass on to the third.

In the (unnatural) case of those who pass on to the extreme position of rogue consciousness, the personality matrix may well have to be destroyed (or radically reconstructed) and a new one developed in order to achieve the moderation and balance which are necessary for progress beyond the second stage (basic isolation). This involves for such an individual (soul) a considerable evolutionary set-back, but is quite rare. Nonetheless, the spiritual student who has developed a considerable strength of personality must be wary of the ego and expend a considerable effort to moderate and conquer (control) the ego, fully transforming the sense of individual potency into the even more capable (relatively humble and spiritually responsive) sense of unity with all life (and an appreciation (subordination) of the individuality in that greater context).

In the third stage (that of the island universal), a balance is necessary between the rapport with humanity, the rapport universal, and the individuality. Rather than losing the individuality entirely, the (enlightened) (third stage) individual is (has) a well-tempered personality having considerable (albeit cooperative and subordinate) strength of character, quality of consciousness, devotion to duty (the path) (service to humanity), humility, etc., as well as a mental or intuitional polarization of consciousness. The spiritual student, at this stage, is actually closer to humanity than those who are absorbed in the mass consciousness, for

such a spiritual student understands and respects the mass consciousness (without being absorbed) (which serves as a basis for basic (conscious) rapport with those so absorbed) and is attuned to the higher (soul) aspects of the lifewave (e.g., its purpose, qualification, etc.).

The rapport universal qualifies the (responsive) spiritual student with considerable (higher) energies, and such a student then becomes an island of light (enlightenment) within the sea of humanity, devoted to humanity without being drawn to the grosser levels of the bulk of human personalities. The island universal is unimposing (and not normally noticeable) (unobtrusive), content simply to share whatever energies and talents are afforded to the extent of the responsiveness of those with whom he is associated in the outer world (or all, via group meditation). The island universal is neither head-centered nor heart-centered, but evenly balanced, with considerable mental (occult) talents and training (self-discipline) (self-mastery) and considerable heart quality (impersonal love) (compassion) (humility).

The role of the island universal is to encourage and qualify humanity, on practical levels, without imposition or attracting attention, remaining relatively free from glamour and illusion, not being absorbed in mundane or personal matters (consciousness), and remaining aligned with and responsive to the higher (deeper) sources (the soul) (the esoteric group within the context of the planetary (evolutionary) scheme (plan)). The potency (significance) of the enlightened student (servant) (island universal) comes from working from within humanity, rather than from without. As part of humanity and simultaneously as part of life universal, the spiritual student is an inductive force for evolutionary progress, a stimulus and an encouragement, from within.

Preliminary Discipline

A rather clear demarcation exists between the casual student and the serious spiritual student (candidate) in that the serious student has overcome the basic resistance of the personality and conscientiously embraces (at least) the preliminary discipline and preliminary endeavors of the (spiritual) path. The casual student may be nonetheless sincere and well-intentioned, but until the preliminary discipline is adhered to, the student cannot properly be trusted.

Adherence to the preliminary discipline is important for a number of reasons, all relating to becoming fit to channel the energies of the path effectively and efficiently (and safely). Though moderation is a particularly significant keyword upon the path, any compromise with the preliminary discipline leaves a student below the threshold of significance. In other words, one who adheres to the entire discipline is normally trusted with advanced qualification and training (and concomitant energies) while one who embraces not all of the preliminary discipline is simply too weak from an occult point of view to warrant much attention. The casual student may very well be helpful in relation to spiritual work, but much of the qualification (energy) of the path must be withheld, for the relatively coarse personality (and lack of integrated strength) would simply compromise or short-circuit the more profound (potent) energies of the path.

The preliminary discipline is primarily physical albeit having significant effects on emotional and mental levels. The dietary restrictions of the preliminary discipline are simple and straight-forward. No meat, fish, or fowl is permitted for consumption. Some (nominal) care must be taken to eat the proper foods, but the important thing (occultly) is the elimination of flesh foods. Similarly, no consumption of alcoholic beverages (including beer and wine) is permitted by the preliminary discipline. Only drugs which are deemed medically necessary or medically expedient are permitted, and even those are discouraged. Likewise, no smoking is permitted by the preliminary discipline.

The elimination of these things (flesh foods, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, etc.) is a necessary prerequisite for the refinement and self-control required on the path.

The consumption of these things sustains a certain coarseness in the physical body (with concomitant effects on higher levels) (from an occult point of view), burden the energy balance of the etheric body, and undermine the physical, emotional, and mental integration and self-control of the personality. Another important aspect of the preliminary discipline is adherence to a daily pattern of meaningful (spiritual) meditation (20-30 minutes minimum) and philosophical study or contemplation (consideration). This too is important to refinement and self-control and responsiveness to higher energies.

Many attempt the preliminary discipline gradually and piecemeal, and fail to make significant progress because the gradual approach merely strengthens the (subtle) resistance of the personality to these changes. The successful students are generally those who simply embrace the preliminary discipline in its entirety, in a no-nonsense fashion. Of course, the preliminary discipline must be faced again in every succeeding incarnation (and the first time is potentially the most difficult (although in subsequent incarnations the resistance of the personality is likely to be more subtle)). The advanced disciplines of the path simply expand upon the preliminary, as greater and greater freedom (from coarseness and the bondage of personality-centeredness) and capacity for service are achieved. None of the disciplines of the path are imposed; all are simply accepted and embraced by the serious candidates.

† Commentary No. 450

Xenos

"Xenos" is a Greek word meaning strange or foreign (implying strangeness). The character of response or reaction of a person to another who happens to be strange or different or foreign (in the perspective of the first person) is often governed by the separative and independent nature of the ego. This nature (albeit natural in the sense that the personality is materialistic and not inherently spiritual) must ultimately be overcome, during the process of reintegration, where the separative barriers of the personality (ego) are destroyed (dissolved) (withdrawn) and the individual becomes an intelligent and responsive participant within humanity.

The appropriateness of individual and group differences (distinctions) is not so easily apparent for the relatively coarse members of humanity, who see themselves and their own culture and values as proper, and (naturally) fail to understand the culture, values, etc. of others beyond their own experience. This lack of appreciation (understanding) can lead to estrangement (xenos). But in fact, individual and group differences are natural and necessary and within the scope of evolutionary experience. The group (humanity) lives through its individual members and the various racial and cultural and national (regional) groups. Each (individual and group) has a contribution to make to the whole (albeit in part redundant (albeit intentionally so) and in part relatively (albeit not very significantly) unique).

The basis of xenos (strangeness) is in some cases a simple matter of personality-centeredness (pride) (arrogance) (conceit) (attachment to racial (cultural) (national) heritage) and in other cases a simple matter of fear (based either upon that which is unknown (and therefore not understood) or upon previous experience (of mutual strangeness (separative reactivity))). The separativeness on an individual level is linked to the ego and the materialistic (self-centered) nature. The separativeness on a group level is also related to existence in matter, but it is as well related directly to the racial heritage and the early methods of development.

In earlier cycles (primarily) (but to some small extent in the present cycle for relatively primitive human groups), each family (tribe) (nation) (race) was largely guided or directed by their respective group spirit. Much coherent experience and development resulted from these (early) methods (which were indeed appropriate or necessary to the primitive circumstances and levels of development), but they were inherently separative, as each group was necessarily isolated to some large extent from other groups. Much of this earlier experience (qualification) (programming) (habits) is carried on through the material heritage of the personality (in spite of much effort to interrelate the various groups), and must (eventually) be fully overcome.

With a broadening of experience, a more inclusive perspective (vision), and a more refined (properly qualified) personality, strangeness is accepted naturally, and those who are relatively strange are perceived within a constructive framework of an integrated humanity. The stranger's values are respected (not

necessarily accepted or embraced), being recognized as appropriate to the other's nature and circumstances. One's own values should not be considered as inferior or superior to others' but simply appropriate to one's own circumstances and nature (albeit with regard to needed improvement (adjustment and progress)). In this manner is the sense of strangeness fully overcome (and even the sense of otherness is dissolved) as the oneness of humanity (and all life) is consciously and properly realized.

✝ Commentary No. 451

Leadership

Leadership intrinsically falls within the domain and purview of the first ray, since leadership, as a process, is qualified primarily by that ray. A particular leadership style, however, may be qualified by any one or another of the seven rays, and in some cases by more than one of the rays. Leadership is defined as the process and activity of guiding, directing, or encouraging others upon a particular path (course) or toward some particular goal. As such, leadership can be extrinsic or intrinsic, conscious or unconscious, deliberate (qualified) or otherwise (casual) (indeliberate), explicit or implicit, constructive (healthy) or destructive, etc.

The central issue of leadership is the objective and means of influence. Thus the significant aspects of leadership include motive(s), style(s), qualification, and context. For the spiritual (metaphysical) (theosophical) (esoteric) student, the proper motive is to live in accordance with and adherence to the evolutionary plan and the evolutionary unit (the soul). Leadership styles vary a great deal, according to the particular personality and soul rays, the relative development and maturity of the person in the context of his or her ray(s), and the context of the individual or group circumstances (charter) (duty). In addition to the obvious (subtle) ray qualifications, leadership may be qualified (sanctioned) or unqualified.

The bulk of attempted leadership (however sincere) is personality-centered (individually and independently motivated) (mainly because the majority of people are personality-centered and either independently motivated or circumstantially (environmentally) motivated). Such leadership is not

sanctioned, except in the general sense wherever it is constructive and consistent with the evolutionary plan (rather than being merely karmically consistent (as all things are)). Sanctioned leadership occurs where an individual (and group) are actually responsive to the evolutionary program. Besides being inherently constructive, sanctioned leadership is generally intrinsic, consciously and deliberately qualified, implicit and inductive.

Intrinsic (implicit) leadership is wholly natural, being involved in the essential (higher) (refined) nature of the (qualified) student, not generally revealed or obviously expressed. The natural leader does not try to lead, guide, or influence others; he (she) simply leads by nature. In the case of the spiritual student, that leadership should normally be inductive and unobtrusive (not in any way an imposition upon others), by virtue of quality of consciousness (spiritual presence) whether or not apparent to those who are present or responsive to such (proper) (implied) leadership. The essence of leadership is encouragement (not direction) by virtue of presence (the inductive presence of higher consciousness), spiritual momentum (precedence), and ab intra properties.

Ab intra leadership is leadership from within, meaning that the individual is led from within to be a spiritual (gentle) force of encouragement, and (even more significantly), that humanity (the group) progresses in response to internal leadership (rather than direction or external guidance). Thus the proper (spiritual) (unobtrusive) (unrecognized) leader leads from within the group, being an integrated aspect of the group. There is no authority implied in or required for leadership per se, but the pioneers of humanity (in the spiritual and evolutionary sense) are all particularly qualified and sanctioned within the context of the planetary (evolutionary) scheme and within the context of their (respective) soul groups.

Seven Rays Analysis

Since the seven rays predominate in the cyclical and structural (organizational) (psychological) basis of evolutionary manifestation in all of its aspects, analysis along seven ray lines (utilizing the seven ray correlations as a basis or perspective for analysis) is particularly potent. Every aspect of manifestation at any level can be effectively evaluated and analyzed utilizing correspondences with the three major rays (the trinity) and with the seven rays (the septenate), provided sufficient basic knowledge, understanding, and ability are brought to bear on the subject.

The essence of seven rays analysis is the qualification by one or another or more of the seven rays of every aspect of manifestation. Every object (subject) (concept) (aspect) (attribute) (activity) (life) (consciousness) is so qualified. But care must be taken to distinguish between categorical qualification, contextual qualification, and particular qualification, for every object (subject) is qualified both categorically, contextually, and particularly, and the relative significance of qualification can vary considerably. Complex objects are qualified in their various aspects (which should be considered) (separately, relationally, and collectively). The context relatedness of some object (subject) is also subject to qualification along ray lines. And the various ray relationships (occult, mystical, complement, reflection, etc.) add further insight to analysis.

The primary (basic and essential) knowledge of the seven rays (the primary aspect of seven rays analysis) relates to categorical qualification. Categorical qualification is the qualification of some class or category of object or subject area without regard to contextual qualification or the particular qualification of a (particular) object within that class or category. For example the soul (souls) is qualified categorically by the second ray (all souls are qualified (inherently) by the second ray due to the nature (character) of souls) (souls are a manifestation of and correlation to the second ray) (all souls are within the domain and scope of second ray qualification).

The secondary knowledge of the seven rays relates to relative or contextual qualification. For example, while the soul is categorically (essentially) qualified

by the second ray, the soul's role relative to the personality is (contextually) qualified by the first ray (i.e., the first ray governs or qualifies the soul in its position superior to the personality) (as the soul is the source and sustaining force for the personality existence). Similarly, the soul is contextually qualified by the third ray in its (inferior) role relative to the monad.

The tertiary aspect of seven rays analysis relates to particular qualification. For example, while the soul is categorically qualified along second ray lines, a particular soul (or a particular group of souls) may be (particularly) qualified (by particular nature) by any one of the seven rays. In addition, the particular soul may be qualified (also) by any one of the rays in the sense that in any given cycle, a particular ray will qualify a particular soul according to its own (individual) cyclical context (correlation) (not to mention the cyclical context (qualifying rays) of the soul group, humanity, planet, etc.). While categorical and contextual qualifications are readily apparent to anyone of training in the seven rays, particular qualification is relatively much more difficult to ascertain. Fortunately, particular qualification is much less significant than categorical and contextual considerations.

† Commentary No. 453

Preliminary Endeavors

While the preliminary discipline embraces a number of necessary and relatively easily achievable adjustments to (in) the personality life (being well-defined and easily objectively realizable), the preliminary endeavors are a necessary complement to the preliminary discipline and deal with the more qualitatively realizable aspects of the spiritual path and approach thereto. The preliminary endeavors are well-defined and clear in concept and principle, but not so easily defined in practice. The preliminary endeavors require more attention (awareness) for accomplishment than does the preliminary discipline, but build upon the refinement and opportunities afforded by the discipline and gradually lead the spiritual student further and further into the light and love (and service) of the spiritual path (the soul).

To complement the preliminary discipline and realize the next step or stage in the process of transformation of the human personality, the student must

endeavor to improve the quality of the body, the aura, and the mind, through conscious purification and qualification. The student must (likewise) endeavor to achieve and maintain an integrated personality (with a mental polarization) and a healthy balance between the head-centered nature and the heart-centered nature. In order to achieve these things, the student must necessarily overcome the physical and emotional appetites, desires, attachments, etc. which lend strength to the lower (coarse) (personal) nature and decrease the responsiveness of the personality to higher (soul) impression.

The spiritual student must also endeavor to live a relatively harmless life, becoming more and more aware of the cause and effect relationships and endeavoring to be as intelligently cooperative and constructive as practicable. The student must endeavor to be honest and truthful in all respects, to value truth, and to achieve the humility demanded of the path. The student must endeavor to overcome the tendency of the personality toward self-deception, glamour, and illusion; to overcome the resistance and inertia of the self-indulgent and self-sustaining personality, transforming that personality into a relatively selfless and spiritually responsive instrument (of the soul).

The spiritual student must learn to become and remain free from opinions and other mental attachments, learn to speak purposively and not needlessly, and endeavor to be free from personality absorption (which implies that the student must first learn to be aware of being absorbed at the personality level). The spiritual student must endeavor to be non-judgmental relative to others, yet nonetheless able to learn by observation and assessment. The spiritual student must endeavor to live constructively, in harmony with the spiritual path, with the environment, and with mundane humanity (without being absorbed in the mundane world or personal energies). The student must endeavor to moderate the entire personality at all times to insure self-control and a positive qualification of consciousness and activities.

The spiritual student must similarly endeavor to improve the quality of the daily meditation discipline and extend that meditation environment (energy) to application in the daily life. The student must endeavor to become more and more responsive to the spiritual path and to the soul, embarking upon and sustaining a life of appropriate service to humanity (according to the talents and abilities and significant opportunities afforded (earned)). All in all, the student

must do that which is before him (her) to do, that which must be done (the preliminary discipline), and endeavor to do whatever is appropriate to do (the preliminary endeavors).

✝ Commentary No. 454

First Ray Leadership

The first of four basic (ray) approaches to leadership is first ray leadership, that is, leadership that is particularly qualified by the first ray and/or its reflection (the seventh ray). This first ray leadership can be viewed in two dimensions or aspects: (1) the relative balance of first ray and seventh ray energies utilized or evoked, and (2) the degree of quality or maturity reflected in the methods and approach.

In the first case, at one extreme is unmoderated first ray energy which is overly directive and forceful, while at the other extreme is unmoderated seventh ray energy which is overly organized and constrained. In between these two extremes are many qualities and attributes that can be evoked to various extents and degrees of balance and moderation, and with various degrees of quality and maturity. In this second case (quality), each attribute has a qualitative range, from highly effective (spiritually moderated) (highly appropriate) (spiritually responsive) to highly ineffective (dominated by ego and/or coarseness). Thus, each essence holds (hides) a strength as well as a weakness.

An individual embracing first ray energy for leadership purposes (or who has a personality considerably qualified with first ray energy) (or, similarly, with seventh ray energy) will tend to be directive, decisive, self-confident, persuasive, persistent, well-organized, properly focused, responsive (purposive), enterprising, and (sensibly) brave, at best, and will tend to be demanding, dominating, impulsive, arrogant, meddlesome, coercive, contentious, impatient, reactive, insistent, hasty, unprincipled, authoritarian, competitive, unfocussed, opportunistic, foolishly fearless, and ego-centered, at worst. The particular case will more likely fall between the two extremes and include some strengths and some weaknesses, but all of these tendencies exist nonetheless within the

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energy embraced. The sensible student must learn therefore to sublimate the negative aspects into the more positive aspects.

The danger of leadership is its overall first ray qualification, and this is particularly (potentially) a problem for leadership (or personalities) that is (are) particularly qualified by the first ray, for the power and potency implied is considerable, and the ego (personality) that is not highly refined is particularly vulnerable. If the individual is properly refined and moderated, and if the effect is sensible (purposive) (appropriate), then no problems need ensue. But if such is not the case, then first ray leadership can be degraded to the dictatorial and ego-inflative approaches that are fraught with problems (conceptually and consequentially). The danger (power) is present in each of the rays, but in the first ray case it is simply greater. It is relatively easy to lose control of the first ray energies, becoming instead reactive and under their domination instead.

Inductive leadership utilizing first ray (and seventh ray) energies is particularly keen and particularly subtle. The presence is potent and encouraging, yet without imposition or forcefulness. The unfortunate first ray tendency toward a sense and conveyance (delusion) of urgency is, in this higher sense of leadership, transformed to a sense and conveyance of purpose and appropriateness, shared and mutually realizable, not imposed in any sense. This first ray (inductive) approach is inherently honest and based within the strength of humility. There is therefore a facing up to the realities concerned, an honest appraisal and assessment, and a reasonable approach to accomplishment. And all of this is conveyed without drawing attention to the catalyst (the inductive presence).

Initiative and Momentum 1

The human lifewave (inhabiting the fourth kingdom) is an evolutionary flow stretching from the interface with the third (animal) kingdom to the interface with the fifth (trans-humanic) kingdom. That flow of consciousness is subject to considerable evolutionary qualification, as the evolutionary forces provide evolutionary stimulation and guidance. Within that flow, the spiritual path is a dimension (aspect) of consciousness that provides a necessary quickening, that draws responsive elements (human souls) to evolve more consciously and at a more rapid rate than the bulk of humanity.

Once an individual (soul) has been drawn onto the path, the individual's evolutionary qualification is intensified and broadened, so that the individual becomes an inductive force for others. Thus, the momentum of the spiritual student is assured by his (her) place upon the path, and that momentum necessarily increases by association with the path. There is a natural impedance of the path, which tends to prevent the student from passing beyond the boundaries of the path. There is also an impedance associated with the material nature of the human personality, which must be dealt with if the student is to progress into the mainstream of the spiritual path.

This personality inertia is defensive in nature, as the ego seeks to maintain status quo (the illusion of independence). This impedance can be wholly unconscious or it can be semi-conscious (being somewhat rationalized (rationalization being a self-deceptive process)). The soul on the other hand knows no impediment save that of the personality. The soul (upon the path) naturally seeks to encourage the progress of the personality as it (the personality) responds to the intensified evolutionary qualification of (by) the soul, but the personality (in the early stages of the path, and to some extent during certain phases of each subsequent incarnation) naturally resists that encouragement. The soul is limited in its ability to enlist the cooperation of its reflection (lower self), so that in many cases, the soul is to some extent at the mercy of the degree and extent to which the personality is responsive.

In time, of course, the impersonal and persistent qualification of the soul gradually transforms the personality so the personality becomes much more (spiritually) responsive. But in the meantime the soul and the path encourage that transformation (responsiveness). Where the individual is not wholly absorbed in mundane (personal) matters and is reasonably knowledgeable concerning the basic principles of the path, then the karma associated with that student's relationship to the path is intensified and quickened. In essence, knowledge of the path conveys an obligation to adhere to the dictates of the path to the extent of that knowledge and to some degree to the extent of the understanding of the knowledge. Understanding notwithstanding, however, there remains an obligation to progress toward and onto the path. This implies that the soul expects the personality to take some (or considerable) initiative in that direction, and to consciously overcome the personality impediments.

Such a personality (having been exposed to the basic principles of the path) who actively (passively) resists spiritual progress is actually inviting karmic compulsion (i.e., difficult circumstances (with much more overt learning opportunities)). One must learn to be more open (neither passive nor resistant) to the demands of the path, to insure intelligent responsiveness (and to avoid needless retardation (loss of momentum)). One who takes more (cooperative) initiative toward the path is more likely to learn by induction and consciously face (recognize) (appreciate) the many blessings of the path.

✝ Commentary No. 456

Initiative and Momentum 2

In the context (perspective) of a karmic (evolutionary) field (flow), initiative is the sending forth of unresolved (but qualified) energy (and associated force) for some apparent purpose. For every such action there is (in time and subsequence) an appropriate response. If the action initiated is sensibly (realistically) qualified (and flexible), then the system (action and moderation of that action, leading to karmic convolution and a subsequent (induced) response) will return a sensibly constructive consequence. Conversely, if the initiative is not so sensibly conceived and qualified, the results are likely to be predictably less sensible and less concerted (albeit, nonetheless appropriate to the action and

circumstances). Thus action (initiative) engenders an appropriate response (consequence), but that response may vary considerably in significance (effectiveness).

If one simply fails to take initiative, being content to passively react to the gradual evolutionary flow, then the momentum achieved will also be essentially passive. If one is persistently passive over a long enough period of time, then one will simply be held over for the next lifewave, or (in the case of a responsive soul) one will be awakened by circumstances and impelled to play a more active (albeit cooperative and responsive) role. The personality that is content to wait for some perception of the soul's initiative is actually undermining that process. However, the personality that seeks to cooperate with the soul's intention, must necessarily take sufficient initiative and remain (become) sufficiently flexible (responsive) to permit progress.

Initiative produces movement (in the karmic framework) and provides an opportunity for learning, adjustment, and progress. A movement (in some direction) coupled with sensible flexibility (receptivity) is a movement that can be guided and (gradually) brought into proper alignment with the evolutionary flow. Without movement there is no momentum, no real responsiveness, no real opportunity to grow and progress (and no real opportunity to contribute to the path). Even an apparently counterproductive movement affords an opportunity to change toward a more productive avenue. Whereas the absence of initiative (considerable inertia) leaves the individual wholly unresponsive to active spiritual (evolutionary) encouragement.

Of course proper initiative is based upon sensible intelligence. Too much initiative (head-strength) can be as counterproductive or nonproductive as no initiative at all. To charge boldly (thoughtlessly) ahead without proper consideration and awareness is foolish and suspect. But to proceed carefully, with consideration for potential consequences and an awareness of the associated environment (consciousness) can be quite positive. The keys to success (in this context) are moderation and sincerity (humility). To presume to proceed based upon presumption of understanding is inherently fallacious, so therefore the spiritual student should ever proceed openly (honestly, with an open, responsive (but not passive) mind). To proceed forcefully (without due

consideration) is to lose self-control, so therefore the spiritual student should ever proceed gently (without imposition or insistence).

Not to proceed at all is to remain asleep, as the bulk of humanity sleeps (to a certain extent) through the many and varied experiences (opportunities) of this life on earth. But to proceed with consideration (responsively) (responsibly) (reasonably) is to awaken increasingly to the reality of existence (the soul) (the path) and to intelligently achieve the concordance of that reality, which is a spiritual momentum of considerable import.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 457</div>

Pleasure

Pleasure is defined as a state of gratification or enjoyment, and normally refers to sensual gratification since most people are physically or emotionally polarized. In a more general sense there are three basic types of pleasure.

The first type of pleasure and the one that currently predominates in the mundane world is hedonistic or sensual pleasure. Hedonistic (sensual) pleasure prevails only where the individual is physically or emotionally polarized (or between those two levels). Hedonistic pleasure is largely self-centered and absorbing; i.e., the hedonist exhibits a considerable inertia (resistance to spiritual progress) and typically remains wholly absorbed in the realm of (sensual) experience. Such a person grows very slowly (assimilating experience only between incarnations where the senses are not a distraction), since the mind is either (relatively) undeveloped and/or dulled by the intensity of the sensual absorption. The pleasure experience (sensual absorption) is appropriate to those who are physically or emotionally polarized, who need such experience, but not for those who are developing mentally.

The second type of pleasure (and the one that is generally (gradually) replacing the pleasure of experience) is the pleasure of (pragmatic) achievement. Pragmatic pleasure is the pleasure of action and accomplishment and is not so dependent on sensual involvement as it is upon the mental ability to value achievement. Thus pragmatic pleasure prevails only where the individual is mentally polarized or in the transition period between being emotionally

polarized and being mentally polarized. The pragmatist is content to work for personal achievement or to perform some service for some (perceived) good beyond mere personal achievement. The pragmatist is (potentially) much more responsive to learning opportunities than the hedonist, although the pragmatist may very well be so absorbed in the work (process of achievement) that he (she) is unresponsive to spiritual impression (qualification) (learning). In such a case the individual develops more gradually and the momentum is somewhat limited (albeit more progressive than the hedonistic case).

The third type of pleasure is the pleasure of understanding (the pleasure of spiritual rapport) and prevails only where the individual (student) is wholly mentally polarized or in the transition period between being mentally polarized and being intuitionally polarized. Where the pragmatist utilizes the mind for action and achievement, the mentalist (contemplative) uses the mind for growth, learning, and sharing (service) on a mental or intuitional level. Where the pragmatist forgoes hedonistic pleasure, the contemplative forgoes both hedonistic pleasure and the pleasure of action and achievement. Or in other words, where the hedonist and pragmatist are enslaved by desire and ego (respectively), the contemplative has (more typically) conquered both desire and ego and is free to become the spiritual self.

The momentum of the true (spiritual) student (scholar) (disciple) is quite considerable, the student being free from the distraction and absorption of the senses and the ego. The student (contemplative) is still (potentially) a worker (and an effective one) but is no longer absorbed by the process of achievement (i.e., the work is important but truth (spiritual reality) is even more important). The proper student is not an intellectual, since intellectuals are a subset of pragmatists, but is rather mental and intuitive (i.e., the intellect is related more to the mind than it is to the physical brain). The pleasure of the spiritual student is more properly a quiet (subtle) (non-distractive) joy rather than pleasure per se.

Second Ray Leadership

The second of four basic (ray) approaches to leadership is second ray leadership, leadership that is particularly qualified by the second ray and/or its reflection (the sixth ray). In the sense of relative balance of second ray and sixth ray energies utilized or evoked, at one extreme is unmoderated second ray energy which is unreasonably utopian and impractical, while at the other extreme is unmoderated sixth ray energy which is unreasonably overprotective and based upon blind allegiance (rather than sensible loyalty).

In between these two extremes are many various qualities and attributes, with varied balance (moderation) (quality) (maturity). The real strength of second ray leadership is its impersonality qualified by love and wisdom, while the real weakness of second ray leadership (via its reflection) is the personal and parental qualifications compounded by glamour. The second ray approach tends to be more mature, more impersonal, and less practical, while the sixth ray approach tends to be less mature, more personal, and more practical. Where considerable ego (self-deception) (glamour) is present, neither approach is very effective, even though a considerable (mass) magnetic force may be evoked.

While the first ray approach to leadership is essentially directive and persuasive (overtly or inductively so), the second ray approach is more characteristically magnetic and cultivating (overtly or inductively). An individual embracing second ray energy for leadership purposes (or who has a personality qualified by second ray energy) (or, similarly, with sixth ray energy) will tend to be thoughtful, reasonably idealistic, modest, trusting, loyal, cooperative, generous, and helpful, at best, and will tend to be impractical, utopian, naive, gullible, blindly devoted (allegiant), passive, parental, and insistent, at worst. The principal difference between the second ray and sixth ray approaches is that in the second ray approach (generally) the path (way) is recognized impersonally (without attachment or glamour) and insight (energy) shared without insistence, while in the sixth ray approach some aspect of the path is embraced (never the inclusive whole) on a personal (emotional) level (often via some personality) and attempts are made to impose that perspective upon others instead of simply encouraging others to think for themselves.

In short, the sixth ray approach (religious conviction) works well in the context of the unprepared masses but not so well in any more mature context. In the more mature sense, the second ray and sixth ray approaches involve being responsive to needs, being cooperative and supportive, and sharing energy. While in the less mature sense these approaches are impositional and demanding. The light of the second ray (sixth ray) approach to leadership is excellence (growth toward perfection), while the love of the second ray (sixth ray) approach is (properly) the cause (the path). In the higher sense, the second ray approach depends on inductive response to quality, while in the lower sense it depends largely on the appeal to principles or the appeal of the personality involved.

The keyword for second ray leadership is encouragement, the magnetic encouragement of quality and consciousness, the working out of the soul's energy and intentions, and passing above and beyond the petty personality domains. Inclusiveness is a keynote of the second ray approach, while the sixth ray approach is vulnerable to exclusion and separativeness. Of course, the two approaches are not properly separable, and the strengths (weaknesses) of one are masked in the other.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 459</div>

The Tropes of Agrippa

Agrippa was a Greek Skeptic who is credited with five tropes or ways of achieving doubt. Agrippa's tropes cast doubt upon the senses (sense perception) and upon understanding (reasoning), upon phenomenal and trans-phenomenal claims. Consequently, the tropes of Agrippa lead naturally to a relativistic philosophy in which sense perceptions are inconclusive and in which reasoning is similarly inconclusive. Or in other words, by refusing to accept as fact that which is necessarily unprovable and inconclusive, the skeptic (relativist) tends to avoid self-deception.

The first trope is that of conflict or discrepancy, and relates to variation of views concerning the same objects. Both the senses and reasoning are considered fallible. Perception varies widely according to the abilities,

experience, and (natural) bias of the individual as well as the context of that which is perceived. The second trope is that of infinite regression, and relates to the infinite process involved in proving anything (i.e., premises are required to "prove" a given conclusion, but every premise itself requires proof, etc.). There is no criterion for conclusion, since no result of sense perception and/or reasoning is inherently or actually provable. Since nothing can be proven in any final sense, judgment must be suspended.

The third trope is that of relativity, and relates to the appearance of an object according to the relationships between an object and other things, between one's perception of that object and one's perception of other things. Or in other words, knowledge of some object (subject) generally comes indirectly by way of knowledge of relationships, rather than directly (and if the knowledge comes (purportedly) directly, then the process by which the information comes is similarly questionable (fallible)). Thus, one cannot know a thing in itself, since one is limited to the fallible senses and fallible reasoning. The fourth trope is that of hypothesis, and relates to the arbitrary character of (dogmatic) assumptions, assumed as starting points in order to avoid the infinite regression. Any "proof" that depends on unproven premises is inconclusive. Thus one must also suspend judgment.

Similarly, the fifth trope is that of circularity, and relates to the vicious circle or the necessity of assuming in the "proof" of anything the very conclusion that has to be proved. Neither plausibilities nor premises lead to any proof or conclusion (except (potentially) tentative or qualified conclusions). Although the avoidance of self-deception is not assured, the tropes of Agrippa may very well provide (unprovable) assurance of doubt, as the concepts are accepted as reasonable and/or sustained by intuitive insight (neither of which is in itself conclusive).

The net result of all this is the conclusion that nothing is actually ever provable, that if one accepts as fact anything, one has merely achieved some measure of self-deception. But if one (more reasonably) accepts something as a belief (vice fact) and one is aware of the fact (distinction) of that belief as a belief and not as a fact, then one has (in this instance) avoided self-deception (unless of course the subconscious accepts the belief as fact). One cannot prove anything to anyone (albeit one can potentially convince another of some presumed fact in

the sense that another can accept as true that which is so presented, but no "proof" is involved). Though one cannot prove anything to oneself in any absolute sense, for all practical purposes one can prove something to oneself, relatively, to the extent that one necessarily accepts something as true.

† Commentary No. 460

The Void and Chaos

Before the beginning was the void. The void predates the manifestation of the universe, persists throughout the illusion of manifestation, and remains when all has been withdrawn from manifestation. The void is not the emptiness of space, for space exists in material (temporal) manifestation and the void knows no such existence. The void is simply the null universe, the absolute existence of which nothing enchanted by manifestation can perceive in any direct or positive sense. The void is a far greater reality than universal manifestation, for that which is manifested comes and goes, while the void is persistent and more truly existent (given that anything manifested is not truly existent, but a construct).

The void contains nothing, meaning that all that is something or another is not real but consequential. The void is beyond containment, meaning that the rules and substance of manifestation have no meaning within the void. The void is not the precursor of manifestation, albeit the unmanifested (absolute) proceeds from the void as a precursor to manifestation. The nature of that procedure is imposition, as matter is created or forced into existence (and held under some primordial tension). The object of that basic tension is (presumably) to permit manifestation. But what is manifested is itself a qualified existence and unreal relative to the void.

The first reality is the void. The second is chaos. The third is the unmanifest (though some would suggest that the second reality is the unmanifest and that that unmanifest induces chaos as a third) (some would even suggest that primordial tension is the second and that chaos is the third (the unmanifested not even considered at that level)). Chaos proceeds from the void. Chaos is the substructural universe, the imposition of space upon the void and the imposition

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of primordial matter upon that space. Primordial matter is matter without form, without any secondary qualification (i.e., unqualified matter, held in place (suspended) by primordial tension). The only structure to chaos is that primordial tension and the seven-fold (exponential) differentiation of matter into (primordial) planes of consciousness (which are archetypal to the (manifested) seven planes of consciousness). Consequently, there is no pattern to primordial matter at any level save the distinction of levels. Thus primordial matter is chaos, wholly unorganized and unqualified by intention (other than the existence (potential) of chaos itself). Primordial matter (chaos) is randomly distributed (in place and motion) (at each level) and entropy implies that no energy is available on any level.

Except for the basic septenary structure, chaos is the ultimate degraded state of matter and energy, the ultimate state of inert uniformity (randomness) that precedes and supersedes manifestation. In chaos, energy cannot flow between septenary states (levels), for that would imply overt interdependence. Thus chaos sustains the basic primordiality as a changeless existence (i.e., there is change but that change is random and not significant).

Primordial tension is to the void what the unmanifested life (in its most basic sense) is to chaos. The unmanifested life is to chaos (primordiality) what manifested life is to differentiated matter. Similarly, primordial tension is to chaos what the unmanifested life is to differentiated matter, and the unmanifested life is to differentiated matter what manifested life is to form. The void alone is absolute and infinite. All else is necessarily relative and finite. Universal manifestation is virtually infinite, but in fact, is infinite only in the sense of being a convoluted continuum.

Meditation Dynamics 1

The dynamics of proper (active) (spiritually qualified) (impersonal) meditation depends primarily upon the relative, overall quality of individual (group) consciousness and the responsiveness of the individual (group) to the energy available at soul levels. The outer form of the meditation (the conscious outline and techniques utilized for meditation) provides a framework for meditation dynamics, but as long as the form is proper (appropriate and sufficient), then it is really a matter of quality and responsiveness.

In individual (proper) meditation, the dynamics are relatively straight-forward. As the individual (spiritual student) stills the personality (physical body, emotions, and mind), the mind and personality are qualified (conditioned) by the soul (to the extent that the mind and personality are responsive). As the student achieves some measure of alignment with the soul, the soul then evokes a flow of energy from soul levels that fills the aura as light and love (depending on the relative development, balance, and effectiveness of the head and heart centers). For the most part, that energy remains in the aura until properly (consciously) (unconsciously) released.

The proper release of the accumulated energies is important. Since the principal reason (purpose) of meditation is service, the energies evoked are (should be) oriented toward some sharing or encouragement (qualification) of humanity, from within humanity. If these energies are not released properly, the personality will normally be impaired in some manner. These energies are not intended to be retained (directly) by the student or appropriated for individual purposes. In the case of proper meditation (properly motivated, properly performed, and part of a proper meditation rhythm (daily) schedule), an energy flow is built up and sustained so that during meditation the flow is merely intensified, and so that at (all) other times it continues in a more subtle manner.

This energy flow originates at soul levels, passes through the cooperating (responsive) (intelligent) student, and is shared naturally on mental and astral and etheric levels according to its particular nature and character (e.g., impersonal, healing energy). Incidental to this energy flow, the qualified

personality (unconsciously) (indirectly) utilizes some small fraction of the energy to improve the overall fitness of the student to perform this (meditative) work. In proper meditation, it is the soul that qualifies and controls these dynamic processes. The soul is generally successful to the extent that the personality is responsive (which really means to the extent that the personality does not impede these processes). Where the ego becomes involved, the soul withdraws and the energy flow is terminated (the ego can draw energy from concrete mental, astral, and etheric levels, but it cannot draw energy from abstract mental levels or beyond).

Where a proper energy flow is evoked and sustained (by proper meditation), both the place of meditation and the individual(s) (and group) are qualified, and that qualification remains beyond the actual meditation periods. The place of meditation is gradually charged by the recurring (proper) meditation until it becomes a dynamic component in the energy processes. Likewise for the (proper) participant, the student's aura remains charged (qualified) and the energies flow continually (if not continuously) toward their intended objective. The student need not be conscious of these meditation dynamics in order to be effective; but the student's effectiveness is increased to the extent that he (she) is aware of and cooperating with the energy dynamics.

✝   Commentary No. 462

Meditation Dynamics 2

In (proper) group meditation, the meditation dynamics are basically similar to those of individual meditation, except that in (proper) group meditation there is a considerable enhancement in the intensity (potency) of the energy flow and there are added dimensions of circularity (energy sharing) (group rapport) and specialization. Of course, group meditation is effective to the extent of quality of consciousness and responsiveness (impersonality), but group meditation effectiveness also depends on the rapport and integration of the participants as a group. The group must be able to respond as a group, not merely as a collection of individuals.

As long as the participants share a common overall motive, harmony, quality, character, temperament, etc., the group can (potentially) function effectively even with considerable variation in individual abilities and responsiveness, provided there are properly trained (qualified) participants to effectively play specialized roles. As the various personalities (participants) are stilled and integrated and qualified individually, so must they be stilled and integrated and qualified as a (manifested) (outer) (exoteric) (meditation) group. This can be done consciously or unconsciously, by meditation group participants or from the soul level if the participants are sufficiently responsive. Usually the group integration is performed consciously by one or more trained integrators, who consciously adjust the auras of the participants to the required pitch and qualification (to the extent such auras are able to be adjusted) (the integrator is not normally permitted to use occult force, but rather adjusts the auras inductively). Once properly integrated as a group, the group must be effectively aligned with the soul group. The alignment is normally achieved (effected) through the role of the integrator.

Another specialized role within group meditation is that of evocation. One or more participants (who are properly trained, capable, and more effectively aligned at the soul level) will normally evoke the meditation energies from soul levels for the entire group (if all are able to contribute to the role, then so much the better). Once the energy is evoked (more properly intensified, since the energy flow should be continuous), then another role is played, that of energy circulation. Again, one or more properly qualified and trained participants will guide and focus the evoked (intensified) energy in one or more dimensions, usually (1) a periodic focusing through each individual participant, (2) an overall focusing through the group as a whole, and (3) a sustained circulation of the energy through the entire group assembly.

Another specialized role is that of stabilization, as the appropriate (trained) (qualified) participant(s) observe the overall meditation dynamics and make adjustments as needed to insure individual and group stability. These adjustments are made in the focus of the energy (refinement) and in the individual and group auras (consciousness). The final (major) specialized role is that of radiation, as the appropriate (assigned) participant(s) direct the radiation (release) of the accumulated (qualified) (intensified) energies out into the world

of human activity, creating and sustaining channels of qualified energy for particular purposes or general (spiritual) qualification.

The process of (intensification of) release or direction may come toward the end of the meditation period or it may begin earlier and simply culminate near the end of the meditation period, depending on the magnitude (energy volume), intensity, and qualification of the energy and the ability of the group to sustain its overall role.

<div align="right">✝   Commentary No. 463</div>

Third Ray Leadership

The third of four basic (ray) approaches to leadership is third ray leadership, incorporating both third ray and fifth ray energies according to some balance. Compared to the compulsive inspiration of the first ray and the magnetic induction of the second ray, the third ray approach to leadership is inherently conservative. At the third ray extreme there is abstraction, while at the fifth ray extreme there is concretion. Between the two extremes is a conservative leadership approach that depends largely on consideration and analysis, and the subsequent presentation of information.

The third ray approach embraces thinking before acting or advising. In the more strictly third ray approach it is contemplation and consideration, trying to embrace the whole and reach some conclusion. In the more strictly fifth ray approach it is analysis, evaluating details in a relatively thorough manner, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each reasonable alternative, developing a methodology for proceeding, remaining as practical as possible. The problem of the strictly third ray approach is vagueness and reservation. The problem of the strictly fifth ray approach is tenaciousness and clarity (i.e., a clear solution may not be evident to all concerned).

The third approach to leadership is not particularly flexible or creative, being vulnerable to stubbornness, elaboration, and critical separativeness. In general, the third approach is described as (potentially) practical, factual, thorough, analytical, detail-oriented, cautious, methodological, economical, unemotional, objective, fair, consistent, and conservative. The result of the third ray (fifth

ray) methods is the offering of information and practical advice or recommendations. This is, in a sense, a very impersonal leadership since the responsibility for action is (typically) transferred away (although ultimate responsibility for validity and appropriateness of the advice remains) (the process leading to the offering of information and advice need not be impersonal, but its effectiveness does depend to some extent on the degree of impersonality embraced in that process).

Where leadership action is involved along third ray (fifth ray) lines, the tendency is toward structure, well-defined methods and procedures of implementation (i.e., bureaucratic leadership implementation). Some such measure may be effective, but the danger of too much measure is a lack of dynamic (flexible) responsibility and freedom. Arguments for or against some action are necessarily separative, albeit common along fifth ray lines. Where the leadership process rises above the strictly fifth ray nature, there can no longer reign any arguments or argumentativeness (or separative criticism). Where the leadership process rises above the third ray nature as well, then there is generally a clarity of understanding and comprehension, a recognition of appropriateness, and an effective means of impersonal leadership (guidance).

The basic problem of any leadership approach is that of balance, of blending the positive (constructive) aspects and energies to achieve effectiveness. Effective leadership depends as much on the nature and methods of the catalyst (leader) as the situation. Where leadership is inductive and dynamic and mature, there is much more chance of effectiveness (fulfillment in several dimensions (for the individuals concerned as well as the immediate objective)). Conservative approaches and methods may or may not be effective depending on the people involved, their nature, and the situation. Where conservative methods are effective they should be used. Where not, then other (first ray) (second ray) (fourth ray) methods should be utilized, as appropriate.

Chaos and Manifestation

In the higher sense, chaos is the substructural universe, statistically changeless and unorganized (energy cannot flow at the entropic level of chaos). In the lower sense, chaos is the archetypically structural framework for manifestation (consisting of seven primordial (archetypal) planes of consciousness). Chaos is the non-precursory precedent and succedent of manifestation, non-precursory in the sense that chaos contains no information or qualification for manifestation, and similarly inconsequentially succedent.

Manifestation is dualistic, as both life and form are necessarily manifested to serve evolutionary purpose. The manifestation of life in the most basic (primordial) sense precedes the manifestation of form, but the manifestation of life in the higher sense must necessarily follow the manifestation of form (albeit that life is manipulative of form and matter is manifested as a consequence of life (through consciousness)). The evolutionary framework for manifestation is developed as the seven planes are organized (qualified) from their archetypes and as the various evolutionary schemes (threads) (progressive patterns) are impressed archetypically upon the universal basis (substructure) to form a coordinated and correlative (purposive) superstructure.

Matter is in the most basic sense life at some basic, primitive level. Form is not life except in the sense of the elementary lives that constitute the matter from which the form is assembled. That form can appear to live is either the result of an indwelling, higher life, or the artificial life of an organized qualification (or both). The form side of manifestation precedes the manifestation of higher lives, as those higher lives qualify and condition and organize the matter on the various levels (planes) and patterns to accommodate their experience and expression. Impressed upon chaos, the manifestation of structured matter (form) creates tension, between the purpose implied by the form through its qualification, and the natural formlessness of chaos. In a sense, the primordial matter has an entropic force, a force that naturally seeks formlessness, that resists organization, that works to degrade any material form. This is natural and necessary, and suitably overcome for some duration by the purposive life

and its qualification of form. This means that life must continuously refresh the form, and when the life withdraws then the form naturally disintegrates.

Manifestation proceeds then as life qualifies form, as life lives through or works through the qualified form(s), and ultimately withdraws from that association of life and form. All of manifestation is cyclical, both for the manifestation of form as well as life, and as well for the working consciousness (the interaction of life and form). The forces of manifestation are naturally balanced by the forces of chaos, affording a dynamic and responsive equilibrium that can be meaningfully utilized by the many lives within lives.

The intermediate product of manifestation is consciousness, but the final product (of any manifestation) is the assimilation of consciousness, for ultimately, as the manifested lives withdraw, the forms are discarded and consciousness dissolved as well. What is carried on is the essence achieved, analogous to wisdom (and as well the archetypes and matrices from which manifestation can be renewed (more properly archetypes of archetypes, depending on the level of withdrawal)). There are numerous levels within levels and lives within lives associated with manifestation, such that chaos is only reached in some absolute sense when all of life is withdrawn from all of manifestation, leaving only the void.

✝ Commentary No. 465

Meditation Dynamics 3

The hidden side of (group) meditation dynamics is that which occurs on soul levels. A soul whose reflection (personality) is not spiritually mature (responsive) really has little to do with its reflection during the period of incarnation. But a soul whose reflection is relatively spiritually mature (as evidenced by its quality of consciousness and meditation patterns) becomes involved with its personality in the sense of sending forth (down) qualified energies for the mind and personality to utilize in its (spiritual) work. This occurs primarily during (proper) meditation, but to some extent continually or continuously once a proper meditation pattern and energy flow are established and sustained.

On soul levels, the meditation dynamics are entirely group-oriented, for the soul of one who is relatively spiritually mature (on or approaching the path and somewhat responsive to spiritual energies) is necessarily part of an esoteric group (a well-defined soul group) or at least part of a karmic group (a less well-defined soul group based upon overall character and quality as well as historical considerations (e.g., a group of souls created or individualized together due to the character and quality of that localized group within the fabric of the oversoul)). The soul group typically contains members who are in incarnation as well as those who are not. Such a soul group will naturally seek to work through its incarnated members to the extent to which it is so chartered. Members who are in incarnation but not responsive are pretty much ignored, being of little consequence to the soul group for the duration of their absorption in the mundane (personal) world.

But those group members in incarnation who are responsive (i.e., who meditate properly and effectively) can be utilized to channel spiritual energies for those who are otherwise unresponsive (the bulk of humanity in incarnation are not responsive to energies at the soul level, but are responsive to some extent to energies on more practical (etheric, astral, concrete mental) levels). Thus the object of group meditation is to transform those energies from soul levels and share the resultant energies on more practical levels, serving as a means of constructive (spiritual) (evolutionary) encouragement.

On soul levels then, the soul group members are involved in receiving, accumulating, transforming, and releasing energies of various (appropriate) (assigned) types and (whenever practicable) sending selected energies forth through the framework of the (outer) (lower) group meditation dynamics. Each soul group is chartered in some manner according to its character and quality (and ability) as well as the overall needs (of the lifewave or greater scheme of evolution). Some groups perform rather specialized (engineering) work; other groups perform generalized work (sharing energies of overall evolutionary encouragement). The meditation dynamics at the soul level may be relatively simple or relatively complex depending on the nature and charter of the particular group.

In the final analysis, each soul group plays a role within a greater scheme of evolution, contributing according to its talents and assignments. The entire

fabric of the many soul groups is an integrated and coordinated dynamic web of energy manipulation, responsive to and coordinated by logoic qualifications. The flow of evolution embraces these soul groups primarily, as far as humanity and the planetary scheme are concerned, and only secondarily affects the qualification of lives and forms in the lower (outer) world of mundane and personal activity.

✝ Commentary No. 466

Meditation Dynamics 4

Where a sincere group of spiritual students does not have sufficiently trained and qualified members to play the various (dynamic) roles for group meditation, the roles may be played by inner-plane members (participants) (as always, to the extent that the outer group is qualified and responsive) (meaning to the extent that such a group is spiritually effective and therefore worthy of such energy investment).

Needless to say, groups that are not sanctioned at the soul level (i.e., which are not sufficiently refined to achieve alignment) cannot evoke these higher energies and their meditation dynamics are ineffective by comparison, although potentially constructive and therefore worthwhile. The important factor in this respect is motivation (quality). If a group is properly motivated (albeit not sanctioned at the soul level) then its work will (likely) be constructive; otherwise group meditation can be dangerous (e.g., powerful minds or passive (or strong) emotions can evoke mental and astral forces of coarse and unmanageable proportions). But where the group is spiritually responsive (i.e., mature), then the meditation dynamics are properly supervised and therefore reasonably safe.

The minimum essential requirements for a sanctioned group meditation effort (given sufficient maturity, consistency, quality, etc.) are three participants, at least one of which must be able to achieve alignment with the soul and/or soul group. Three participants are needed in order to achieve circulation (as evidenced in the relative (enhanced) potency of meditation triangles). At least one participant must be able to evoke the intended energies, circulate them through the group, and guide their effective and constructive release. To be effective (and sanctioned) none of the participants can be (permitted to be)

passive relative to external forces. This means that any participant who is normally emotionally polarized must be able to integrate the personality (or be integrated inductively). Otherwise the group will be vulnerable to counterproductive (astral) forces and external thought-forms (and be unqualified for sanctioned occult (spiritual) work).

It is not necessary (albeit helpful) for every participant to be consciously aware of the meditation dynamics and/or fully (properly) integrated (mentally polarized) and aligned prior to meditation (or even aligned during meditation). The important factor in this respect is intelligent responsiveness (in contrast to naive passivity). The participant who is intelligently responsive can easily be inductively integrated and aligned with the group meditation effort, and therefore be a significant contributor, even where such a person does not sense the meditation dynamics. Participants who are consciously aware of the meditation dynamics (energy flow) can sense the specific involvement needed and respond accordingly. Those who are not consciously aware of the meditation dynamics should qualify their involvement, in more general terms, maintaining a positive point of focus for meditation (on concrete mental or abstract mental or intuitive levels, according to ability), and therefore being (actively albeit unconsciously) responsive to the group dynamics.

Group meditation dynamics are relatively simple in principle and practice. With sustained spiritual work (meditation), the meditation atmosphere becomes alive with the quality and purpose of spiritual endeavor (all the more reason why some suitable space should be devoted exclusively to meditation) and the regular participant in proper (individual and group) meditation becomes that much more effective.

Fourth Ray Leadership

The fourth of the four basic (ray) approaches to leadership is fourth ray leadership. The fourth ray approach is in principle the most flexible and synthetic of the four basic approaches to leadership. Fourth ray leadership involves adaptation and consensus, and is the practical, diplomatic approach, the approach of balance and moderation.

Although the fourth ray has no reflection as is the case for (1,7), (2,6), and (3,5), it is synthetic in the sense that it balances the three pairs of ray energies, and can to some extent draw upon any or all of the others. The fourth ray leadership approach is one of adjusting and balancing or moderating the various (impulsive) (inductive) (conserving) forces in order to achieve the desired (intended) (proper) result. The fourth approach is the way of conflict resolution, of seeing enough of both sides of any conflict to be able to draw upon the inevitable commonalities, of problem solving, finding solutions to difficulties (hopefully without compromising the significant aspects), of achieving harmony. Compromise can be appropriate, even essential to proper resolution, but care must be taken to consider the respective significance of each aspect potentially compromisable.

At worst, one who is utilizing fourth ray energy for leadership purposes is potentially inconsistent, impressionable, placating, manipulative, vacillating, (passively) acquiescent, aimless, flighty, solicitous, over-compromising, melodramatic, deluding, artificial, ambivalent, and/or fervent. At best, one who is utilizing fourth ray energy is potentially stable, consistent, flexible, adaptable, tactful, (honestly) diplomatic, socially skillful, inspiring, sincere, and reassuring. Such a person to be effective should be aware of other views, sufficiently respectful of those views (and implied purposes), and able to review matters in a positive, synthetic manner for all concerned. Thus one should be able to bring about a consensus, in principle. The fourth ray enables empathy (which is a helpful factor in this fourth approach), but can also draw from the sixth ray sympathy (which is potentially counterproductive). Thus the fourth ray "leader" should be empathetic but not necessarily sympathetic.

In effect, there is always a reasonable solution to any conflict or disagreement. One needs only to find a sufficiently broad and inclusive perspective, one that reduces to conflict or paradox only where limited or masked by narrow perspectives. The task of the fourth ray "leader" is to find that inclusive perspective and share it with the participants in such a way that it can be understood and appreciated by all concerned. Of course personalities can in principle be intransigent and impossible to deal with, but in practice most people are willing and able to face a broader view if properly presented (meaning with consideration for whatever inherent bias is present). Thus consensus is possible for reasonable (non-reactive) people.

The problem of the fourth ray approach is a tendency to take the intended resolution too seriously. In such a case there is the danger of deception and manipulation, reaching a consensus based upon a questionable means. Upon the spiritual path (i.e., for anyone who is upon or approaching the path regardless of particular mundane environment) the student is expected to always endeavour to embrace the ethics of the path, which means that the methods and means are as important if not more so than the immediate objective, result, or consequences. Thus the means and methods of leadership albeit fourth ray or otherwise must be considered in light of the path and its guidelines. Honesty and harmlessness are both essential to spiritual practice and neither should be compromised.

† Commentary No. 468

Manifestation and the Seven Rays 1

Universal manifestation is preeminently the manifestation of life and proceeds through multiplicative differentiation on and through a number of levels and in a number of ways, culminating in multidimensional integration, assimilation, and abstraction (withdrawal). The manifestation of life is also (simultaneously and (necessarily) coincidentally) the manifestation of form, the distinction between life and form (spirit and matter) being a simple matter of perspective. In manifestation, every life is a form from some perspective.

From the standpoint of central life (form), there are two principal (pseudo-spatial) dimensions, arbitrarily (symbolically) vertical and horizontal,

respectively. The vertical dimension constitutes the seven planes of consciousness. Each plane (sub-plane) is a ray life, a direct (central) manifestation of one or another of the seven rays (in obviously ordered and reflected fashion (e.g., the first and seventh planes (sub-planes) at any level are direct manifestations of the first ray and seventh ray, respectively (1,7) and reflectively (7,1))). Since the seven rays constitute one life (as well as three and seven), each ray manifestation is a differentiation of one life or subsequent, and intimately related to every other ray life (e.g., the third sub-plane of the second cosmic plane is a life that is responsive to and a manifestation of both the third ray and the second ray).

The horizontal dimension constitutes a septenary differentiation of parallel lives, where each successive differentiation results in seven parallel lives (equated to the seven ray lives, respectively), and where each succession (of seven lives or logoi) is upon the next lower plane of consciousness. Upon the first level is the absolute (unitary) (monadic) being; upon the second level is the supreme (triple) being (triad); upon each of the five succeeding levels (supreme, universal, cosmic, solar, and planetary, respectively) are seven logoi for each precedent. Each logos is a conjunction (coincidence) of two ray lives (categorical and particular) (e.g., the third of seven solar logoi is a conjunction of third ray (particularly) and sixth ray (categorically) lives).

Each logos constitutes the life for its succedent and part (one-seventh) of the form of its precedent. Each logos is actually a psychic center (chakra), multi-dimensionally vibrant, while the apparent form is induced within matter (e.g., a planetary logos is a chakra within the field of solar consciousness, while the planetary body (form) is merely an artificial, inductive secondary thereto). Both the horizontal and vertical dimensions are central (persistent) aspects of manifestation, while the third dimension (pseudo-temporal) is not persistent as far as logoic and planar centrality is concerned.

The third dimension is periodicity, as cyclic lives are sent forth from logoic centers to live and grow by progressively (recursively) passing through various levels and evolutionary fields before returning abstractively to their source. Typically, from each logos pours forth seven lifewaves (successively) which constitute the non-central or transient aspect of manifestation (the centrality of a soul within some lifewave is another perspective altogether). Each lifewave is

qualified primarily by the ray of its succession (i.e., the first lifewave is (at its level) primarily (particularly) a first ray manifestation, secondarily according to the particular cycle of that lifewave (but also according to the ray of its logos, etc.)). In each of the three principal dimensions (seven levels, seven logoi, seven cycles), qualification is equivalent to life and manifestation; to be qualified by some one of the seven rays is to be (alive as) that ray.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 469</div>

The Solar Cycle

While the lunar cycle describes an approximately monthly process relating the Earth to the sun and the zodiac (the moon serving primarily to moderate the energy actually received from the sun), the solar cycle describes an annual process relating the Earth to the sun directly, without consideration for the place of the moon (except at the basic level). The solar cycle embraces several levels of significance, the most basic of which is the relationship of the physical (etheric) planet to its solar counterpart, the sun as a daily source of basic energy and qualification, resulting in the passage of the four seasons and the implications of that passage for (planetary) qualification and growth.

All lives within the planetary aura are affected or qualified to some extent at this basic level, particularly the nature forces involved in growth and seasonal processes. The basic (solar) forces are quite considerable and provide a basis for the various earth-centered (moon-centered) (sun-centered) religions. At this basic level, the passage of the moon and the (apparent) passage of the sun provide a dynamic, potent, and periodic correlation of basic (natural) forces, culminating in the various full moon periods and the four points of the solar cycle (two equinoxes and two solstices).

At the intermediate and subtle levels, the moon's position or role in the solar cycle is not significant. At the intermediate level, the four points of the solar cycle provide for a particularly potent (significant) alignment of the planet with its primary (the sun). Physically (etherically), the two equinoxes are those points of the solar cycle in which the planet is aligned with the solar plane (i.e., the plane of the solar system), while the two solstices are those points of the

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solar cycle in which the planet experiences the maximum (extreme) deviation (distance) from alignment with the solar plane. The period between a solstice and the subsequent equinox represents relative planetary motion toward (approaching) alignment with the solar plane; while the period between an equinox and the subsequent solstice represents relative planetary motion away from alignment with the solar plane.

The significance of the solar cycle (beyond the basic level) relates to the relative alignment and relationship of the planetary logos with the solar logos (and other planetary logoi) via the solar plane (which symbolizes the alignment of solar consciousness). Astrological implications of the solar cycle are not particularly significant (and do not correlate with the full moon cycle) (i.e., astrological implications correlate more directly with the lunar cycle). The solar cycle is relatively more significant (at the intermediate and subtle levels) than the lunar cycle, though the significance (potency) of the solar cycle is on a higher level and therefore much less practical than that of the lunar cycle (or that of the basic level of the solar cycle (which is potent and practical albeit not subtle or particularly spiritual)).

The keynote of the solar cycle at the basic level is (cyclic) growth (life). The keynote of the solar cycle at the intermediate level is balance (i.e., between logoi), while the keynote at the more subtle level is detachment (in all ways other than in solar alignment). The three levels of the solar cycle are coupled in a non-reinforcing manner, i.e., involvement in the solar cycle at one level precludes involvement at either or both of the other levels. This masking of levels is necessary to the relative potency and character of the associated solar processes. The masking of the basic level is particularly strong, while masking between the intermediate and subtle levels is not as significant or potent.

Solar Meditation

While proper (daily) (individual) (group) meditation and proper meditation at the twelve points of the lunar cycle involve a substantial (significant) flow of (spiritual) energy (for qualification and release), proper solar meditation (at the four points of the solar cycle) does not result in or involve any substantive energy flow. Of course at the basic level of the solar cycle, at the four points of the solar cycle, there is a considerable, practical energy flow (which is appropriate for physical (etheric) (earth-centered) applications), but at the intermediate and subtle levels there is only a subtle balance and rapport (i.e., an energy relationship of a very subtle nature).

At the basic level, solar meditation (at the four points of the solar cycle) involves participating in the dynamics of earth-centered energy (i.e., solar energy on etheric levels appropriated for earthly (natural) purposes). Solar meditation at the basic level is qualified hemi-spherically (since the seasons are reversed between the northern and southern hemispheres). Solar meditation at the basic level is not (strictly speaking) proper occult meditation, but it can involve occult forces and occult energies (primarily on etheric levels).

At the intermediate level (balance), a rapport exists between the planetary logos and the solar logos that is most pronounced at the two equinoxes (equilibrium alignment) and at the two solstices (a balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces, where the rapport of the two logoi draws the planet back into the solar plane). At the intermediate level, solar meditation (at the four points of the cycle) involves the participation of (esoteric group) consciousness in the logoic relationships. Such a meditation is effective only where the individual (group member) is wholly detached from the normal affairs of life (mundane and spiritual). Such a meditation should focus on the intermediate keynote (balance) and the logoic relationships (i.e., the various relationships in effect between the planetary and solar logoi, including the solar qualification of the planetary scheme (albeit without concern for its working out, since such concern would preclude the necessary detachment)).

At the subtle level, the individual (group member) is also effectively detached from all planetary considerations, being aligned principally with the consciousness of the solar logos. This involves a complete, albeit temporary release of all consideration. While proper solar meditation at the intermediate level results in the qualification of the group along planetary lines, proper solar meditation at the subtle level results in (a very subtle) qualification of the group along solar lines. There is only minimal structure for proper solar meditation (at the intermediate level and beyond), sufficient to insure (qualify) proper meditation.

The purpose of proper (spiritual) (group) (occult) solar meditation is to participate in the higher energies of group alignment (i.e., the subtle relationships of an esoteric group with the two logoi) (being careful not to appropriate any associated energies). No exoteric (astrological) (mundane) (personality) considerations are appropriate at the intermediate level or beyond, nor is any alignment with humanity or hierarchy appropriate at the subtle level. Alignment with humanity and hierarchy is the principal focus of the lunar (full moon) meditations, not the solar. Depending on the affiliations (charter) (character) of an esoteric group, the solar cycle may preempt the lunar cycle as far as the group's meditation activities are concerned (i.e., where a solar point and a lunar point coincide, some groups will proceed with full moon meditation, while other groups will proceed with solar meditation).

† Commentary No. 471

Visualization 1

Visualization is defined as the act of visualizing, of seeing or forming a visual mental image. The ability to visualize at will and effectively is an important prerequisite for serious occult (spiritual) work (with emphasis on being able to form visual mental images of considerable definition, character, and duration (sustenance) and consistency (stability)).

The potency of visualization is derived from the power of creative imagination, the evocation of energy in accordance with that which is visualized and to the extent that the person visualizing can properly wield such energy. The principle

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of energy following thought (and feeling) is particularly true for creative visualization. In effect, every act of visualization evokes energy directed toward that which is visualized. The energy flow may be considerable or nominal, of high (pure) quality and qualification or otherwise (coarse), well-defined and sustained (effective) or poorly defined and intermittent (relatively ineffective), depending on the character (quality), ability (training), and intention (motive) of the one who so visualizes.

There are two basic purposes of visualization (in addition to the exercise for training (discipline)); one is simply to send or transfer energy (of a particular form) (for some purpose), the other (essentially equivalent) is to bring about some creative change (i.e., visualizing something or some condition that does not exist in practical reality, with the intention of bringing it about). In the first case, one is working with a current condition and sending forth qualified energy to encourage some change or qualification; in the other case, one is working with the end product of that process (of creative change). The two approaches are essentially equivalent, with the latter being more dramatic and requiring more energy (and relatively, more talent or ability to bring about). Normally one would start by visualizing the current condition, gradually and carefully changing that visualization (creatively) until the product or result is fully and properly achieved and realized.

There are of course dangers inherent in these processes. Visualization can be used for good or evil, depending on motive (conscious or otherwise). Visualization can evoke energy, forces, changes, etc., whether or not the process is conscious and deliberate or unconscious and casual (careless). Visualization can constitute imposition, unless it is properly and carefully qualified to preclude imposition. Visualization can be quite potent and potentially unmanageable (destructive) where the emotions are involved (particularly in group formation at the personality level (i.e., without spiritual qualification)). A forceful and unqualified visualization that is inconsistent with karmic constraints can be disastrous for the one so visualizing (i.e., in sending forth improperly qualified or improperly motivated energy, there is likely to be a considerable reactive consequence, as the energy returns to the one who sends it forth).

The training and discipline for visualization in the context of an occult school (esoteric group) emphasizes the ethics of visualization, the responsibilities implied, and the potential consequences. The training proceeds only where the students are sufficiently qualified (i.e., where the students are refined and qualified and where the conscience and motivation are spiritually consistent). The preliminary training can be achieved without the occult group context, and therefore almost anyone can utilize the visualization process for good or ill, but the spiritual student (with considerably enhanced potency) must be particularly careful and considerate in his or her creative endeavors.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 472</div>

Manifested Life 1

From the human (occult) perspective, looking out upon the broad scheme of universal manifestation, there naturally appear to be four major categories of interrelated, manifested life. These four are planar lives, ray lives, logoic lives, and lifewaves (or lives within lifewaves). In addition to these four categories, there are composite lives within each category, effectively constituting aggregate lives or lifewaves.

Planar lives provide the basic (septenary) vertical structure or planes of consciousness, relating life with form (through consciousness). Planar lives are highly compositional, as each (plane) (sub-plane) provides matter (form) and consciousness for appropriation by central (logoic) lives. Devas (deva lives) are much more closely related to the planar lives and planar consciousness than are human lives. Planar lives are dynamic albeit on a much longer timescale than that of the composite planars or manifested logoic lives. Planar lives essentially constitute a dimension of manifestation, one of vertical structure, available materials, and subtle qualifications.

In the purest sense, ray lives are beyond the ken of human consciousness, being most subtle. Yet the ray lives qualify all that is (planar, logoic, etc.) and are therefore present in all of manifestation by means of multiple correlations. In a sense, all lives are manifestations of ray lives, being qualified by the various rays in numerous ways and varying significance. Ray lives are eminently visible

only in the sense of effected qualification and influence, not in the sense of distinctive lives or energy sources (even the ray energy sources are intermediate and therefore merely apparent). The paradox of being so near and everywhere, and yet nowhere in the purest sense (absolute distinction) is easily resolved in the inclusion principle (distinctions are convenient to an understanding of the scheme of manifestation, yet somewhat misleading, since all lives and all activities are included within a greater framework (centrality), and since greater (relative) reality is necessarily more inclusive) (or in other words, viewing manifestation as an integrated whole is more real and more significant (substantive) than viewing life (manifestation) in its differentiated form). Ray lives are nonetheless real, and in the highest practicable perspective along ray lines, all of manifestation is an internal phenomenon, the interrelated experience of seven constitutional (ray) lives. In this perspective, all other lives are secondary (derived) to (from) the seven ray lives.

Logoic lives are the more positive indications of manifestation, being (apparently) much more progressive and evolutionary than ray lives or planar lives, yet drawing necessarily on both (being qualified by the various ray lives and living through the various planar lives (albeit in a more local sense)). Logoic lives are relatively localized and central (intensive) (dynamic). Logoic lives are differentiated in the vertical and horizontal sense, where each greater logos typically differentiates (reflects) itself into (through) seven lesser (constituent) (subordinate) logoi, the succedents being (each) central on their level, being parallel one with each other (i.e., all seven being more or less on the same level, albeit in different degrees of qualification).

Each logos (on whatever level centralized) is in effect a chakra, a correlation of ray and planar lives, enabling energy to pass from one level to another. Each logos typically lives through seven principal (subordinate) (coordinated) chakras (logoi), and/or (if the logos is terminal rather than intermediate) through seven successive lifewaves.

Activity and Change 1

Given the immediate purpose of life (which is the evolution of group and individual consciousness), then the purpose of activity is the affordance of experience, and the purpose of experience is the affordance of assimilation (of that experience) leading to change (growth) (development) (deepening) (expansion) (refinement) (in consciousness). Consequently, much of the evolutionary qualification of external conditions and consciousness is concerned with the stimulation of consciousness and the coincident opportunities for positive (progressive) change.

Proper change comes about through and as a consequence of changes in consciousness, and those changes in consciousness can only come about from within; they cannot be externally imposed or induced (except in the catalytic sense of responsiveness). Progress is never the result or consequence of outer (external) activity; it is always the result or consequence of inner (internal) activity (i.e., changes in consciousness). The cause and effect relationships of consciousness dominate throughout the experiential and evolutionary fields. In the experiential field, activity does not determine (or cause) change; change (ever) determines activity (i.e., the factors of consciousness (quality, character, temperament) and change in consciousness determine (cause) activity or apparent (conditional) changes). Activity (external) is not (particularly) important or significant; change (in consciousness) is. Activity is merely an affordance.

People respond to evolutionary pressure (experiential affordance) in various ways. Most assimilate experience gradually and between lives, being generally inertial and resistant to change, the more so while involved in the sleep of incarnation. Some, being more responsive to that evolutionary pressure, consciously or otherwise seek to change or develop themselves. Others, being responsive or reactive to that evolutionary pressure, seek to change others (humanity) or the (outer, external) conditions of humanity. But the outer conditions (other people) cannot be changed (significantly); those conditions (people) can only change as an inevitable consequence of changes in

consciousness. Besides, the outer conditions are simply not important compared to consciousness.

The timescale for significant (effective) change tends to be much, much longer than most people want to believe. The outer conditions may change superficially quickly, but not substantively quickly. The outer conditions are necessary and always in accordance with the generalized consciousness. Those who would force upon the world (or others) their means and notions, however noble, will not and cannot in such activity cause any changes in consciousness or bring about any effective changes in (outer or inner) conditions. It is only when (as) the changes in consciousness have (are) taken (taking) place that any such activity will appear to bear fruit, but that is all it really is (the appearance and consequence), not the cause. It is necessarily futile and foolish (for the spiritual student) to try to change things without regard for the cause and effect relationships and the necessary and prerequisite changes in consciousness.

Such activity (attempted change (imposition) without proper regard for consciousness) can only serve to vary the experiential field (albeit not significantly so). There is, however, a domain of proper activity in consideration of consciousness that does contribute substantively albeit indirectly to (significant) (effective) change.

<div style="text-align:right">✝ Commentary No. 474</div>

Activity and Change 2

The domain of proper activity in consideration of consciousness includes cultivation (development) (refinement) leading to self-mastery, service to humanity (or the planetary scheme) through being, and service to humanity (or the planetary scheme) through creative (occult) (unimposing) endeavors.

Changing oneself is relatively simple and straightforward; one needs only to be determined and sensible, for man (as a creative being) is self-responsible and able to influence his internal and external conditions (while remaining karmically consistent).

The activity of being (substantive incidental service) is also relatively simple and straightforward; having achieved some measure of consciousness (character, quality, temperament, etc.) one needs only to live in accordance with that character and consciousness, consistent with spiritual (ethical) principles and practice. Being present within a lifewave (e.g., humanity), the individual (spiritual student) (group member) is an inductive force (for good or ill) depending on that character and consciousness. Thus the spiritual student is tasked with continued development and refinement (toward self-mastery) and with continual (if not yet continuous) service through being.

The proper activity of occult endeavor can be generalized or very specific, performed as a responsive individual (i.e., an individual without a formal group relation but who is nonetheless responsive to the consciousness of the evolutionary plan), or performed as part of a coordinated (concerted) (integrated) group endeavor. In the general sense, proper occult activity involves observation, understanding, and creative evocation of appropriate energies. In the general sense, the spiritual student is encouraged to observe the world conditions (without becoming personally involved or entangled (as that precludes occult effectiveness (i.e., compromises the ability to contribute in consciousness))), to seek to understand the cause and effect relations in consciousness leading to those conditions (in consciousness), perceiving the inherent momentum toward improved conditions (in consciousness), then to visualize (or otherwise creatively stimulate) the gradual enlightenment from within humanity that shall bring about the needed changes (without being deceived or distracted by apparent needs) (e.g., hungry destitution is not a problem; the condition in consciousness that brings about hungry destitution is the problem; the solution is not to artificially or arbitrarily eliminate hunger and destitution, but to evoke (induce) the changes in consciousness that afford the assimilation of experience and result in progressive change (in consciousness)).

Occult work is particularly effective where the concerted (group or individual) effort is in harmony with the evolutionary plan and working from within humanity (inductively) (in consciousness) rather than working upon from without. All esoteric groups working within the human lifewave (and within the planetary scheme) are tasked with (realize and embrace) some general or particular creative endeavor(s) (service) in context, according to their respective talents and charters (and according to the needs of the evolutionary plan). No

esoteric group or (proper) occult work is concerned directly with changing the external conditions as an end in itself. All deal in one manner or another with consciousness and the conditions in consciousness. All are active in one manner or another, yet none are externally active. Those exoteric groups which are externally active may or may not be working in response to the (true) needs (in consciousness) of humanity.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 475</div>

Visualization 2

Visualization is actually the second of three (practical) (first order) creative techniques. The first (third) is affirmation, while the third (first) is correlation (association) (abstract relationship). For each of the first two there is a higher (second order) correspondence, but neither is practical.

The purposes for which these (practical) (occult) creative techniques can (should) be applied are similar if not essentially equivalent, with each technique (affirmation, visualization, correlation) being successively more potent and more subtle in method and application (the second order techniques being even more so).

Four (progressive) applications are easily amenable to first order techniques. The first is self-qualification, for purposes of health, stability, refinement, integration, alignment, etc. (i.e., self-discipline and occult integrity). Although self-qualification is somewhat self-centered, the motivation of the spiritual (occult) student should be spiritual (occult) effectiveness, which should not be self-centered. Visualization (reinforced by affirmation) is a rather potent means of self-qualification, as the physical form, etheric double, astral nature, and mental nature are all visualized as being stabilized (purified) (energized) with light (love) (life) energies.

The second application is an extension (externalization) (projection) of the first, that is object qualification (vitalization). One can visualize and thereby qualify any external object (living or otherwise) to the extent to which a rapport can be achieved and/or to the extent to which the student's occult training and abilities permit. The purpose of such visualization (object qualification) should be quite

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clear and within the scope of the individual's responsibility and/or group charter, or else karmic complication will naturally and inevitably result. Thus the ethics and intentions should be carefully considered before these techniques should be utilized. A sense of helpfulness and sincerity are necessary but insufficient to warrant object qualification, for such must also preclude imposition (unless clearly warranted by charter and specific application). The sanctions for (unwarranted) imposition are quite considerable, particularly in the case of imposing upon another's aura. Consequently, the student should perform object qualification (at the human level) only in the general sense of making energy available (depending on the object individual to be responsive) and thereby precluding imposition. The qualification of subhuman lives (objects) is less prohibitive, but the motives and intentions should be nonetheless carefully considered, and serve some constructive and appropriate purpose.

The third application is simply a focusing on the energy flow resulting in some qualification or accumulation, rather than focusing on the qualified object or destination per se. In this case, the occult student visualizes the flow of energy from some (specific) (general) (intermediate) source to some (specific) (general) (intermediate) destination, emphasizing the quality of the energy utilized and the stability and structure of the energy flow and channel. In effect, through visualization, one can create and sustain an energy flow for practically any (constructive) purpose, with maintenance being only a recurring activity (vice continuous). Much of the occult work assigned to the various (proper) (esoteric) (spiritual) (occult) groups is concerned with creating and sustaining energy patterns in accordance with the (overall) evolutionary plan (service to humanity and other lifewaves, consistent with the evolutionary plan and karmic considerations).

Manifested Life 2

Lifewaves and logoic lives are necessarily closely coupled (interrelated), with each logos having the potential for inducing (creating) (projecting) lifewaves within its sphere or domain of manifestation (ring-pass-not), and each lifewave being composed of (potentially) numerous (differentiated) lives, each with the potential to evolve into an atomic sphere (logos) in its own right.

Each logos is a positive center of force (vitalization) (intensity) (chakra), an atomic sphere of some central significance. Depending on the nature of the logos and its relationship to some more primary center (source), a logos may manifest itself through seven planar lives, through seven (derivative) ray lives, through seven subordinate (parallel or successive) logoi (e.g., a solar logos through seven planetary logoi), and/or through seven (parallel or successive) lifewaves (e.g., a planetary logos and seven streams of manifested life). In each case (form of manifestation) (logoi, planar lives, ray lives, lifewaves), there are correlations with the other forms of manifestation (as well as their parallels, precedents, and succedents), as all are necessarily mutually dependent.

Planar lives and ray lives represent the female principle in manifestation, providing the field of manifestation for the various logoi and lifewaves (which represent the male or active principle in manifestation). The deva or angelic (female) lifewaves are actually differentiated within and closely related to the planar lives, even within some logoic correlation (qualification), while the various "human" (male) lifewaves are differentiated within the respective logos proper, even within some planar correlation (qualification). Some energy of course passes between the various elements (forms) of manifestation, binding each to every other and permitting correlation (communication) and vitalization. Although it is instructive and useful to perceive these various distinctions, there is always a higher, more inclusive perspective for which distinctions are not obvious.

Each of the ray lives is a creative force, qualifying all within the field of manifestation according to the various progressive patterns, cycles, and correlations. In addition to the creative ray lives, there are yet a number of

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additional creative lives, called creative hierarchies. While the ray lives are generally viewed internally (i.e., as creative qualifications within some scheme of local manifestation), the creative hierarchies are generally viewed externally (i.e., internal to some great scheme of manifestation but external to some scheme of local manifestation). The creative hierarchies provide needed qualification (energies) which evoke (cultivate) various (particular and general) talents and abilities within the various lives and lifewaves according to the scheme and intentions (plan) of the overshadowing life (logos). The creative hierarchies are manifested lives in their own right, yet contribute far beyond the domain of their own manifestation. Similarly, the system of logoic lives within a given logoic manifestation may constitute a creative hierarchy relative to some other (apparently far removed) system.

Each of the various forms of manifestation vitalizes a (potentially) considerable number of composite lives, for each form is composed of composite lives, and each life lives through various composite forms. Thus even the distinction between life and form is merely a practical one, and passes in light of inclusion. The distinctions between primary and secondary, superior and inferior, precedent and succedent, timely and timeless, all pass as well, for all of manifestation is one life (albeit merely reflective).

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 477</div>

Activity and Service

Though it may appear easy enough to distinguish the three aspects of proper activity (development, being, and occult work), they are in fact one and the same, and essentially inseparable, for one cannot develop without being and without creative (inductive) endeavor, one cannot be a spiritual student (proper) without progress and service, and one (similarly) cannot be involved in occult work without progress and being. The important thing in this context is to live in accordance with the obligations (harmony) of the path, without independently willful activity.

For the spiritual student, all of the student's activity becomes (gradually) (increasingly) more in accordance with dharma, and (increasingly) more

qualified by service. This implies, necessarily, progressively lesser qualification by the personality and progressively greater qualification by the soul. This also means that as the student progresses, the character and nature of the student's service activities change gradually and progressively as well, becoming more impersonal, more subtle, more in accordance with the path (dharma).

Initially, the student (aspirant) responds to the energy (qualification) of the path (typically) unconsciously and in a relatively pragmatic manner, being helpful in the world of outer activity, serving humanity (or some other element of planetary life) in some way, consistent with consciousness and understanding, but nonetheless externally and objectively focused. This activity is potentially worthwhile, particularly to the extent that it is not distorted by glamour or illusion, and not for the sake of apparent accomplishment (effects), but for the sake of positive (constructive) energy expression, encouragement, induction, etc. But the student must (eventually) realize that any service activity is itself an effect and cannot in itself accomplish any goal or objective. The goal or objective can only be accomplished where it is warranted in karma, in which case all of the necessary ingredients will be present to effect the needed result. Otherwise all effort is futile. But effort that is consistent with karma, or at least responsive to karmic considerations, will be more likely effective (and therefore a more worthy effort).

Of course it is not for the student to judge karmic matters, but it is for the student to cultivate an intuitive (non-judgmental) sense of appropriateness. As the individual awareness and understanding grows, so likely shall the sense of appropriateness grow and become a meaningful guide to activity. Then the work (service) of the spiritual student becomes more appropriately qualified. There is then less involvement in outer activities (although the student may remain a constructive and inductive presence) and more involvement in and focusing on constructive meditation work (service) and intermediate activities that are not imposing but merely encouraging.

The more significant aspect of the activity and service transformation is that service to humanity is gradually transformed into service to God (and therefore the spiritual path (which is the relationship of the spiritual student to God)). Serving humanity is most effective when it is performed incidentally, in the context of the spiritual path, and not as an end in itself. The reason for this is

absorption. Serving humanity (as an end in itself) involves the personality primarily as a personality, and not merely as an instrument of the soul, whereas service to the path (potentially) involves far less absorption, and therefore greater spiritual potency (albeit subtle). Service in the context of the path deals primarily with causes and relationships and is therefore a much more effective means of evolutionary encouragement.

✝ Commentary No. 478

Planetary Stress

For all practical purposes the planetary scheme is the (immediate) field of evolution for all lives within the planetary (logoic) aura or consciousness. Thus it is largely the planetary scheme that is substantially qualified for evolutionary purpose. Planetary stress plays a major role in planetary evolution (and consequently in the evolution of all lives within the planetary scheme), directly as a result of evolutionary qualification, and indirectly as a consequence of evolutionary activity.

Earth changes (e.g., volcanoes, earthquakes, glaciers, etc.) are relatively minor phenomena (in the context of the evolution of consciousness), primarily due to their physical nature and their limited scope (temporally or spatially). Earth changes are natural and do release some of the planetary stress, but do not have as great an impact on human consciousness as do events on emotional or mental levels. Earth changes evoke subtle and gradual environmental adjustments in accordance with the evolutionary plan and the need for various conditions (even the substantial earth (planetary body) is teeming with life and must remain a dynamic, vital organism in order to be effective). Earth changes involving adjustments in atmospheric conditions do have a potentially significant impact on most involutionary and some evolutionary lives.

Planetary stress is defined as constraining force(s) that results in increased evolutionary pressure and/or an adjustment in the balance of forces resulting in some changed conditions(s) and/or release of accumulated pressure(s). The changes or conditions of or relating to planetary stress are all evolutionary and karmic in nature. Most (earth changes) are primarily evolutionary in some broad context, the karmic consequences being incidental. Others (war,

pestilence, etc.) are more largely karmic adjustments which also result in a balance of forces.

Human consciousness is a relatively potent force within the planetary scheme, and therefore, as human consciousness proceeds with its experience and activities it naturally interacts with the balance of planetary forces. When human force (pressure of consciousness) is persistent, then an adjustment in the balance of forces is evoked. War, disease, fertility changes, etc. are examples of natural consequences of human force in relation to evolutionary momentum. In accordance with karmic law, every significant human experience or activity (on some significant scale) evokes whatever changes are appropriate to relieve the planetary stress and bring about the needed lessons in consciousness. Thus pain and suffering, war and disease, etc. are natural consequences of human endeavor. Where however the human consciousness is alive and awake (aware of cause and effect relationships) and responsive to evolutionary encouragement (i.e., working constructively and learning and progressing naturally), then there is less likely to be any pain or suffering.

There will continue to be planetary stress and individual stress, for stress (pressure) is an evolutionary qualification and a necessary part of growth and progress. The problem then becomes learning to live with some (appropriate) measure of stress, allowing the stress to be an encouragement in consciousness without being compelling or disruptive. One who ignores stress ignores too the opportunities implied (learning). One who resists stress is one who is eventually overwhelmed by it. But one who faces stress intelligently, making the needed adjustments, will find considerable encouragement (and the stress manifestation will become increasingly more subtle (as the student becomes increasingly more able to realize a balance on more subtle levels)).

Visualization 3

The fourth application is an extension (expansion) of the third, that is the creation and/or maintenance of complex energy networks. Greater and lesser networks exist both within and without the planetary scheme, involving most esoteric groups in one way or another (i.e., in a coordinated manner). Some energy networks exist for channeling various energies purposively and appropriately. Other energy networks exist (and can be created) for reasons of containment (protection). A wall (web) of (qualified) light (energy) can easily be created (visualized) and sustained as an object in itself using much the same techniques as in object qualification. But in each and every case, the spiritual student should proceed carefully and with consideration.

Effective visualization (with proper results) depends much upon consideration of the various laws and qualifications in effect for the planetary scheme and upon the degree to which the visualization is specific. Where the motivation, objective, and methods of creative visualization are consistent with higher qualification, then the effort will be more effective; where they are inconsistent with higher qualification, the results are likely to be ineffective or counterproductive. Such (ineffective) results are also likely wherever the visualization is highly specific or detailed. A more general visualization (qualification) is simply more likely to be in accordance with natural law (and actually utilize the energy of natural law), allowing for synergistic effects and automatically taking into consideration unanticipated factors.

A creative logos visualizes in a relatively simple (general) manner, qualifying the visualization with overall objectives. The results of such (primary) visualization are the natural (evolutionary) laws of manifestation (including karma). Those laws in turn induce secondary and tertiary effects, each being successively causative and simultaneously (coincidentally) consistent with the overall (natural) (logoic) scheme. Each evolutionary unit (soul) within that qualified scheme is subject to those natural laws, and where that soul becomes itself a creative force, then those creative efforts must necessarily be within the overall creative web. Wherever creative efforts are consciously within that

overall scheme, then the effort is much more likely to be effective and potently so (every such effort being in a sense an effect of that higher qualification).

Thus in order to be truly effective in creative visualization, the spiritual (occult) (esoteric) student must (1) be properly motivated and responsive to the qualification of the soul, (2) carefully consider the intended objective and methods in the context of natural law and ensure that the effort is consistent with that higher qualification, (3) visualize generally, establishing (primarily) the qualifying conditions of the intended results (allowing those qualifying conditions to evoke the necessary particulars), and (4) provide sufficient energy and momentum, being consistent and stable throughout the visualization (particularly if recursive).

One of the responsibilities of the student (upon the path) is the study of natural law (the scheme of evolution) both in practice (through observation) and principle (through contemplation), to improve the student's ability to understand the various cause and effect relationships and the logoic intentions (to the extent that they can be perceived), being as correlative and as inclusive as possible, that the student should gradually and eventually be able to perceive the natural flow of energy in its various and many forms and paths, and so be able to live and work constructively and harmoniously.

✝ Commentary No. 480

Affirmation and Visualization

All of the manifested worlds and their various aspects are created, sustained, and progressed by some means of affirmation and/or visualization, at some level (order) or another. The manifested trinity are the three parts of the (triple) sacred word, sounded at some level beyond the ken of manifested life (and knowable only by effects and perceived relationships (harmonies)). The seven ray lives are seven syllables of another (septenary) dimension of the sacred word. Similarly the seven planes (and successive sub-planes) are the result of yet another dimension of the sacred word.

The distinction between affirmation (the sounding (physically or mentally) of some word or formula) and visualization (the focusing of the mind's eye) is much less apparent on abstract (creative) levels, for the methods and means merge and become more subtle, more a matter of association and correlation, of utilizing the various chakras (on the various levels) for particular purposes. Any of the ray centers (chakras) can be utilized creatively, albeit the rules, methods, relationships, and consequences vary from chakra to chakra.

The emergence and activities of seven planetary logoi are in a sense simply a sounding forth or visualization by the respective solar logos. Similarly a planetary scheme is a (relatively complex) pattern affirmed or visualized within the consciousness of a planetary logos. The emergence of the various lifewaves (and composites) is likewise within that affirmation (visualization). The various elements and aspects (lives) (forms) are sustained only to the extent that the creative pattern is held in consciousness. When the energy flow of an affirmation or visualization is diverted or withdrawn, then all that emerged in response simply (naturally) disintegrates. Such is the basis of reality, that the effects (forms) (lives) are transient, while the precursory lives (monads) are relatively less so (being relatively more real).

Other examples of affirmed (visualized) existence are the planetary (etheric) web (and associated networks on more subtle levels), the solar ring-pass-not, and the detailed structure of evolutionary lifewaves. The planetary network of light (love) (life) is created by the planetary logos and sustained by logoic momentum through the auspices of higher lives within that logoic consciousness (i.e., hierarchical forces) who cooperate consciously and intelligently in concordance with the planetary scheme. The solar ring-pass-not is simply the outer limit of solar consciousness, sustained as such by the focus of logoic consciousness (were the focus withdrawn, the ring-pass-not would fail to contain that which lives within, and all would diffuse (outwardly) and cease to be coherent). The detailed structure of the various evolutionary lifewaves and kingdoms (and their relationships) is sustained similarly, by logoic and hierarchical consciousness in response to higher qualification (law).

Those who serve God (the solar logos) (the cosmic Christ) (the spiritual path) do so by working within the qualified framework of the path, living in harmony with the dharma of the path, being responsive to that (higher) qualification. In

practical terms, this means contributing in some way to sustaining and progressing the evolutionary qualification of the entire planetary scheme (in accordance with chartered guidance) (and karma). The esoteric (occult) work largely involves esoteric endeavors (affirmation and/or visualization) in group formation (or at least so chartered), in dynamic equilibrium with the consciousness of the lifewave (humanity). The effectiveness of the work (service) is directly attributable to the responsiveness of the overall (human) (lower planetary) consciousness.

✝ Commentary No. 481

Recklessness

Recklessness is defined as being marked by a lack of caution or proper consideration. Recklessness is an egoic indulgence, centered in the strength of the personality (ego), and related entirely to the lower (animal) (independent) nature. The degree to which recklessness is dangerous depends upon the consciousness of the individual, the place of the individual upon the path, and the vulnerability matrix of the individual.

For those who are not upon the path, recklessness is a simple matter of increased vulnerability. The consequences may vary considerably in magnitude and timing, depending on the individual karmic equation. But for those who are upon or approaching the path, recklessness is not such a simple matter, for as one progresses upon (along) the path, the karmic consequences are (generally) intensified and quickened, and the place (potency) (influence) of the ego is a major consideration. For a professed (or self-presumed) spiritual student to be reckless indicates that such a person is not firmly established upon the path, that such a person is unduly influenced by the lower nature (ego), and that such a person cannot properly be trusted (or that any trust must be clearly defined and appropriate in consideration of the relative strength of the ego).

One who is reckless is one who is both imprudent and impudent (insolent) (to some extent, subtly or otherwise). In the context of the path, these are separative (or at least inertial and preventative) characteristics, for proper caution and consideration (prudence) invites spiritual poise and the responsiveness of the personality to the soul, while imprudence and impudence

undermine the process of self-mastery (egoic conquest) and spiritual responsiveness (rapport with the higher self (soul)). Recklessness (rashness) (boldness) (casual or otherwise) may be part of a vicious cycle in which (apparently successful) recklessness sustains and encourages the ego and its hold on the personality, and in which that egoic strength then encourages continued recklessness. The physical (or psychic) peril is one matter (serious enough), but the preclusive nature of such a (reckless) personality (ego) in the context of the path is of even greater significance.

Wherever (and to whatever extent) a person is absorbed by (in) the personality, deceived by the ego, etc., it is most difficult to progress spiritually (i.e., to break the fetters of such absorption or deception). Furthermore, those who are (merely apparently) successfully (safely) reckless are drawing heavily on the strength of the ego for energy (force) to avert (near-term) peril. In other words, recklessness (insolence) (arrogance) invites peril which can only be averted (or transformed into something more subtle and therefore more perilous) by the force of the ego (or relatively immediate responsiveness to the implied learning opportunity). The appropriation of egoic (personality) energy for these purposes (aversion) (albeit unconsciously so) reduces the overall effectiveness of the individual in the context of the path (and any associated group). As one progresses upon (or toward) the path the consequences of (even mild) recklessness become potentially more severe, in the sense of direct peril or through (subtle) deception and absorption.

The composure (poise) (overall qualification) of the spiritual student is important to progress and effectiveness. Imprudence (recklessness) and all that that implies must be transformed into prudence, a proper sense of caution and consideration (without fear or worry). The lack of self-restraint must be transformed into self-mastery, coarseness into refined qualification, personality absorption into true freedom (from ego), and folly into wisdom.

Suicide

Suicide is defined as the act or instance of taking one's own life, voluntarily and intentionally. In the esoteric philosophy, suicide is considered one of the major crimes, although there may be some (rare) circumstances where it is warranted. It is considered a crime because the ego (personality) does not have the right to kill or injure any of the personality vehicles (physical body, etheric double, astral body, mind), since those vehicles belong not to the ego (personality) but to the soul.

The soul does not countenance suicide (or any other impositional activity) (not that the soul has much awareness of personality activities). It is the soul's prerogative to terminate its incarnation (without such compelling karma), although quite rarely does the soul exercise that prerogative (when it does, the body simply dies or falls into a coma (as the soul withdraws)) (this is not to say that any death or coma is necessarily the result of some such withdrawal; in fact, almost every instance is strictly a karmic matter (a karmic consequence)). It is not the prerogative of the ego (personality) to impede or imperil the soul's incarnation in any manner, yet the ego does in many cases have the power to do so. Thus, suicide is considered a misuse of egoic power and a tragedy in the sense that it is not warranted by karma (although the conditions faced and capabilities available to the ego in any situation (including consideration of suicide) are determined nonetheless by karma).

Death resulting from a suicide attempt is much like any other death, except that the victim is bound to the lower worlds (principally the astral plane) for the duration of what would have been that person's natural life. The suicide is not permitted any relief or further transition until warranted by the soul's intention. Consequently, whatever distress prompted the personality's decision likely continues unabated (or with even greater vigour since the physical body is no longer present to dull the sense impressions). Much like an alcoholic who dies without facing up to his problem, the suicide tends to linger on coarse (lower astral) levels, reliving whatever desires or distress he (she) sought to avoid in the first place. The suicide also tends to linger about those to whom he (she)

was or felt close to during his (her) (aborted) incarnation, particularly where those people are responsive to his (her) coarse energy.

For a spiritual student to commit suicide without sanction is an unconscionable act that seriously undermines that person's relationship to and progress upon the path. For others it is less unconscionable but nonetheless grave and not without considerable impact. As ever, the consequences are more serious for those who (should) know better. The role of the spiritual student in the face of another person's suicide is simply to offer (gentle) light (love) energy, and the encouragement for understanding. There can be no intervention in the suicide's fate, but one can encourage the fallen one to face up to the circumstances (consequences). Needless to say, one should not approach a suicide on coarse levels nor permit any such person to affect one's own lower nature (only the physically and emotionally polarized are vulnerable).

By definition, suicide per se is voluntary and intentional. One who kills himself while under the influence of drugs or while vulnerable to (coarse) external forces is nonetheless responsible for his own fate, but it is not considered suicide in the same sense as one not so influenced. Sad though any (apparent) tragedy may be, in each case (proper suicide or otherwise) all of the pertinent factors are incorporated in the near-term and/or long-term karma, so that whatever lessons are needed are eventually learned, without avoidance.

† Commentary No. 483

Bodily Ills 1

In the practical, spiritual context, the spiritual student is expected to refine the personality vehicles (physical body, etheric double, astral body (emotions), and mind), achieve proper personality integration, and (eventually) achieve a proper alignment of the refined and integrated personality with the soul and with the soul's group. Anything non-essential that impedes that process (of refinement, integration, and alignment) is methodically (properly) eliminated, including anything that contributes to bodily ills, emotional distractions, and/or mental attachments (opinions).

It is essential that the spiritual student properly understands and appreciates the relationship of the soul to the personality and the relationship of the mind to the body and the emotions (aura), so that with that understanding and appreciation the student can achieve his practical objectives (refinement, integration, and alignment). The soul relates only indirectly to the personality unless the personality is properly refined, integrated, and aligned with the soul; in which case the soul is then able to directly qualify the mind and the entire personality (it still takes no interest in the particulars of personality life (experience) (expression); it simply increases the energy flow and spiritual qualification). Before the soul can properly (directly) qualify the personality, the entire personality must be properly refined and the mind must properly integrate the entire personality (and sustain that proper (refined) integration). Alignment is not possible without proper integration, and integration is not possible without some degree of refinement (clarity) (purity).

There are many (ignorantly) self-imposed (self-sustaining) personality fetters (limitations) available to the human being; where present, they (any or all of them) can considerably impede refinement and integration, effectively precluding any (real) spiritual poise (rapport) (effective higher consciousness). Many of these fetters are simple matters of bodily ills (indulgences); others are more complicated (emotional or mental distractions and attachments); still others are rather subtle self-deceptions that are most difficult to recognize and deal with. Cursorily, the simple bodily ills include being underweight or overweight, taking drugs (unnecessarily and without medical compulsion) (including alcohol in any form), smoking, eating flesh foods (meat, fish, fowl), and suffering any disease or injury (physically, emotionally, and/or mentally).

The direct effects of any of these simple bodily ills are relatively easy to discern, appreciate, and overcome (yet most simple ills or effects have more subtle causes that must be dealt with eventually and effectively in order to ensure success). Being (significantly) underweight weakens the physical body and its etheric double, forcing the personality to draw directly on external (subtle) energy sources in order to achieve any balance (stability); although the result may be stable, it is not a healthy energy balance and the (subtle) energy drain effectively prevents or impedes utilization of energy for purposes of qualification (refinement) and integration.

Being overweight has a rather different effect on the body; it dulls the senses and makes it more difficult (if not impossible) for the mind to bring the body and the senses to the proper integrated state. The overweight body is as much a burden on consciousness as the underweight body, although the dynamics are somewhat different. The overweight body tends to strengthen the resistance (inertia) of personality to higher impression.

✝ Commentary No. 484

Bodily Ills 2

Alcohol (and drugs in general) imbibed or injected into the body induces an adversarial condition; the introduction of the foreign substance (alcohol) (drug) causes a natural resistive focusing of bodily forces which may through habit (conditioning) or sheer magnitude be overwhelmed by the foreign substance (a large concentration of a natural substance has the same impact as that of a foreign substance) (any unnatural concentration of chemicals or organic materials can have devastating effects on the natural bodily balance).

The direct effect of alcohol (and many but not all other drugs) is to loosen or sever some of the connections between the lower vehicles (i.e., between the physical body, the etheric double, the astral body, and the mind), making self-control (integration) impossible for as long as the alcohol (or drug) is present and making subsequent (proper) integration extremely difficult due to the (lingering) conditioning effects of alcohol (i.e., alcohol (and other drugs) negatively (destructively) (unnaturally) conditions the physical body and its links to the other vehicles). A considerable period (sometimes years) of abstinence is generally required to overcome the conditioning effects and permit proper integration to be achieved.

All drugs (including alcohol) are an unnatural burden for the physical body and personality consciousness, effectively impeding or precluding effective integration and higher qualification. Drugs simply make the body (and personality) unresponsive to (proper) higher impression (soul contact) (higher qualification). Drugs in moderate dosages may sometimes be medically necessary (or expedient), but the price (burden) for usage (the energy required to achieve balance) must be paid nonetheless. So the spiritual student abstains

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from any alcoholic consumption and utilizes drugs only where medically prescribed and necessary.

In loosening the natural (constructive) bonds of the lower vehicles, many drugs open the victim to (uncontrolled) astral impression, giving the delusion of meaningful "spiritual" contacts and making the individual particularly vulnerable to astral forces. There are no short cuts to evolutionary development (the "work" of the path); as the student achieves proper refinement and integration (self-mastery), the subtle bonds and limitations of the personality are gradually overcome, providing considerable freedom and sensitivity, but within the context and bounds of the path, naturally, and without recourse to unnatural methods and their concomitant vulnerabilities.

Smoking involves the inhalation or ingestion of drugs (and their consequential effects), but smoking also has a devastating effect on the quality of the aura. Aside from the drug content, smoke is a suspension of particulate matter in a gaseous medium (air). The particulate matter is coarse (matter) and has a degrading and lingering effect on the vibration and quality of the aura. The aura of a smoker contains and carries with it a dark coarseness (that lingers within the aura almost indefinitely) that lowers the smoker's resistance to external coarseness, disease, etc. (although a strong (albeit coarse) personality may be able to compensate for that lowered resistance for awhile, but not indefinitely, giving rise to the illusion of invulnerability and contributing to the (necessarily delusory) rationalization). The lowered vibration of the aura inhibits refinement and makes proper integration impossible. Before proper integration can be achieved, the aura must be cleared of all coarseness (and the system cleansed of all drug effects) and the lower vehicles brought into cooperative resonance.

Bodily Ills 3

The consumption of flesh foods (meat, fish, and fowl) is likened to the ingestion of drugs which induce animal coarseness. Although the body may be conditioned to flesh foods, the consumption of flesh foods nonetheless has the effect of lowering the overall vibration (quality) (in the case of transgression) or preventing or impeding refinement (preventing the raising of overall vibration (quality) in the case of those who have yet to achieve any substantive personality refinement (all bodily ills are the consequence of ignorance)). The coarseness resulting from eating flesh foods is not as severe as the coarseness resulting from smoking, and the drug effects of eating flesh foods are not as severe as the drug effects of alcoholic consumption; however, the subtle effects of eating flesh foods are more considerable in the sense of stimulating the animal nature.

The human body is naturally (initially) an animal body with associated animal coarseness, instincts, and sensitivities. An intermediate (necessary) goal of human experience (and precursive to proper spiritual experience) is the transformation of that (natural) animal body into a (natural) (proper) human vehicle (i.e., a properly responsive vehicle of human consciousness in contrast with the body responsive to the needs of expression and experience in animal consciousness). The transformation process is also natural albeit gradual in the case of the bulk of humanity and difficult in the case of those who are responsive to the call of the path (the call of the soul).

The animal stimulation precludes any real (proper) integration due to the separative nature of the animal coarseness. Thus the spiritual student (properly) abstains from all flesh foods (eggs, milk, cheese, etc., are not considered flesh foods and do not bring the coarse effects that other flesh foods do, but they do bring some (relatively) minor psychic impediment).

Although all bodily ills (disease) (injury) (and ills of consciousness) are consequential (karmic) and not merely simple appearances, the effects upon consciousness are nonetheless noteworthy. Drugs used to treat disease or the effects of injury (e.g., pain) must be dealt with as well (particularly with respect

to consciousness) (and can induce subsequent or additional bodily ills). The direct effect of disease is (frequently) to induce fever, which impedes or precludes the ability of the mind to integrate the personality (i.e., fever tends to involuntarily dissociate the personality vehicles, making it impossible (for the while) to achieve integration or alignment). In each case (of bodily ills), the outer (lower) conditions are (principally) effects, and the causes (in consciousness) must be dealt with before any real (lasting) resolution can be achieved.

The principal problem of bodily ills (and ills of consciousness) is the ego, which naturally (self-defensively) tends to impede refinement, to impede understanding and resolution, and to impede any significant healing process (unless the ego can be thereby strengthened). But where the ego is responsive to higher impression (i.e., where there is some meaningful degree of humility and concomitant understanding and maturity), then the ego can be a potent instrument of healing (self-healing). The problem is the natural problem of the world deception (the illusion of material reality) and self-deception (the illusion of egoic independence or individuality (contrasted with the reality of individual distinction)). Consequently, in treating any problem of bodily ills or ills in consciousness, one must definitely consider as well the place and role of the ego, if one is to achieve any measure of success.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 486</div>

Disease and Injury 1

In contrast to most bodily ills and ills of consciousness which are the result of personal habits (habits of coarseness) (simple karmic consequences), disease and injury are more normally the results of compounded karma (i.e., karmic consequence of several or more related causes or conditions in consciousness, over a period of time (or lifetimes).

Disease and injury are not necessarily more serious or more significant than bodily ills or ills of consciousness, but all (disease, injury, bodily ills, ills of consciousness) must be effectively resolved (if present) before the spiritual student can progress significantly (contributively).

Disease normally refers to any sickness or impairment of the normal state of the living body (physically, emotionally, and/or mentally) that affects the performance of the vital functions. Depending on the stage of consciousness (physical polarization, the transition of physical to emotional polarization, emotional polarization, the transition of emotional to mental polarization, mental polarization, etc.), what is considered a vital function varies accordingly, and the significance of disease and the level at which it is manifested can vary considerably (and accordingly). Having (more or less) conquered the bodily ills (and the associated coarse habits), advanced humanity (the properly mentally polarized) are more concerned with problems in consciousness. In the more abstract sense the bulk of humanity are said to suffer from "sleeping" sickness, being largely unaware of the realm and rules of manifestation of cause and effect. Thus much of the work of (in) higher consciousness deals with encouragement for humanity to overcome this problem of consciousness (which is central to most (if not all) of the manifestations of human coarseness (conflict) and the maladies of self-interest).

Few differences exist between disease and injury (at any given level of consciousness). Disease tends to develop gradually while injury tends to be manifested more quickly (by effect, not by cause). Disease typically impedes physically and emotionally, while injury tends to impede physically, yet both tend to stimulate emotional and mental experience. While disease may be manifested over a larger period of time than injury, the respective resolutions can be comparably short or long, and the causative chain for injury is (normally) nonetheless complicated and spread over a considerable period of time (including the direct effects of carelessness, since carelessness is a condition in consciousness or at least related to a condition in consciousness). What is typically referred to as mental illness is largely emotional (not mental), while proper mental illness is typically much more subtle.

All disease and injury are self-inflicted. All disease and all injury (all bodily ills and all ills of consciousness) are karmic consequences of behavior, actions, attitudes, temperament, habits, opinions, attachments, desires, feelings, thoughts, etc. All impediments major and minor are karmic and relatively meaningful. All contain the seeds of resolution and the potential for learning the needed lessons and/or reaching the appropriate degree or extent of understanding. The lessons (objectives) in consciousness are not necessarily

obviously or directly related to the effects (impediments) (disease or injury) (ill(s)). The lessons or objectives are not necessarily considerable, in spite of the apparent magnitude of the effects. Some karmic consequences are indeed manifestations of causative chains in which the lesson(s) are already essentially learned, yet karmic momentum is sometimes sufficient for manifestation (in such cases there is normally little pain or discomfort).

† Commentary No. 487

The Healing Process 1

Disease (injury) (bodily ills) (ills of consciousness) reveals (implies) a state or condition of lack of harmony resulting (karmically) from some action or state or condition of consciousness that is itself a lack of harmony. The resolution involves restoration of harmony and consistency with (higher) law.

In the human experiential field, in essence, progress in consciousness is made as the human personality moves from one state of relative harmony to another, either along a natural (direct) harmonious path, or indirectly by way of action peripheral to the path of (the evolution of) consciousness and the (karmic) consequences that bring opportunity for restoration (with some implied growth or understanding). More properly, evolutionary progress is made as the soul assimilates the lessons in consciousness of the personality (either during the incarnation in the case of those upon the path (who are sufficiently responsive to the soul) or between lives in the case of the bulk of humanity).

Every action that is inconsistent with natural (cosmic) (karmic) law is a projection of energy qualified by that action, which is (necessarily and consistently) a lack of harmony. Every energy sent forth must ultimately and appropriately return. The projection evokes karmic response(s) according to its direction, intensity, degree of inconsistency, etc. , in the context of the relative state of the individual's consciousness and in the context of the relationship (relative consistency) of that individual consciousness to the (overall) state of human consciousness. The consequences are necessarily consistent and appropriate to the individual and his or her group (humanity) and serve to restore harmony and (simultaneously) to encourage (ensure) growth (progress)

(understanding) (wisdom) as the intended lessons are learned and appropriate adjustments made (consciously or otherwise).

Karmic dispensation is always appropriate to the integrated circumstances and consciousness. Every condition or action that is inconsistent with natural law will evoke compensating forces that persist until the balance (equilibrium) (concordance) (harmony) is restored. The more intense the inconsistency, the more intense (albeit appropriate) is the evoked response. The longer the condition (lack of harmony) persists without resolution (understanding) (adjustment), the more intense is the evoked response (restorative force). Every instance of disease (injury) (bodily ills) (ills of consciousness) (on some individual, group, or planetary scale) is a manifestation of karmic force appropriate to the integrated circumstances and consciousness (at that level). Merely treating or removing or moderating the apparent effects (manifestation) in no way restores the intended balance (harmony), for the karmic force (pressure) would remain unfulfilled and that karmic force would naturally find another means of manifestation (i.e., subsequent and potentially more serious disease or injury).

But where adjustments are made in consciousness to restore harmony on that level (i.e., with appropriate growth, learning, understanding, etc.) then the karmic force is fulfilled and the disease (injury) is no longer significant. What is significant (relatively important) is that healing cannot be imposed from without, it can only be achieved from within. External forces may offer encouragement, but proper healing occurs only where the intended realization is achieved (on some appropriate level). The healing process is the learning process. As understanding is achieved (and relevant adjustments made), so is harmony restored in consciousness (and concurrently, in the karmic balance as karmic equilibrium is restored).

The Healing Process 2

One of the aspects of the dharma of the path (for spiritual students) is the task of concordance, that every spiritual student is expected to seek consciously to maintain individual and group harmony, not the superficial harmony of appearance, but the true living in accordance with natural (karmic) law and working appropriately in accordance with the group's charter (dharma).

Living in accordance with natural law allows (evokes) meaningful experience and expression (service) without the impediments of bodily ills, disease, etc. By being responsive to natural law (the wisdom of the path), the student is able to recognize the relative karmic balance and work toward restoration (equilibrium) beyond the scale of the individual (but without imposition). By being so responsive, the student is able to contribute to the healing process for humanity (planetary life), by sharing the various energies of encouragement.

The healing process requires recognition (on some level), acquired understanding, appropriate adjustments (progress) in consciousness, and a restoration of karmic equilibrium. For oneself, it is a matter of non-distractive vigilance (the vigilance of qualification (programmed awareness or recognition), not the constant conscious vigilance of absorption in self-interest), being aware of the circumstances and conditions in consciousness, and being able to make adjustments (learning) before the consequences become impediments. Where impediments emerge, the student should assess their relative significance (some may merely indicate the need for perseverance) and make any appropriate adjustments in consciousness to which the student is aware, without becoming absorbed in the process.

The enlightened individual (spiritual student) gradually becomes more and more able to discern the karmic balance, learn the appropriate lessons, make the appropriate adjustments, and pass on to more appropriate matters (dharma), without the need for impediment (disease, injury, ills, or other obstructions). Where incidental discernment is not sufficient, the student should approach the problem meditatively (contemplatively), evoking light and love energies motivated by the desire or need for understanding and subsequent adjustment,

not motivated by a desire for effective removal. Recurring effects (similar or otherwise) may imply a lack of insight or an improper direction (approach) (or egoic deception (one should always approach these matters in the humble state, being willing to face the truth (as the ego is seldom so willing to face))). Of course the properly trained esoteric student can relatively easily bring the effects into balance, removing the immediate impedimental force, but a solution in consciousness must then be found before the healing process is complete and the karmic force fulfilled (for such is the obligation of those abilities notwithstanding the karma of the effects themselves).

Similarly, it is relatively easy to treat the effects of another's karmic imbalance, but that is to some extent an imposition (unless invited and unless accompanied by a willingness to seek and face the truth associated with the problem and a willingness to live in accordance with the lessons learned). One cannot (should never) control another's actions or consciousness; one can (should) only offer encouragement (healing energy) and (potentially) serve as a catalyst for healing. By evoking healing energy (i.e., making such energy available for utilization) the spiritual student offers encouragement without imposition. In general, the evocation of healing energy is (should be) for general use, not particular to some person or persons, but to some more appropriate broader, impersonal context.

† Commentary No. 489

The Healing Process 3

The healing process is quite natural and is in fact the path of least resistance for healing energy, healing energy being any appropriate energy qualified for some restorative purpose. The healing process cannot be imposed; it can only occur to the extent that the patient is karmically responsive and responsive in consciousness (at some appropriate level). Great patterns of healing energies are maintained throughout the planetary network and those (devas and humans) who work with the healing energies (properly) simply attune themselves to the natural flow of healing energies and respond appropriately, channeling the energy onto more practical levels and releasing it in a manner consistent with their understanding of the appropriate equilibrium state. One should never

appropriate healing energies, but should rather simply be responsive to such energies.

The available healing energy is limited only by the karmic balance of the planet (humanity) (or level of application). On a global scale, many ills of consciousness, diseases, etc., are common, yet each is appropriate to the affected consciousness. Resolution (harmony) can only be achieved where human consciousness is responsive to the implied lessons. The role of the spiritual student is to serve humanity from within humanity, as an inductive (non-imposing) force for good, to encourage the refinement of consciousness (which will, incidentally, serve to restore harmony on the larger scale).

In addition to developing an affinity for healing energies (and appropriate wisdom) and a sensitivity (sensibility) sufficient to preclude imposition, the spiritual student who would work with healing energies (as all spiritual students must, directly or indirectly, for such is the dharma of the path) must avoid rationalization and the various forms of (glamorous) deception. It is a simple albeit dangerous matter to perceive an apparent injustice or an apparent need for healing on some level, with accompanying rationalization of cause and effect or of effect and (presumed) solution. But all effects are just, and rationalization is a path of deception compounded by emotional resolve (naiveté) and egoic attachment (the delusion of understanding (righteousness)).

Thus humility is a necessary ingredient for the spiritual student in working with healing energies. One cannot normally perceive the underlying karma (the wisdom implied by the consequences) (certainly not with completeness, and partial understanding presumed as complete is almost always dangerously misleading). Things (effects) are rarely as simple in the context of cause and effect (action and consequence) as apparent (yet effects are indeed simple, but only in a higher context). Wisdom calls for humility in all actions (attitudes), and understanding (particular) karma is not necessary for the needed encouragement and/or catalysis in healing. The spiritual student needs only that understanding required to preclude imposition. The spiritual student needs only to make healing energies available on practical levels and to encourage (inductively) the responsiveness of the individual (group) (humanity) to learning (healing).

The healing process is simply one of learning and adjustment, given the opportunity implied by encouragement (healing energies). With humility and the preclusion of (significant) glamour (deception) (egoic involvement), the spiritual student is a potent and effective catalyst for constructive change (restoration of equilibrium) (healing). Wherever there is a need that coincides with responsiveness (on the appropriate level), then there is a natural evocation of healing energy and a restoration of harmony.

† Commentary No. 490

Vulnerability

In all cases, disease and injury are the result of susceptibility within some framework of vulnerability and that susceptibility is the result of some karmic (causative) chain or matrix. But being vulnerable (or even being susceptible) is not sufficient to precipitate the effects (disease or injury per se). Being susceptible is simply an earned or self-inflicted condition of potential consequences. The catalyst for manifestation is itself a karmic consequence, but the significance of vulnerability is the potential for karmic resolution (recognition, awareness, adjustment, and resolution (understanding) (wisdom) prior to or preclusive to the manifestation of disease or injury).

While vulnerability implies opportunity for individual growth and opportunity to contribute to growth (progress) on some broader scale, invulnerability implies the lack of such opportunity and a separation of the individual from the lifewave (humanity) (in the context of manifestation (incarnation)). The very act (process) of incarnation brings about some (appropriate) degree of vulnerability. As a soul, one cannot evolve at some level without some degree of vulnerability (in the context of some experiential field). For the incarnated personality, the experiential field is the objective world of physical, emotional, and (concrete) mental experience, with the degree of vulnerability implied by the relative state (degree) of consciousness (degree of refinement and integration) (the soul then evolves as that experience is assimilated (as knowledge and experience are transformed into wisdom)).

Susceptibility is some (significant) degree of vulnerability, implying some lack of resistance or protection (and implying some unresponsiveness to learning the

immediate and near-term (karmic) lessons). As the student evolves (as the student refines the personality, improves the consciousness, achieves integration, etc.), the student remains vulnerable (to the extent of the incarnation) but becomes less and less susceptible to disease, illness, injury, etc. This is so not because the person has achieved some degree of resistance or protection (although such a person may have so achieved), but because the individual (consciousness) is able to learn and adjust (progress) without the need for impediments. Natural resistance (protection) (insusceptibility) (in the context of disease and injury (health)) (individually or collectively) is the result of achievement (responsiveness) (awareness) in consciousness (learning ability).

Susceptibility can arise in either of two ways (each karmically inspired), (indirectly) through (incidental) carelessness or lack of awareness or attention to integration and qualification, or (directly) through some causative (karmic) chain. Exposure to some threat is itself not necessarily sufficient to allow some impediment (disharmony) to manifest. Those who are susceptible to certain diseases (for example) are susceptible because of carelessness or because the susceptibility is induced precursively as part of some causative chain.

If some karmic force coincides with some particular vulnerability (susceptibility), then that is simply (karmically) consistent. There are no accidents, individually or collectively, nor is there any potential for evasion. We are (all) humanity and we have (all) created all of our circumstances, as humanity and as individuals and groups. And we must (all) face those circumstances and fulfill our (karmic) (dharmic) obligations. The spiritual student remains vulnerable in order to serve humanity and in order to progress, but precludes susceptibility to the extent that he (she) is capable in order to remain effective and responsive (and true to the path).

Awareness and Consciousness 1

The distinction between awareness and consciousness is an important one for the spiritual student, since the methods and approach for development and qualification of awareness and consciousness are distinctly different. Awareness is that aspect of consciousness which provides for qualified and (relatively) conscious perception and realization. Awareness is qualified by consciousness and is more a matter of cultivation and training than is the case for consciousness per se.

Awareness is developed within the framework of consciousness. The human being (by definition) (as a consequence of evolutionary development) has a mind, an emotional (astral) body, and a physical (etheric) form, providing a means of focusing (expressing) mental, emotional, and physical consciousness, respectively. Having consciousness at some level does not mean necessarily that that person is conscious or aware on that level. Each human being has a mind and an astral body (for example), but few are actually conscious on emotional levels and fewer still are actually conscious on mental levels.

Following aeons of evolutionary development leading to some instrument of consciousness (on some level) (e.g., a mind), there are five stages of subsequent development: (1) having consciousness on that level, (2) being conscious of (some) phenomena on that level, (3) having awareness on that level, (4) being fully-conscious on that level, and (5) having mastery of that level.

Having consciousness on some level simply follows from having an instrument of consciousness on that level and the ability (albeit primitive) to use that instrument. Being able to feel emotion indicates having consciousness on emotional levels. Being able to think indicates having consciousness on concrete mental levels. In neither case does it mean (necessarily) being conscious of feeling or being conscious of thinking (or being conscious of any other's feelings or thoughts). Being conscious of feeling (thinking) or being (superficially) aware of another's feeling (thinking) indicates the second stage (at that level). For example, a person might have true physical awareness (third stage), but be merely conscious (second stage) on emotional and mental levels.

The superficial awareness of the second stage is normally based upon awareness on the next lower level of consciousness (e.g., being conscious of emotional phenomena by virtue of physical observation of physical indications (which implies the danger of interpretation of perception)).

Having awareness (proper) on some level is the third stage, where recourse to observation on the next lower level of consciousness is not necessary (in fact, not even desirable as it is generally less clear). Having awareness on some level implies a relatively true perception of things on that level, but that does not mean necessarily that the observer can properly interpret that perception, it just means (hopefully) that sense impressions are recognized as sense impressions, at that level. The fourth stage, being fully conscious on some level, is simply a much better extent of awareness on that level, with considerable understanding and realization. The fifth stage, having mastery on some level, is the culmination of development in consciousness (for that level), in which the student is able to effectively wield the forces inherent in the matter (consciousness) of that level. The bulk of humanity have awareness on the physical plane (third stage), are conscious of emotional phenomena (second stage), and have (some) (concrete) mental consciousness (first stage), being emotionally-polarized (and therefore not integrated) but having no real awareness of the fact of their emotional polarization.

✝ Commentary No. 492

The Solar Lens

The solar logos is the dominant creative and qualifying force for the entire solar system. The solar logos qualifies each of the planetary (evolutionary) schemes directly (via solar energy) and indirectly (via each planetary logos). The solar logos also similarly qualifies each of the various lifewaves (evolutionary cycles) within each planetary scheme. Every soul (at every level) within the ring-pass-not of the solar system is part of the solar logos and is therefore (individually) qualified by the logos.

The creative and qualifying force of the solar logos arises both internally and externally. Much of the creative and qualifying force of the solar logos arises

from deep within the central sun (masking numerous relationships). Much of the creative and qualifying force of the solar logos arises from various (creative) sources within the local group (of solar and other (higher) logoi), special (non-ecliptic) sources, and generalized (ecliptic) sources. The energy from these external sources is passed through the solar lens (an aspect of the central sun) and focused upon one or another (or more) (or all) of the planetary logoi (planetary schemes) (lifewaves). The solar lens receives the external forces, moderates them (to some extent) (subjects them to solar qualification), and then refocuses them appropriately.

Some of the energy that passes through the solar lens is passed through deliberately and intelligently by the solar logos. Some of the energy is passed unconsciously (for even the solar logos is unconscious at some level). But some of the energy is channeled deliberately and intelligently by the cosmic logos, who (which) is a major qualifying force for the derivative solar manifestations. The solar lens is in a sense a living, dynamic instrument of (solar) consciousness, self-moderating in some respects, internally and/or externally moderated in other respects.

At various particular stages in evolutionary development, each lifewave (planet) (experiential field) requires particular qualification (vivification) (endowment(s)) not generally available within the system or through normal channels. At such times, the solar logos (or planetary logos working through the solar lens) draws energy from some appropriate (external) creative hierarchy and wields that force for particular applications. The twelve creative hierarchies of the ecliptic (zodiac) are the most noticeable set (but not the most prominent, esoterically) for our own (solar) system. The twelve are largely unrelated (being merely incidental) to our own system, yet of considerable creative (qualificative) significance when (the forces thereof are) evoked via the solar lens. The twelve normally provide generalized and cyclic qualification via the solar lens and the lunar cycle, but are specially evoked for purposes of vivification or endowment only occasionally during the manifestation of a lifewave.

The various (ecliptic and non-ecliptic) creative hierarchies are often perceived as great lives who come to our solar system or planetary scheme to share their creative potencies at crucial (evolutionary) times, yet in fact (although great lives nonetheless) these hierarchical lives remain in place and are not really

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conscious of their impact upon our system. Our own solar logos and other great lives within the solar ring-pass-not are the principal moderators of these creative forces, with the solar lens being the principal instrument of transformation and focusing. Individuals are not capable of working with the solar lens or these forces prior to their passage through the solar lens.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 493</div>

Crime and Punishment 1

Exoteric laws are rules of conduct prescribed or recognized as binding or enforced by some controlling authority. A crime (in this orthodox sense) is an act that is forbidden or the omission of a duty that is commanded by a public law and that makes the offender liable to punishment by that law. In this same context, punishment is retributive suffering, pain, or loss and/or a penalty imposed upon an offender through judicial procedure. The whole system of exoteric law is (in principle) a natural (human) attempt to establish and maintain a peaceful, safe, and orderly society, to permit the members of that society to reasonably exercise their (relative) freedom.

The duty of the spiritual student in this context is to remain a law-abiding member of society and, simultaneously, to remain true to the dharma of the path (i.e., to abide by the (higher) ethical and moral standards of the path (to the extent that they are recognized) (without imposing those standards on others)). For the spiritual student, (and in principle) where one has reason to be offended, one should not feel offended, nor should one be reactive or retributive. Where one commits some offense deliberately or otherwise, one should accept responsibility for one's action and offer appropriate recompense. In the face of apparent injustice, one should recognize the infallibility of karmic law and accept the consequences, looking to those consequences as encouragement for learning.

In the metaphysical sense, every circumstance faced is a warranted consequence of integrated action, all lives and all action (experience) being governed by karmic law. Freedom of action implies (earned) opportunity for experience and expression, but it also implies the inevitability of appropriate consequences.

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Action may be inherently constructive or destructive (or both), with resulting circumstances being appropriate in a broader sense than is normally recognized. In the metaphysical sense, a crime is any act that is inconsistent with the evolutionary plan (with consideration for the level and quality of consciousness (and degree of awareness) and the associated circumstances). In the metaphysical sense there is no punishment, for all consequences are inherently constructive, always earned, and always appropriate.

There are basically two categories of crimes, that of crimes against others and that of crimes against oneself. Any crime against another (others) (humanity) is a crime of imposition (any imposition not in accordance with the evolutionary plan is offensive). Imposition includes many of the conventional crimes (murder, rape, assault, robbery, etc.) as well as the moral (ethical) crimes of intimidation, coercion, preemption, preclusion, deception, lying, etc. Crimes against oneself are the crimes (offenses) (improprieties) of self-indulgence, and include selfishness, self-centeredness, absorption in mundane or personal matters, pursuit of self-interest, neglect of duty, etc. Offenses are judged (karmically) by the extent of imposition or indulgence, the extent of deception or self-deception, etc., in context. There are few if any absolutes (save the void) and few things are perfectly clear. Thus one cannot (and should not presume to) judge others (since one cannot know and understand all of the factors); one should simply seek to learn by one's own experience and the experience of others in order to improve oneself.

In the final analysis there is no distinction between crimes against others and crimes against oneself, since all are one and we evolve as a group. With an integrated (inclusive) perspective, all actions should be tempered by accumulated wisdom.

Vigilance

With occult training comes the natural ability for vigilant awareness and programmed protection, which is (as many things are) a mixed blessing (i.e., one with implied responsibilities) (meaning that that ability is itself an opportunity for learning, albeit for more subtle matters). One can in principle preclude virtually all energies that would otherwise lead to disease or injury. But in so doing, one must be very careful not to preclude awareness of those karmic forces (energies) and their proper resolution (implied learning and consequent adjustment). Thus the spiritual student should endeavor to improve the awareness and quality of consciousness, remaining relatively insusceptible to impedimental forces, but remaining nonetheless responsive to the implied lessons and true to the dharma of the path.

Another aspect of vigilance is (programmed) vigilant awareness of one's own thoughts, feelings, and actions (and the various implications of each) in order to become immediately conscious of any negative (unwarranted) expression (coarseness) or any expression inconsistent with one's (spiritual) values and understanding. This vigilance allows for (potentially) immediate compensation or preclusion and (potentially) reinforces the discipline of a properly qualified personality. Good intentions are helpful, but vigilant determination to fulfill one's intentions is more effective. With vigilance comes a flow of energy qualified by those intentions, and a corresponding (intelligent) qualification (programming) of the personality. With continued and proper vigilance comes improved recognition and understanding of cause and effect relationships.

Vigilance can be effective consciously or unconsciously. In a sense, the meditation state (involving occult tension) is a state of conscious, vigilant awareness on abstract mental or intuitive levels, effectively precluding any concrete mental activity (mental noise) or distraction. Deliberate, unconscious, vigilant awareness can remain in effect without distracting the waking-consciousness (unless warranted), provided that that vigilance is suitably qualified. This leaves the focus of consciousness (the waking-consciousness) free for other objective or subjective concerns. In either case, conscious or unconscious vigilance, the motive and qualification should be primarily one of

learning or service. In either case, properly programmed (qualified) (consistent) vigilance is a means of improving awareness.

The manner of and motivation for vigilant awareness is relatively important. Where emotionally motivated (as in fear) or otherwise selfishly motivated, the energy associated with vigilant awareness can actually attract that which one might seek to preclude (or preclude that which one might seek to attract). Thus effective vigilance requires poise (a healthy mental demeanor, emotional stability, and a properly integrated personality). In the final analysis, proper vigilance must be incidental as well as deliberate, and not a major focus of consciousness.

Perhaps the most prudent application of vigilant awareness is that intended to preclude any absorption in personal or mundane energies. So much of the activities and circumstances of the external (mundane) world encourage absorption, yet with a properly qualified vigilant awareness, the spiritual student can be consciously reminded at each instance of crossing the threshold of absorption, which makes it much easier to overcome the absorptive tendency. Of course effective daily meditation is essential to effective qualification (vigilant awareness) and the preclusion of mundane (personal) absorption.

† Commentary No. 495

Awareness and Consciousness 2

Consciousness is improved by qualification, by continued cultivation, refinement, and discipline. Awareness is improved within that framework of (qualified) consciousness, is limited by the extent and character of that consciousness, and is developed through the proper exercise and training of consciousness. The qualification of consciousness is programmable as is the vigilant discipline of awareness, but awareness is improved primarily as the waking-consciousness exercises the point of focus (of consciousness). True awareness requires an integrated personality and a considerably refined (and stabilized) personality.

Having consciousness on some level implies some degree of activity on that level, but not necessarily any degree of awareness or control. Most of humanity are quite active physically and emotionally, with only mental activity limited and dominated (heavily biased) by emotional forces. A growing number of people are achieving some degree of control over the lower nature, tempering the emotions, and freeing the mind for (relatively) unbiased activity. Upon the spiritual path, the student consciously refines the consciousness, raises the polarization (level of focus) of consciousness, and develops an intelligent awareness on mental and intuitional levels.

As a faculty or attribute of consciousness, awareness begins as an unconscious perception that is very difficult to assimilate because it is unconscious. Awareness is developed through the activity of the focus of consciousness, from unconscious perception to semi-conscious perception, to conscious awareness, and ultimately to conscious realization. The main distinction is between perception and awareness and realization. Perception does not imply discrimination or insight (understanding) or wisdom. Perception merely implies the receipt of sense impressions without (necessarily) any real measure of discipline (meaning those impressions will likely emerge in consciousness heavily biased by the coarseness of the outer consciousness). Conscious awareness implies some degree of being aware of being aware, and (hopefully) some measure of discipline (clarity), discrimination, and understanding. If the personality is not properly refined and integrated, then even this (preliminary) conscious awareness will be limited in effectiveness.

Conscious realization follows the further development and refinement of consciousness and conscious awareness, where the instrument of awareness (consciousness) is refined, stabilized (disciplined), and qualified (clarified). The significance of proper (conscious) awareness and (conscious) realization is limited to the extent of any allowance of personal energies (bias) (distortion). The existence of personal or mundane energy in (the focus of) consciousness precludes realization and severely limits the integrity of any awareness. In effect, proper awareness (realization) depends not only on the ability to interpret properly, but also upon the ability to filter out any distorting tendencies or distractions.

Thus awareness depends on the quality of consciousness and upon the discipline achieved within that consciousness. The spiritual student must learn to be aware on a number of levels simultaneously, without being distracted by any of them. One should eventually be very effective mentally and intuitionally (contemplatively) while being aware and functioning effectively on all appropriate levels. This can only be achieved through the overall process of self-mastery and subordination of the individuality (ego) to the dharma of the spiritual path.

✝ Commentary No. 496

Vivification

In the cosmological sense, the one life manifests itself in part through the many lives within the numerous lifewaves which emerge successively and simultaneously throughout the period of logoic manifestation. Each of the lives (and lifewaves) holds within itself accumulated potential (qualification) based upon its previous and intended experience (in the context (qualification) of the logoic evolutionary plan). Periodically during the course of evolutionary (involutionary) development (experience), a process of (some particular form of) vivification is involved (evoked) by the guardians of the lifewave.

This evolutionary (involutionary) vivification is in no manner merely an artificial stimulation. It is, rather, an adjustment and stimulation (qualification) of the inner fires (potential) resulting (for those who are qualified and responsive) in a quickening of some meaningful attribute (aspect) in (of) consciousness. The process of individualization in which a soul passes from the animal kingdom into the human kingdom is an example of evolutionary vivification. The necessary impulse comes from without the human being (usually via some particular creative hierarchy or intermediary) yet reveals (allows) the emergence of some aspect of the individual (group) potential. Within each personality matrix (and analogously for greater (preceding) and lesser (succeeding) lives) is the requisite potential, but the ability of the individual (group) life to respond appropriately to the (catalytic) (creative) (evolutionary) (qualificative) impulse depends on the measure of progress achieved (in consciousness) relative to that which is intended.

Vivification may involve endowment of potential or it may involve the triggering (release) of some developed potential. The endowment of potential involves the adjustment (reprogramming) (qualification or requalification) (by induction) of the individual (group) life matrix, the emplacement of the seeds of proper (intended) evolutionary development, that, when exposed to the proper conditions and experience will lead to some intended fulfillment. The release of some developed potential is similarly a qualification of the life (soul) (personality) matrix, normally involving the dissolution of the safeguards and restraints of that aspect or attribute. The process of vivification is simply a matter of directed energy and the proper qualification of that energy.

The role of a creative hierarchy is normally an unconscious one (at least in the context of not directly related lifewaves or logoi). The role of the intermediary (logos or logoic representative) is normally much more conscious, as the intermediary (one concerned with catalysis or induction in accordance with the plan and charter of the group to which the intermediary belongs). The intermediary either invokes the needed force or otherwise recognizes its availability (in context), then evokes the appropriate energy, wielding it (and simultaneously qualifying it with particular purpose) for some group of lives (a lifewave or some relatively large group within some lifewave).

The duty of the intermediate group (for evolutionary encouragement, induction, qualification, vivification, etc.) is a natural and necessary component of interrelated (unified) evolution. Each group of lives (lifewave) at any stage of evolution (or involution) is related directly or indirectly to at least several other (preceding, parallel, or succeeding) lifewaves (or group lives). The sense (duty) of intelligent (sanctioned) helpfulness is pervasive upon the spiritual path, with each group receiving appropriate encouragement from some (preceding or parallel) group(s), and simultaneously providing appropriate encouragement to some other (succeeding or parallel) group(s).

Spiritual Community

A spiritual community is a group of people with common spiritual interests (values) living together with some degree of (group) integration. Spiritual communities can serve any one or more of a number of purposes, at one extreme being wholly concerned with individual development and training (along spiritual lines), at another extreme being wholly concerned with service to humanity (and the path) along some particular line of service. Spiritual communities (i.e., that are spiritually oriented (rather than personality-centered)) serve the plan (path) directly or indirectly to the extent of their quality and maturity, which is the extent to which they contribute constructive energy (inductive encouragement) to some larger community (region).

Spiritual communities should contribute to the local equilibrium (without mundane absorption). Thus care should be taken to maintain good community relations with the surrounding peoples. The spiritual community should avoid emphasis on differences between the spiritual lifestyles and values and those of the mundane community, but recognize the common interests and values (i.e., remain non-separative). At the same time, the spiritual community should avoid personality-centeredness so that a balance can be maintained between cohesion as a spiritual community (and the values that that implies) and maintenance of (healthy) mundane community relationships. In order to maintain that spiritual cohesion (orientation), the group must remain relatively neutral in mundane (popular) (political) (timely) issues, preferring emphasis on spiritual matters.

The relative quality and maturity of a spiritual community (group) is a rather significant factor in the relative success or effectiveness of the group as a spiritual community. Many spiritual communities play a bridging role, being able to attract (naturally) those who are approaching the path and provide pertinent encouragement. Other spiritual communities are more specialized or naturally attract more serious students who are already trained in much of the basic discipline and philosophy (theosophy). The size of a spiritual community is not particularly important, although the more serious communities tend to be quite small compared with the more gregarious (social) communities. In some

cases, a serious (less gregarious) spiritual core group exists within the framework of a larger, more gregarious (relatively) spiritually-oriented community. Such a core group is necessary for a (larger) spiritual community to maintain any spiritual momentum, since mundane (social) absorption is as much a threat to the spiritual community as it is to the individual student.

The degree of group integration (cohesion) is also a rather significant factor in the effectiveness of a spiritual community. The more socially active communities tend to be poorly integrated in the spiritual sense, but likely to sustain a considerable (personality) (social) rapport among their members due to the common values. The more serious communities require a much higher degree of integration in the spiritual sense, being less personal and less social, while having a (much) greater rapport on spiritual levels. This implies (and requires) a withdrawal from mundane and personal matters and the resulting freedom to devote the bulk of one's time and energy to spiritual matters (meaning necessary (practical) mundane endeavors are properly qualified).

The spiritual community provides a considerable opportunity for individual development and training in the context (and higher purpose) of group consciousness and service, just as living directly in the mainstream of humanity without the benefits of spiritual community serves as an equally significant (albeit distinctly different) opportunity for experience and service.

✝ Commentary No. 498

Spiritual Lifestyles

A number of different spiritual lifestyles (living arrangements) afford a range of opportunities for experience and development and service. Much depends on the individual circumstances (karmic obligations and relative freedom to pursue spiritual matters). The traditional family environment affords considerable opportunities, particularly for the relatively sensitive spiritual student (who is thereby afforded the opportunity of facing the stress of balancing the (worthwhile) mundane obligations with the compelling needs of the student's emerging spiritual nature). Living alone is another potent (albeit different)

opportunity (e.g., for refinement, study, meditation, etc.) (although development achieved under stress is more substantial).

The lifestyle implied by a spiritual community can vary considerably, from a loose association of traditional families and friends, to cooperative living, to communal living (or some combination). Although advantages exist for both a loose association on one hand and a fully-integrated communal community on the other hand, the preferred arrangement for a spiritual community is more cooperative than communal. A cooperative community (group lifestyle) (living arrangements) implies some (considerable) degree of (cooperative) living with largely traditional spiritual (family) values and subjective (spiritual) interdependence (rapport). Communal living implies wholly integrated living quarters and a greater social context (with its advantages and disadvantages). The monastic (communal) community is the most potent, but it is also the most demanding (having greater qualifications for participation).

Cooperative living implies working together and sharing responsibilities, but with some (considerable) degree of individual privacy (privacy is important to spiritual growth (self-mastery) but too much privacy impairs the group rapport and community potential). Communal living implies less privacy and greater interdependence in the objective sense. Cooperative living affords the needed privacy, but (properly) emphasizes the subjective interdependence (in addition to the moderate, objective interdependence). The spiritual community itself implies group or organizational ownership of (group) property (resources), in addition to personal effects (property). Both cooperative and communal living imply that each participant contributes (time, energy, money) to the maintenance of the (spiritual) community and the objectives (service activities) of the community.

Cooperative living implies voluntary commitments, while communal living implies voluntary obligations. In either case, the individual participation depends on adherence to the group values and objectives. In neither case should the individual be constrained or burdened. Individual freedom is important, and the spiritual community should be based on common values, intelligent understanding of group values and objectives, and voluntary adherence based upon (and to the extent of) that understanding and rapport. Personality-centeredness has no place in a (proper) spiritual community. Those who are

more personality-centered than spiritually-integrated should remain on the periphery of a spiritual community.

Though communal living is appropriate for some, the traditional spiritual community is more cooperative than communal. The community should serve as a cooperative sanctuary, with largely subjective interdependence and a considerable (intelligent) (effective) rapport. With an effective subjective rapport it is even practical for physically isolated members and associates to participate effectively in the energy and work of the group.

<div align="right">✝ Commentary No. 499</div>

Geometric Symbolism

Geometry is a branch of mathematics that deals with the measurement, properties, and relationships of points, lines, angles, surfaces, and solids. Geometric symbolism is the study of geometric constructs as symbols, particularly in the sense of conveyance of relatively abstract philosophical concepts. The utility of geometric symbols is limited by the relative inabilities of the concrete mind (of the personality) which is necessarily accustomed to the common (three-dimensional) spatial perspective and is not normally accustomed to working closely with the abstract mind.

As an exercise, the study of geometric symbols serves to train and encourage the concrete mind to be relatively free from mundane or personal attachments (distractions) and to work more closely with the necessarily impersonal, abstract mind (of the soul). Philosophy is naturally the domain of the abstract mind (manas) and spiritual intuition (buddhi), but must be embraced conceptually on the more concrete levels (of the personality) if the personality is (ever) to be responsive to the soul (and to the spiritual path of conscious evolution).

The proper (higher) elements of the esoteric philosophy (and theosophy) are necessarily abstract and less amenable (if at all amenable) to concrete thought and language. But the energy of those elements can be conveyed to the (concrete mind of the) personality (and waking-consciousness) via geometric

symbols. The potency of the symbolic concept (in this context) is relatively inversely proportional to the complexity (dimensionality) of the symbol(s) utilized. The (symbolic) concept of a dimensionless point within a (nonexistent) field is vastly more potent in this respect, for example, than a three-dimensional object of mundane familiarity. The simple (most profound) truths are those which appear to illustrate contradiction or paradox, since each such instance is resolvable with more inclusive (relatively more abstract) thinking. Complexity serves primarily to distract the more mundane mentalities, and can be used to mask the more simple, more potent constructs and ideas. Thus in viewing a relatively complex geometric symbol one should look for the inherent simplicities and avoid being distracted by the more familiar habits of thinking (and feeling).

The preponderance of (meaningful) geometric symbols are two-dimensional, being relatively simple yet able to illustrate a variety of ideas (the three-dimensional analogues being significant mainly by derivation and reduction (or more properly, by the implications of derivation and/or reducibility)). The proper (contemplative) study of geometry should be complemented by a study of the (simple, conceptual) physics of power, energy, and force, since many of the implications of geometry are (can be) associated with lines of force (and their respective implications). Energy flows along lines of force, linearly or radiatively or otherwise according to its form (nature) and circumstances. The (simple, conceptual) geometry of nature implies much concerning the nature of manifestation and evolution, all of which is (most) effectively described in symbolic terms, the apparent complexity of nature notwithstanding.

Pragmatic issues associated with geometric symbolism should be generally discounted or at least viewed impersonally. There is no personal significance to the esoteric philosophy or to the symbolic representation of manifestation (philosophy). One should simply remain self-responsible and view the various symbols conceptually, learning contemplatively and reflectively, and progressing to the extent of the soul's participation in conceptual process (mental training).

The Circle 1

The circle is a closed plane curve every point of which is equidistant from a fixed point within the curve (the point being fixed relative to the curve or vice versa). As a geometric symbol, the circle is one of the more potent symbolic abstractions, leading to numerous concepts of philosophical significance.
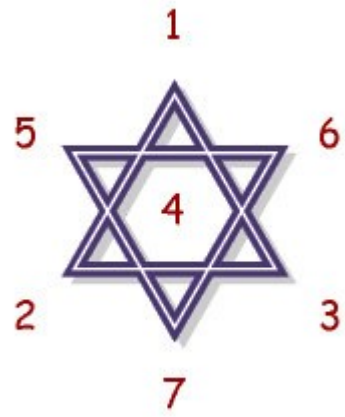
The elements or properties of the circle are (1) the fixed (dimensionless) point within the circle (at the center) (2) the radius or diameter (magnitude) of the circle (which determines its circumference), (3) the two-dimensional space (region) circumscribed by the circle (the inner region), (4) the two-dimensional space excluded by the circle (the outer region), (5) the dimensionless points which constitute the circle per se, and (6) the lines of force implied by the circle. Extensions or derivatives of the circle include (1) the family of closed curves of which the circle is the simple case, (2) the element of motion, (3) the element of segmentation, (4) the element of proliferation, (5) the three-dimensional analog, (6) relationships with other objects, and (7) the lines of force implied in those relationships.

The fixed (central) point can be viewed as the source. As that central point expands uniformly and two-dimensionally, its surface constitutes a circle. The circle represents (among many other things) the frontier of defined (two-dimensional) space, the ring-pass-not of the unitary (all-inclusive) (atomic) source. While the central point remains dimensionless (not defined in one or two (or more) dimensions) (obscure) (beyond the ken of dimensional existence (which implies greater reality to dimension-lessness)), the circle has apparent magnitude by virtue of its radius or diameter. But that magnitude has no independent or singular significance. It is only significant in relation to some other object, either within or without the circle. Likewise, the magnitude of the area within the circle is only significant given the division of space into regions additional to the circle's inner and outer regions.

In fact, symbolically, in the absence of other participants in the symbolic space, the area within the circle is equivalent to the area beyond the circle (since the interior region has no relative magnitude and since the outer region is not

bounded). Thus the inner region can be viewed as the inner world (subjective reality) and the outer region can be viewed as the outer world (objective reality) or vice versa. The outer can be viewed as the reflection of the inner, with the circle representing the surface of reflection (i.e., the soul). But more essentially, the two are equivalent and neither is real relative to the central point.

The dimensionless points which constitute the circle per se can be viewed collectively as the soul or intermediate existence. Each point is equidistant from the source, giving rise to equivalence or equality. To constitute a circle the dimensionless points cannot be discrete, non-discretion giving rise to continuum, the circle being an unbroken line of (circular or periodic) force. In addition to the circular lines of force are an infinite number of lines of force between the central point and the circle per se, infinite since each of the dimensionless points on the circle is necessarily linked to the central point and since an infinite number of dimensionless points are necessary to constitute a circular continuum. Since the surface (the circle per se) is reflective, those lines of force extend radially outward beyond the circle, indefinitely. Thus the central point (monad) is related to the unbroken circle (the soul) and on to the shadow (personality) of the circle.

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